



The Buckingham Society

Campaigning for a better Buckingham

Newsletter June 2019

A word from our Chair

Looking back to last June, I wrote in this column, *“the sun is shining, birds are singing, and you can almost hear the plants throwing off the shackles and sprouting and spreading themselves”*. Well, what a difference a year makes. Wet and chilly weather that is nothing like June at all and the plants, in my garden at least, are looking rather sorry for themselves. However, we can all take heart that we live in a lovely and generally peaceful part of the world that we should feel privileged to be a part of.

Just the other day I was talking to a group of people from New Zealand who expressed surprise at just how beautiful this part of England is. Buckinghamshire, and particularly north Bucks, is rarely singled out as one of the beauty spots to visit, often being overlooked in favour of perhaps more obvious places such as the Cotswolds or the Chilterns. And yet we have some gorgeous countryside around here and some delightful places to visit such as Stowe, Claydon House, (pictured left), Evenly Woods and so on.



And Buckingham itself remains a fine town and it is good to see that there are plenty of people around who are doing their bit to keep it so. This year we launched the Buckingham Society Design and Conservation Awards with the aim of recognising people or organisations that have undertaken projects over the last two years that have enhanced and improved how Buckingham looks. We believe that there are many people and organisations around the town who have taken a lot of care and put in a lot of time and effort to try to ensure that their part of the town looks good. This benefits everybody in Buckingham and the Society wishes to recognise their efforts with these awards.

The awards will be presented on Buckingham Civic Day, Saturday June 22nd, outside the Old Gaol at 10.00. We will be presenting ten certificates and the projects, listed below, range from the University's Vinson Building, through some very fine individual house restoration work to major conservation projects such as Stoneleigh House and Villiers. There will also be recognition for the person who looks after the gardens of the almshouses in Church Street and the group of people who form the Railway Walk conservation Group. As you can see, a very wide range of projects but all with a similar outcome; to keep Buckingham looking good.

So, please come along to the Old Gaol on June 22nd and help us to celebrate our lovely town. Who knows, the sun might have started to shine again

Buckingham Society Design and Conservation Award Nominations

- The Vinson Centre - a very well-designed building that enhances the area and provides a new public facility at that end of the town
- The former NatWest building - the conversion has turned a previously uninteresting building into a fine addition to Buckingham's main street and created an unbroken period facade that enormously enhances the townscape
- The Mitre pub - internal upgrade and improvements to what is believed to be Buckingham's oldest existing pub. Also extension to the garden including the planting of three trees.
- 1 and 1A Ford Street - conversion of a former outhouse of the New Inn that was run down and nondescript into four residential units. The conversion shows great attention to detail and has enhanced the appearance of Ford Street.
- 4 Nelson Street (the Blue House) - a fine piece of conservation showing great attention to detail and, again, improving the look of the corner of the conservation area.
- 11 Bristle Hill - a long-term conservation project showing great attention to detail that enhances the view down Bristle Hill from Castle Street
- Stoneleigh House- a fine conversion of a town house into a boutique hotel that enhances and restores a fine building bringing it back to viable use and providing residents of Buckingham with a chance to enjoy the setting
- Villiers Hotel - high quality internal rehabilitation of the Old Town Hall
- Barton's Hospital almshouses gardens Church Street - the resident of no. 11 Church Street maintains the small gardens in front of the almshouses enhancing the view of one of Buckingham's most historic streets
- The Railway Walk Conservation Group - recognising the work done by the group in maintaining and enhancing the Railway Walk

Barts Bus

County Councillor Warren Whyte has been establishing a community bus scheme for Buckingham and the surrounding area, and in the last 12 months the project has started a pilot service to establish evidence of need and build up experience.

The project is at an exciting stage and is close to getting agreement for Buckingham's very own vehicle - a 14-seat minibus with tail lift for wheel chairs. This will transform the project into an effective working community transport scheme.

The committee is small and there is an opportunity for others to join the team, especially to help with a treasurer role, publicity and fundraising. Someone to recruit and maintain a volunteer driver base is also required. This is an ideal time to join to help shape the next stage. We are currently a project hosted by the Swan Community Hub, and the plan is to formally establish as a charity this summer. There will also be opportunities for volunteer drivers.



