



# The Buckingham Society

*Campaigning for a better Buckingham*

## Newsletter October 2019

### A word from our Chair

Whether or not you agree with their actions, there can be no doubt that the Extinction Rebellion group has forced the issue of climate change and the need for action to be taken to combat it into the headlines. While it could be argued that most governments and some major businesses are giving serious consideration to the threat that climate change poses to our planet, many, including the largest countries in the world, do not appear to be taking the issue seriously. This is despite the fact that the vast majority of scientists agree that, if urgent action is not taken, the consequences for the planet will be immense and that time is running out.

But, if governments cannot get their act together, then maybe it is up to local organisations to take the lead. It was encouraging to see back in July that Buckingham Town decided to declare a climate emergency for our town. Town Councillors agreed to draw attention to the issue and to draw up a climate change action plan aimed at seeing Buckingham being carbon neutral by 2030.



Following the Council's decision, Councillor Ruth Newell, Chair of the Council's Environment Committee, said, *"I'm really pleased that Buckingham Town Council is taking the lead in recognising that we need to take actions locally to address climate change. We look forward to working with local groups, as well as reviewing our own operations to take immediate action, and to plan for longer term changes, such as the vehicles we use. There are so many no-cost and low-cost options available that when combined with the funding available to community and other organisations we can start to play an increased role in combating climate change."*

After declaring the climate emergency, the Mayor, Mark Cole, signed the "Covenant of Mayors for climate and energy". This sets out a "step-by-step approach to how local authorities can assess their current emissions, the risks of climate change and create a sustainable energy and climate actions plan within two years".

The next step for Buckingham Town Council will be to find out more about where the Council is now and what changes can be made with the aim of having a draft action plan in place this year.

We should applaud the Council for their actions and, at the same time, perhaps consider how the Buckingham Society can contribute towards helping to preserve our planet.

The Society has a good record in this regard and has contributed enormously to ensuring that Buckingham has the amount of green space that exists throughout the town. For example, the Heartlands area to the south of the river is there in large part due to the efforts of the Buckingham Society at the time the houses were being built. Efforts led by the late Ted Farmer who was



indefatigable in keeping a close eye on what the developers were doing.

The new houses being built on the Tingewick Road site, named St Rumbold's Fields at the suggestion of the Buckingham Society, will also include green space and be linked along a green corridor to the rest of the town. And every planning application that is put before the Town Council is examined by the Society's Planning Group and suggestions are made around landscaping, sustainability, green space and so on.

Furthermore, the Transport Group looks regularly at planning issues with regard to sustainable travel via cycle routes, pedestrian areas and bus routes.

But could more be done? Should the Buckingham Society write its own environmental pledge? Should we become more vocal in showing support for measures aimed at reducing the threat of climate change? This is your society in all senses of the word. How can we help to ensure that our grandchildren have as good a place to live in as we do? Please let us know what you think.

## **Constitution**

Your Executive Committee has updated the Society's constitution. This is the first time the document has been changed since it was written in the 1970s and the amendments that have been made are intended to bring some of the wording up to date and to take account of changes that the Charity Commission has made over the years. At the AGM, your Executive Committee, will seek your agreement to the amended version which is available to view on the Buckingham Society website and can be accessed via this link:

[http://buckinghamssociety.org.uk/Docs/CONSTITUTION\\_2019.pdf](http://buckinghamssociety.org.uk/Docs/CONSTITUTION_2019.pdf)

If you have any queries, or wish to suggest any further amendments, please notify the Chair of the Society, Roger Edwards, prior to the AGM.

## Transport Report – David Child

Moreton Road Pathway - The Society has campaigned since 2015 for this pathway to be built see the report via the link.

<http://buckinghamssociety.org.uk/BStransdocs/BradfieldAvePath.pdf>

Below you can see pictures of the route in 2015 and the nearly finished pathway in October 2019. Pedestrians will be happy they can now walk safely from the bus stop at Bradfield Avenue to the Moreton Road phase 1 development. This will allow residents of the Bellway developments a method of getting to Western Avenue etc. without either need to cross the Moreton Road (twice) or risk the narrow mud path with a 5 feet drop into a ditch.



