



The Buckingham Society

Campaigning for a Better Buckingham

Newsletter October 2017

A Word from our Chair – Roger Edwards

Buckingham is a friendly town with a great atmosphere, a good community spirit and plenty of character. Now, you don't just have to take my word for that – these were the sort of comments that Kathy, Carolyn and I got from members of the public when, back in July on Civic Day, we set up a stall on the market and asked a random selection of passers-by, "What is it you like about Buckingham"?

We spoke to a complete mix of people from locals who have lived here all their lives through to a couple from Philadelphia who were visiting the town for the first time and were really impressed by, to use their words, how *"laid back, friendly and helpful"*, they had found Buckingham people to be.

Everybody we spoke to commented on the lovely and historic buildings and the green spaces that we have around the town. People spoke about the pleasure of walking by the river, the fact that the town continues to have a centre with a variety of independent shops and the joy of still having a street market and the atmosphere of the flea market.

But most of all it was about the people who live here. The community spirit in the town; the fact that a five minute "pop to the shops" can take a couple of hours as there are always people to stop and chat to; the way that local people are always willing to lend a helping hand; the number of groups, societies and organisations that the town has and the friendly and welcoming atmosphere that visitors encounter here.

So, while this was by no means a scientific study, it seems clear that Buckingham folk should give themselves a pat on the back. Our community is thriving and people love being here. Buckingham still has a heart and local people keep that heart beating strongly.

Trees in Buckingham – Kathy Robins

Following my request for information about members favourite trees I now have lots of suggestions, which will be displayed at the AGM on 15th November.

The Annual Lecture and Garden Party

The annual lecture and garden party on 20th July was attended by 50 members and friends who enjoyed a fascinating talk by Barry Smith, Head of Gardens and Estates at Stowe.



We then enjoyed drinks and canapes in Prebend House gardens. We are very grateful to The University of Buckingham for the use of their rooms for this event.

Conservation Areas

2017 marks the 50th anniversary of the 1967 Civic Amenities Act and the establishment of the first conservation area, in Stamford, Lincolnshire. There are now over 10,000 conservation areas reflecting the popularity of this vital and legal means of identifying and protecting our most valued historic places. The revised Buckingham conservation area was adopted on 27th April 2005, following six weeks of consultation with the public.

Civic Voice has surveyed members to gauge the effectiveness of conservation areas. The overall UK picture indicated that conservation areas have been effective at



preserving areas of historic and architectural interest. But there were issues to be confronted including a lack of understanding of the controls in conservation areas, too much street clutter such as signs and advertisements, the lack of traditional paving materials, poor maintenance and loss of historical details such as windows and doors.

The Society is privileged in that we are all invited to enjoy a talk on Conservation Areas by Ian Harvey, Executive Director of Civic Voice, following the AGM on 15th November.

London Road Footbridge

There are plans to refurbish the footbridge which is located beside the London Road Bridge on Bridge Street, Buckingham.

A temporary walkway beside the existing footbridge will be constructed and then the refurbishment work will start. We are told that Bridge Street will remain open to

traffic and pedestrians will always have a route available to them to cross the river. The timescale is:

- Erect the temporary walkway October 2017
- Refurbishment of London Footbridge – November 2017 to February 2018
- Remove the temporary walkway – March 2018

Photograph of Castle Street Buckingham



The image to the right was taken from a set of post cards probably produced in the 1950's by a company called Frith and Co of Reigate. They specialised in producing post cards and calendars for almost every town.

Congratulations to:

Bill Howkins who celebrated his 99th birthday this year.

Liz Zettl, pictured right, who celebrated her 100th birthday on 15th September this year. Liz must surely be the oldest member of The Buckingham Society.



Railings Outside the Mail Sorting Office

Members of the Society have commented that these railings are looking a bit scruffy, particularly now that the planters filled and maintained by the Buckingham Garden Centre are being so well looked after by Buckingham Nursery and Town Council staff. The good news is that the Town Council is to arrange to have them repainted, so they should look much brighter and cleaner.

Steps Between the Market Area and the Old Gaol Paved Area

You may have noticed that some of these have shifted and are starting to look like a possible tripping hazard. The Society has reported this to AVDC via the reporting link on their website.