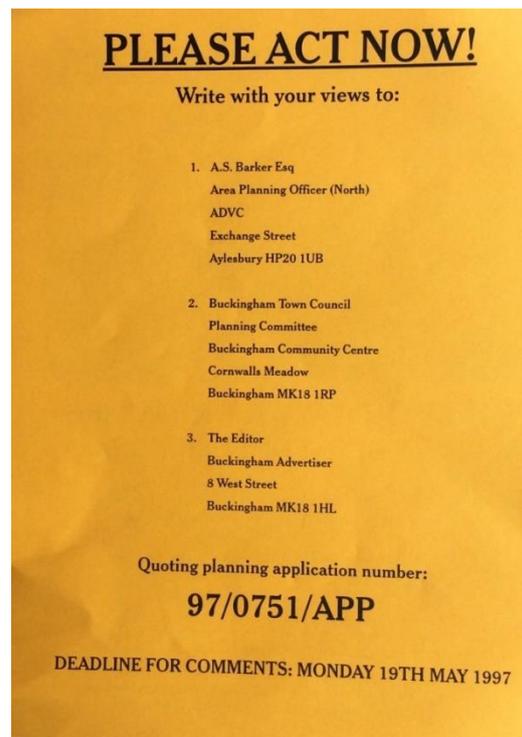
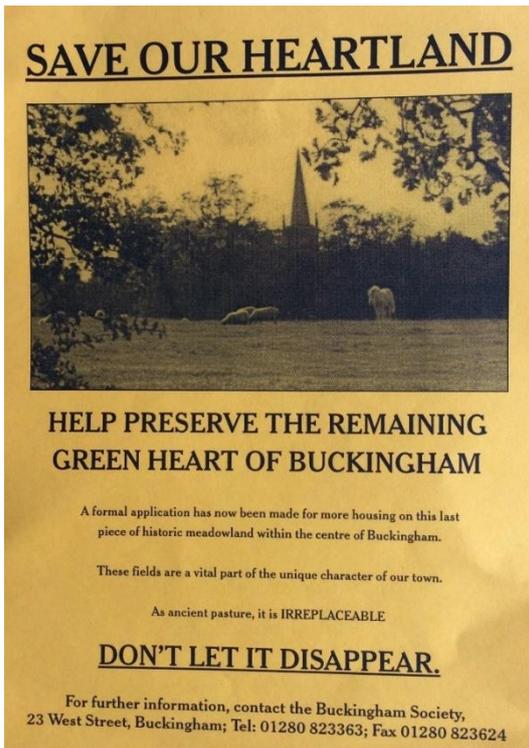
If you would like to join us Email bookings@mybart.org.uk or use the contact form on the website. Find out more about BART on the facebook page and the website. www.facebook.com/mybart.org.uk and www.mybart.org.uk

The Space in Front of the Old Town Hall – Kathy Robins

We have become increasingly concerned about vehicles parking on the paved area in front of the Old Town Hall. See the photograph below. Pedestrian access is often impeded and the view of this handsome building is blocked and cluttered by these vehicles. The owners of the the Old Town Hall complain that customers using the building for formal occasions such as funerals and weddings sometimes find their access blocked and a frail person leaving the building was recently bruised by a reversing van.

We should like to see removable bollards installed to prevent this parking. Let us know if you agree.





The Heartlands - Ed Grimsdale Local Historian and Friend of Buckingham

The images above show two sides of a leaflet produced by the Buckingham Society in 1997 as part of their campaign, mounted to save some of the Mediaeval "Ridge and Furrow" land, Buckingham's 'Green Lung' which lay between the Great Ouse and David Wilson Homes's Tudor Meadows development.

Saxon Buckingham was a high-density urban development which nestled in a defensible loop in the Ouse. Our old town contained very little that was green. Peasants would cross the river to tend their narrow strips of land. The concept of strips allowed each field to be sliced into portions, each having a mix of rich pasture, stony outcrops, and hot, sunny uplands. Were they to tend several strips, then farmers could practise crop rotation.

