



# Maidenhead Civic Society

Estd. 1960

# NEWS

Issue 3/23

Aug 2023



*Braving the elements to promote the Civic Society  
at Maidenhead Festival*

Visit our website: [www.maidenheadcivicsoc.org.uk](http://www.maidenheadcivicsoc.org.uk)

# Editorial

Over the last couple of years we have seen offices on business parks throughout Maidenhead being converted into residential flats under the guise of permitted development.

Whenever a Local Plan is developed meetings take place with consultants and neighbouring authorities on how best to deliver the amount of housing and employment required for future growth.

Office sites on business parks should remain for employment use, otherwise this change will become irreversible. It is a sad trend that has become more apparent in recent years in Maidenhead, with Cordwallis Industrial Estate and Vanwall Business Park office employment sites disappearing to residential development. The pandemic allowed more working from home and offices have become empty building shells, with the knock-on effect on small businesses losing trade from office workers.

This has to change and the way this can be reversed takes time. The way to make this change is to introduce an 'Article 4' direction on business parks to stop offices being converted into flatted accommodation.

An 'Article 4' direction is a piece of legislation that requires consultation before implementation. The Local Authority has to apply to the Secretary of State that they wish to consult on stopping these conversions taking place under permitted development. If the Secretary of State agrees to the consultation it can take a year; at the end of the consultation; if residents agree, it will be difficult to ignore public feedback and the direction could be implemented. It should then be extremely difficult to convert the offices to residential development.

However, in the meantime many more offices can disappear on the business parks replaced with residential flats. The knock-on effect will be in future years when new office developments are required: where do they get built as it is unsustainable to keep working from home?

From a wellbeing perspective there is a need to communicate face-to-face, with fellow colleagues within an office business environment. Therefore, there is a need to retain our office business parks for the future.

If you know any young people who feel passionate about protecting our environment and have a view about protecting Maidenhead for future generations please encourage them to become members of Maidenhead Civic Society so they can influence and make real change to our local community.

*Derek Wilson MBE, Interim Chair*

# Planning Matters

Major planning applications have been limited in recent months, so we will start with an update on the appeal by Bellway Homes to demolish **Mattel House** on Vanwall Business Park and construct a total of 91 flats in blocks up to 5 storeys in height. As mentioned in our last newsletter, this office block was previously granted Permitted Development change of use for conversion into 28 residential units within the existing structure. Subsequently, in mid-2022 a new application was submitted to increase the redevelopment to 91 dwellings within a rebuilt, much larger, structure following demolition of the existing block. Regretfully, RBWM exceeded the permitted time limits for making a decision on the application. In part the Royal Borough may have been addressing issues relating to the potential loss of an employment site, but the lost use as offices was already a fait accompli because of the previously permitted change of use. Anyhow, the procrastination gave the opportunity for an appeal, which has subsequently been allowed. The Inspector believed that the Royal Borough had not made an adequate case for refusal, including considerations relating to employment opportunities. A regretful outcome. It is understood that rather belatedly RBWM intend to apply for Article 4 protection which restricts the rights to Permitted Development and will ensure that future office change of use has to go through the due planning process.

In our last newsletter we also referred to the proposal to use the listed **Maidenhead Court Boathouse** near Boulters Lock as a nursery/preschool. Apparently as no change of use is required from the existing offices, the only required application is for the installation of a heat pump and cooling plant with associated screening. This application has been permitted. The Conservation / Heritage officers at RBWM seem relaxed about the proposals so it seems that the new nursery school will be going ahead.

On a positive note, the proposals to add a further two storeys to the office block known as **Thames House** at 14 Marlow Road has been refused for a second time. Permitted change of use of the existing building to create 40 flats remains, but the two subsequent applications to add two storeys of either 33 or 27 flats has been refused.

**Belmont Place** is yet another office block (on the corner of Belmont Road and Hargreave Road), and in 2021 was allowed permitted change of use to 18 residential flats. However, it has subsequently increased the number of dwellings to 22 within the defined office space. Now it is proposed to create three additional flats in the undercroft space intended for parking. These are new flats which require full planning permission. They all achieve the minimum living space standards – just. However, they are short of natural light, with small windows, have a poor outlook and no amenity space. Whilst this may regrettably be acceptable for office conversions it is not a suitable standard for new dwellings. Hence, we are objecting to this additional proposal as substandard overdevelopment.