Incidentally, did you know that any issues relating to any of the areas of the town for which AVDC has responsibility can be reported via the AVDC website? Click on "Report it" and then on "Parks" and you will find the necessary form. Do not be misled by the title "Parks"; you can also use this area to report problems with pavements, steps etc. Bucks CC has a similar area on their website to report problems with street lighting, potholes and so on.

Town Centre Pavements

Councillor Warren Whyte, who is also a member of the Buckingham Society, is pressing Bucks County Council to replace the missing flagstones that were removed last year for safety reasons. Warren is also investigating whether funding could be available to improve the paving between Barclays Bank and Lloyds Bank.

Buckingham Community Bus

Members may be aware of the new Buckingham Bus community transport project that Warren has launched. The aim is that Buckingham would have a community bus like the Winslow bus that is used by many Buckingham groups and individuals. The Buckingham Society has supported this initiative from its inception and progress is now being made. Pilot services could possibly be trialled later in the financial year. Any members who might wish to be involved with the scheme should contact Warren for further information.

Christmas “Big Event”

Yes, that time is looming already! Buckingham shops will open on the afternoon and into the evening of Sunday 26 November. In addition, there would be stalls around the town, including the Bull Ring and other various locations with possible food and drink stalls, plus an indoor event at The Cote. More information later.

Trader of the Year

This award was created last year by the Buckingham Society and will now be an annual event. There will be two awards again this year. The main “Trader of the Year” that will be open to all local shops and market traders and, instead of last year’s “Market Trader of the Year”, this time there will be a “Café/Restaurant of the Year” – so plenty to choose from there. Nominations for the awards will be collected from the Buckingham public during October and November with the presentation of the awards taking place at the Christmas “Big Event” on November 26th.

Overgrown Vegetation in the Ouse

We have noticed that the fallen trees and vegetation alongside the river, particularly near the ford are becoming very dense. We intend to contact those responsible for maintaining this area so that the river can be cleared.



Planning Report – Carolyn Cumming

Care Home, Grand Junction – The Town Council Council is considering a judicial review of the decision by AVDC to accept this application. This would be a review of process and not the decision itself.

The Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan and Housing Supply - New, updated methodology on housing numbers means AVDC, as at March 2017, has a 7.8 year supply. It might even be as much as 9 years. If confirmed, then the District Council need only apply a 5% “buffer” to the housing requirement (at present it is a 20%). However, once new housing figures have been ascertained (taking into account the as yet unknown unmet need), the supply is likely to drop back to a 5 year norm.

Planning Enforcement - The Town Council had pointed out that too often cases are closed because they are regarded as “not expedient to take action” usually because of the cost of taking up action. If the application is reported to committee, this cost can be as much as 4 times that under delegated powers. This issue will be particularly pertinent in view of Ian Harvey’s talk on conservation areas at our AGM.

Planning Applications

Royal Latin School all-weather sports pitch and building - Issues discussed were the lighting, drainage, lack of a travel plan, good cycle storage and the tree loss. The Town Council wished to see a full SUDs report on drainage. The primary issue affecting this application is the outstanding bat report for the ecological survey. Proceedings have been put on hold and we think that the survey will be received sometime in October.

An application for infill at The Villas Stratford Road was refused.

Minerals & Waste - The draft plan named a site at Hyde Lane (along the A422) for gravel extraction. Critical issues are the nature reserve, the Canal Society’s restored lock and the additional traffic routing via A422/A421. BCC will seek to find waste sites at industrial parks (Radclive Road and Tingewick Road – the latter now superseded by the Clarence Court development).

Trees and Open Spaces – Ian Orton

Buckingham’s green and open spaces generally look at their best during the spring and autumn and 2017 is no exception. The Heartlands and Bourton Meadow are looking particularly good at present and well worth a visit. So too is the Royal Latin School’s (RLS) car-park which contains a number of Buckingham’s best trees.

Unfortunately, however, Buckingham’s treescape is still under considerable pressure from developers. A few yards away from the RLS developers are preparing a site between Waglands Gardens and Chandos Road for yet more houses. Many trees have already been felled with more set to follow.

The Buckingham Society, along with Buckingham Town Council and many local residents opposed this development for a variety of reasons. Not for the first time, however, AVDC took no notice.

Every black cloud has a silver lining, however. The activities of this particular developer have certainly made many residents much more aware of Buckingham's outstanding treescape and the importance of doing whatever we can to protect and maintain it.

One instance of this was the number of people who turned out to protest and successfully stop what can only be called a pre-emptive strike by the developer to start tree felling and other work on the site earlier in the summer.