Planning – Carolyn Cumming

Planning Applications:

19/00924/APP Land Off Market Hill/West Street and 19/01564/APP 12-13 Market Hill

Top of the list of mounting concerns are these two proposals for development in the heart of the town. Together, they show a complete disregard for existing residents, adjacent listed buildings and have made no attempt to enhance what is the very heart of Buckingham's Conservation Area.

Both proposals amount to significant overdevelopment of the sites, an unacceptable density of both people and traffic and ignore the Vision & Design guidelines. On these grounds alone, both applications have been vigorously objected to. In the case of the land next to The Chantry Chapel and Old Latin House, there has been no attempt to include a footpath access between Overne Crescent and Market Hill, a condition that was stipulated in the 2007 Design Guide for the area. The Society agrees with the town council comments, which note the lack of attention to the supply of utilities, inadequate bin and waste storage, parking and delivery of service vehicles.

In addition, there is confirmation from Archaeology that these two sites have important medieval origins; a thorough investigation and report would be required before any development could take place.

In short, the significance of the areas and their relationship to the town centre has been ignored in hasty, ill thought plans that, instead of seeking to enhance facilities and amenities, would prove disastrous for our town.

19/01476/APP Erection of 11 Dwellings, Station House, Tingewick Road

If you have walked past Station House on the continuation of the Railway Walk to Radclive, you will recall that this property, although somewhat neglected, is a fascinating reminder of Buckingham's railway heritage. Attractively sited in the middle of this verdant plot, it deserves sympathetic restoration. Previous proposals for the development of the site have included blocks of flats in varying numbers. The current proposal is for eleven dwellings but, in our view, these are of very non descript, "anywhere" design and, in the words of the Heritage Officer, would be "shoehorned in and swamp the significance of this heritage asset". The Society would very much like to see the property be given local listing status and the site retain the backdrop of mature trees and hedging.

19/01253/INF4 Adverts to buildings (Beefeater, Costa, Premier Inn).

The intensification of advertising signs that are proposed by the complex of these businesses, plus MacDonaldis, is leading to an American style 'Sunset Strip' along this stretch of London Road. What gives rise to further concern is that notification of the proposals are proffered as "not for consultation". How is it that such a proliferation of street clutter into the existing landscape is not a legitimate subject for local consultation?

Other News:

St Rumbolds' Fields

Saxon enthusiasts and Members will be pleased to note that the development along the Tingewick Road has adopted the Society's suggestion of *St Rumbold's Fields* as the site name! The street names within the development will have Saxon origins and Ed Grimdsdale and Ian Orton are working on a short explanation of the names chosen. These will then be incorporated into a leaflet and distributed to all new residents on the estate.

VALP/BNDP

We still await dates for next stage but any further consultation looks as if it will be limited to the **modified changes** – and not to the whole document. This final consultation is scheduled for the summer, following which the Inspector is likely to

consider the new representations made in the autumn of 2019 before issuing his final, binding, report.

We hear rumours that two options are being considered for the Expressway and both are looking at routes north of Winslow.

With regard to the review of the BNDP, we understand that discussions are taking place as to what level of support will be forthcoming from the new Unitary Authority.

Maids Moreton Site MMO006 Application 16/00151/AOP

The Maids Moreton and Foscoate Action Group have submitted a lengthy detailed document to the VALP Planning Inspector, asking that he re-consider its allocation within the VALP. Although detailed, it makes for interesting reading. You can find it by clicking on “examination documents” at:

<https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/examination-updates>

The relevant reference numbers are ED186A and ED186B.

The group, led by Kate Pryke, has made two presentations in Maids Moreton Village Hall (another one is scheduled for 15th June) and Kate has hosted two sessions for all interested parties at Foscoate Manor. Having consulted with a planning barrister, the Action Group are confident that a Judicial Review into the actual planning application can be sought. Clearly this is a huge and expensive undertaking. Fund raising is underway and if anyone feels they can contribute, however small, it would be enormously appreciated.

Contact Carolyn Cumming carolyn.cumming@googlemail.com for details.

Everyone on the Action Group says a huge thank you to The Buckingham Society for their donation of £100.00.

Green and open spaces – Ian Orton

Thanks to the foresight of previous generations Buckingham now has one of the most diverse mature treescapes of any small market town.