HGVs - The transport group have been communicating with BCC transport, the Town council and councillors. The outcome was that a discussion document was sent out to interested parties in June this year. The Society was encouraged by the response to the June report to prepare a detailed proposal for HGVs in Buckingham. The Society is currently putting the finishing touches to a proposal for the control of HGVs in Buckingham with the aim of the proposal being the basis for a meeting this year with BCC transport / BCC councillors and Buckingham Town Council representatives.

## Planning – Carolyn Cumming

**Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan** - We still await the dates for a 6 week consultation on the main modifications proposed by AVDC. This was scheduled to take place in October-November 2019 but there is still no definitive timetable for either the final stage of consultation or adoption of the plan. Among the modifications proposed, it appears that site BUC051 (300 houses off Brackley Road) has been withdrawn in favour of 420 houses on Osier Way (BUC046). In line with the Inspector's requirements to locate more development adjacent to Milton Keynes, sites to be known as Salden Chase and Shenley Park have been identified as locations for 3,362 dwellings.

AVDC also appear to have revised the annual housing build target upwards from 1370 to 1430 and are looking to increase that figure in order to retain the quota + 5% buffer.

BUC043 remains in the plan (Moreton Road 130 houses), as does MMO006 (Maids Moreton 170 houses), unless the Inspector himself takes seriously the submission from the Action Group fighting the proposal.

**Planning News** - Pightle Crescent Garages - The Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust have made a proposal to demolish the garages and erect 9 modular (pre-fabricated) dwellings. Although this is not a formal application, they presented their ideas at a consultation last August. The site is squeezed between a belt of woodland and the Pightle Crescent flats. The 2 storey dwellings with an open car port underneath make the site feel cramped and would be likely to lead to parking and litter issues for both existing proposed residents. However, the proposals are an innovative way of tackling low cost housing and the planning group thought that if a reduction in numbers could generate more space and introduce some softening landscape, it could be a neat solution to a brownfield site.



19/03398/APP Oddfellows Hall, Well Street - Plans were submitted to convert this hall into student accommodation, a proposal that has met with universal criticism. With 9 double rooms and associated facilities, overcrowding would be an obvious issue since the building is poorly sited in relation to neighbouring properties, with limited access posing

further fire risks. The movement and lifestyles of students would pose an unacceptable intrusion into the amenity of residents in Well Street.

19/02152/AAD: Advertisement signage for Costa Coffee Drive Thru, Beefeater Restaurant and Premier Inn - This site on the London Road adjacent to Lace Hill is currently being transformed into a motorway style complex, accompanied by a plethora of corporate signage. In particular, the Costa Drive Thru, for which no less than 14 individual signs are considered necessary, received particular criticism from the Society's Planning Group and the Town Council. Thanks to the objections raised, an additional advertisement pole (10 metres in height!) has been withdrawn, although a totem pole advertising all three businesses will be erected at the entrance.

Do we really need fourteen signs to tell us where and how a takeaway coffee is available? In this case, the company in question, Whitbread, justifies their necessity as being "critical" for the viability of the business. Given their proximity to a residential development, it is disappointing that a more sympathetic "branding" could not have been adopted. But should their need for promoting their business take precedence over residential amenity?

We raise these questions because we believe that local distinctiveness matters. In 2021, the Town Council and the Society will combine forces to mark the 20<sup>th</sup>

anniversary of Buckingham's Vision & Design Guide and seek to reinforce its relevance within the updated Neighbourhood Plan. One of the key principles behind the 2001 document was to maintain the town's individuality and encourage innovative design within new developments that respected this objective. There are some good examples to follow from independent local companies (e.g. Wipac, Buckingham Colour Press, Swan Pool) but sadly the national 'Corporates' hide behind their Head Offices' "one size fits all" mantra, insisting that their branding logos are of vital importance regardless of the locality. Personally, I think this is tantamount to bullying. What do Members think about this?