Another is the number of people that have volunteered to become tree wardens. But more are probably needed to provide Buckingham with adequate coverage.

BTC has produced a leaflet outlining the duties and responsibilities of tree wardens and this is available from the BTC offices.

Another way in which trees can be protected is through tree preservation orders (TPOs). Anyone can nominate trees for possible TPO status.

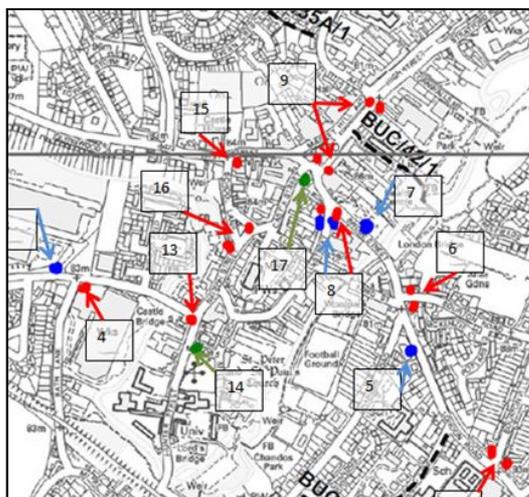
I believe that AVDC may make the process easier by making it possible to nominate online suitable trees for TPOs. The same website may also outline the criteria used to designation suitable trees.

Note, however, that current AVDC policy is not to place TPOs on trees that stand on land owned and managed by AVDC, e.g. The Spinney behind Castle House. Indeed, I believe that AVDC is removing TPOs on any such trees on the basis that as a responsible owner it is hardly likely to fell or reduce tree crowns without initiating the necessary legal procedures.

The Transport Group – David Child

Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV)

In the last newsletter the transport group reported on the work it was doing on HGV signage and restrictions within Buckingham. Unfortunately, despite several angles of approach we are unable to report any real success. What we can say is that we have found a number of sources of information that we would expect to be able to direct us to the lawfully status on restrictions are unable to provide this detail. We still have a couple of last resort avenues to explore but these will take some time to develop.



We started plotting the location of the weight restriction signs in preparation to later compare the signs to the documents that related to weight restrictions in Buckingham but at the moment we are still trying to find the documents that

support the placing of the signs and if possible of more importance are the signs that are missing.

Pathway Cornwalls Meadows

The Transport group have put forward a number of proposals to improve the safety and transport links in Buckingham some of these can be seen on the society's web site via the link:- http://buckinghamssociety.org.uk/Reports_Transport.html



The Cornwalls Meadow suggestion was published in February 2016 and of course we do not claim to be experts in transport design nor able to direct how funding is spent but it is good to see that work has started on making the pedestrian route over the Great River Ouse into Cornwalls Meadows safer than the previous hazardous route through the parked cars and the streams of vehicles.

The route proposed by the transport group in February 2016 is shown in green (see the full report via the link above) and the new path recently opened (September) is in blue.

David Child. transport@buckinghamssociety.org.uk

Dates for your diary

Our Annual General Meeting will be held on Wednesday 15th November, starting at 6.00pm in the Ian Fairbairn Lecture Hall.

The meeting will be followed by drinks.

Then at 7.30 there will be a talk by Ian Harvey, Executive Director of Civic Voice and one of its founders. The talk is entitled "The History of Conservation Areas - fifty years old this year".

Executive Committee:

Roger Edwards	Chair
David Child	Transport and Planning
Carolyn Cumming	Planning
Paul Fello	Transport and Planning
Ed Grimsdale	Planning and society historian
Gill Jones	Membership Secretary and Transport

Tony Mayston	Treasurer
Belinda Morley-Fletcher	Secretary
Nigel Morrison	Destination Buckingham
Ian Orton	Transport, Planning and Green and Open Spaces
Kathy Robins	Newsletter Editor, Transport and Planning
Colin Stocker	University representative

We should like to hear from you

Please give us feedback - tell us what activities you would like The Buckingham Society to prioritise, what more you think that the Society should do or what we should stop doing. Come to the AGM and tell us what you think. We should love to see and hear you.

Comments to: kathyrobins@walnutyard.co.uk Tel: 07834 484762. If you would like to become involved in any of our activities or attend a meeting of the executive committee, then contact us or just come along. www.buckinghamssociety.org.uk