The planting activities of landowners and residents, especially during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, has endowed the town with a wide variety of mature native and non-native deciduous hardwoods, softwoods and shrubs planted both singly and in groups (e.g Maids Moreton Avenue, The Spinney/Castle House, Brookfield House/Royal Latin School and the Old and New Churchyards.

These have been supplemented by the planting associated with Buckingham’s parks and open spaces owned by various local government authorities and/or agencies acting on their behalf, e.g Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC) the former Buckingham Borough Council, the Buckingham Borough Development Company, Buckingham Town Council (BTC) Buckinghamshire County Council and the various agencies associated with water and drainage.

Buckingham's extensive areas of open space that also make a significant contribution to its distinctive character, not least because of the backdrop provided by the River Great Ouse. Few towns have something like the Heartlands, for example, that effectively brings the countryside right into what is more or less the town centre.

To showcase Buckingham's treescape the Society intends to develop walks, much in the style of the Town Trail. On 26 April around 20 Society members took part in the first of these walks which was curated by Michael Hunt, our own tree expert.



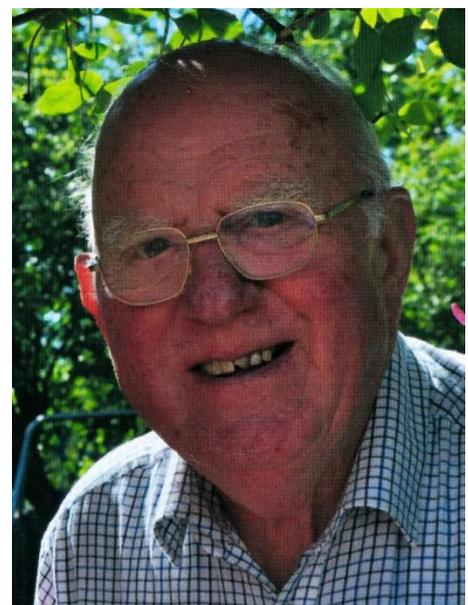
The walk, pictured left, encapsulated the town centre, the "new" churchyard, Church Street, the Old Churchyard, the University, Chandos Park, the Royal Latin School and the area between Bridge Street and the Waitrose car park before ending at the old cattle market.

I think everyone who joined the walk learned about our fantastic treescape. Michael Hunt has an encyclopaedic knowledge about trees in general and particularly Buckingham's trees. What made it especially enjoyable, were the contributions made by the participants. Una Macdonald displayed a wealth of knowledge and provided a good foil to Michael.

Many thanks to Bill and Kathy Robins as well as Michael for organising a great event. We plan to hold the next walk on Saturday 27th July at 10.00 am. Further details to follow later.

Ted Farmer

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the death of Ted Farmer, pictured right, who died on 4th April 2019. He was a longstanding member of the society who led our work on Green Spaces. He was tireless in his monitoring of those areas of Buckingham, reporting on any concerns about trees, the river and maintenance of our green spaces. He almost never missed a committee meeting and was a great support to the Buckingham Society generally as well as his colleagues on our committee. He will be greatly missed.



2019 Dates for your diary

Committee meetings 2019 - all start at 17.00hrs: 24th July
25th September
Annual General Meeting 21st November

Annual Lecture and Garden Party 25th July:- The subject of the lecture will be Claydon House and Gardens and will start at 6.30pm at the Radcliffe Centre. The garden party will follow at 7.30pm at Prebend House. Further details to follow.

Executive Committee:

Roger Edwards	Chair
David Child	Treasurer, transport, website and planning
Carolyn Cumming	Planning
Ed Grimsdale	Planning and society historian
Gill Jones	Membership secretary
Belinda Morley-Fletcher	Secretary
Nigel Morrison	Ent Fest representative
Roger Newall	Planning
Ian Orton	Green and Open Spaces, planning
Mark Parsonage	Website
Anthony Ralph	Planning
Kathy Robins	Newsletter Editor, planning
Colin Stocker	University representative

We should like to hear from you

Please give us some feedback - tell us what activities you would like The Buckingham Society to prioritise. 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, just contact us and come along.
www.buckingsamsociety.org.uk