18/07235/AAD Signage relating to the McDonalds Restaurant - We note that the original planned 31 signs have been reduced to 12! Also, the 12 metre totem sign reduced to 6 metres. We acknowledge these minor improvements.

### Richard III Coin Appeal



You may have read recently about the finding of the Richard III Half Angel coin locally and that the team at the Old Gaol is trying to raise the money to buy it for the museum. Few of these coins were made and there are now only seven known examples of the coin in the world, none of which are on permanent public display. The Old Gaol team aims to keep this historic find within the town and display it in the museum.

The last time one of these coins was auctioned it sold for somewhere around £50,000 and the Old Gaol fund raisers need to raise a five-figure sum by the end of the year. A local interest in keeping hold of the coin needs to be demonstrated and so the more local people that contribute towards the appeal, even with small donations, the more chance there will of the coin remaining in Buckingham. Pledge forms are available from the Old Gaol.

### THE ANNUAL RIVER RINSE – Anthony Ralph

The annual river rinse took place over two Sunday mornings; 22nd September and the 6th October. Those taking part included the Stowe Sub-Aqua Club, Buckingham Town councillors, Town Council staff and members of the public. Apart from general debris, several interesting finds were made on



the first section from Cornwalls Meadow car park to the Chandos Road car park. These included a bike, a football, a chair and of course a shopping trolley (no river rinse is complete without a shopping trolley). Not to be outdone the second section from Tanlow Mill to Fishers Field revealed a computer printer as well as copious quantities of weed and tree branches, together with the more of the usual rubbish.

Not everyone is expected, indeed is not encouraged, to actually enter the river, but most of us armed with 'lazy tongs' and black plastic bags patrolled the riverbank alongside the river team, picking up sizeable numbers of drinks cans, bottles and fast-food packaging.



The fact that the Town Council needs to hire a skip to hold the combined collection speaks volumes about how important this activity is.



## Second Tree Walk

Our second tree walk took place on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> July. Michael Hunt's fascinating and informed commentary made the event as enjoyable as the last, despite the showery weather.

We plan to hold another walk in Spring 2020. If anybody has any suggestions for other such Society activities, please let us know.

## The Annual Lecture and Garden Party

We were far luckier with the weather at the Annual Lecture and Garden Party on 25<sup>th</sup> July. The lecture "Claydon House, Now You See it – Now You Don't" was given by National Trust volunteers Glynis Warlow and Dick Carter, pictured right with Roger Edwards the Chair of the Society.



## Geoff Shaw

Sadly, Geoff Shaw, Chair of the Society from 1995 until 1998, died on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2019. Geoff assisted in setting up the framework and constitution of the society to enable it to achieve its goals as a charitable organisation. Carolyn Cumming in her tribute to him at his funeral said, "These tributes today confirm how his combination of passion, commitment,

willingness to always try something new and his love of this town make him an unforgettable figure”.

## Gillian Smith, Tony Webster and Ron Buckingham

It was with great sadness that we heard of the deaths of Buckingham Society members Gillian Smith, Tony Webster and Ron Buckingham, all of whom were long standing members of the society.

## Date for your diary

### Annual General Meeting Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2019

6.00pm            Drinks and canapes Chandos Road Building rooms 4/5  
6.30pm            Annual General meeting Sunley Lecture Theatre  
7.30pm            Talk by Professor Robert Cumming "A Presidential visit to Buckingham". Describing the visit by John Adams and Thomas Jefferson (who became the second and third Presidents of the United States of America) to Buckingham, in April 1786, what they did when they got here, and where they stayed. It was part of a tour they made together, setting out from London, and getting as far as Stratford-upon-Avon.

## 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
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](mailto: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.buckinghamssociety.org.uk](http://www.buckinghamssociety.org.uk)