In mid-July a decision was made on the future of the Spencers Farm development of 330 homes and a three-form entry primary school. The Maidenhead Development Panel has refused the application unanimously, in spite of the planning officers recommending the application be permitted. The site is clearly earmarked for development within the Borough Local Plan, and the proposals include the provision of up to 40% of affordable homes (mainly flats) to make the scheme more appealing. It is very likely that the proposed development will go to appeal. We have always been against the development of this Green Belt site, which is part of the buffer between North Maidenhead and Cookham. In particular, it suffers from very poor access with only one entry point – onto Cookham Road near the railway bridge over the Marlow branch line.



A second access point is required. In addition to the new residential traffic, the school will have more than 500 pupils and up to 100 staff – a potential traffic nightmare at drop off/pick up time. Significant flood amelioration work is required because much of the site has been prone to flooding. The site can only be described as marginal in terms of suitability for development but that may well be decided at appeal.

There has been a consultation on the proposed office building on the SW corner of the development now known as **One Maidenhead** – previously called The Landing or The Hub. This location is a landmark site at the junction of Queen Street and King

Street facing the Railway Station. The original hybrid application for this development included two office buildings in addition to the cluster of multi-storey residential blocks totalling 429 dwellings that now characterise our townscape. This revised office building is only six storeys in height and attempts to deliver the latest in building design and sustainability. It will add to the high-end and quality office space on offer in Maidenhead and help address the loss of office employment capacity created by the change of use of offices to residential elsewhere in the town. Full planning application has not yet been submitted, but we are broadly supportive of the scheme, though it's a shame about the tower blocks.

In the last newsletter we carried an analysis of the annual **Authority Monitoring Report** on Housing. This was published by RBWM to cover the year up to March 2022. You may recall that there was a total of 3,331 “dwellings” in the pipeline. In view of the size of this number we have long asked for a breakdown, especially to establish the number of flats still to be delivered. Within the report, Section 9.5 under Housing states: “The total outstanding unimplemented housing commitment as of 31st March 2022 was 3,331 dwellings”. This is a very large number considering only 288 were delivered in the reported period and the target for the year to March 2023 is only 400. Is it just possible that the 3,331 figure is not “dwellings” as stated but “applications” – extensions, fenestration, tree work etc? This is even more reason to require an analysis of this pipeline data. Furthermore, how many applications are duplicated, lapsed and never get implemented?

*Martin McNamee*

## **IDEAS GALORE AT TOWN TEAM LAUNCH**

An inaugural meeting of the new Town Team was held at the end of May, hosted by Maidenhead town manager, Robyn Bunyan.

As constituted, the Town Team will not have any direct influence on strategy, policy or planning but will aim instead to harness community effort to undertake initiatives to make Maidenhead “a better place to live, work and visit”. It is backed by a budget, of £30,000 over three years.

Around 70 individuals and groups had expressed interest, and almost 30 attended. A good number were just concerned locals wanting to help improve the town. Several were newcomers living in the new developments. Among the organisations represented were Craft Coop, Filling Good, Good Gym, Maidenhead Festival, Maidenhead Town Partnership, Nicholson Centre, People to Places, Regen Group and Rotary Clubs, as well as the Civic Society which was represented by Lisa Curtin, Jane Wright and myself.

There was palpable enthusiasm amongst the attendees who came up with a host of ideas. Robyn Bunyan was looking for “quick wins” and several emerged in a mainly ‘green’ wish-list. A follow-up meeting on August 1<sup>st</sup> is set to decide whether a



community planting scheme – making use of the many vacant planters to brighten up the town centre – can muster enough support to be the Town Team’s first project.



*Above: some of the eager participants. Society members Lisa Curtin and Jane Wright are respectively fourth and fifth from the left in the front row*

*Below: Robyn Bunyan capturing all the ideas*



*Bob Dulson*



# Heritage & Environment

## PROBLEMS WITH THE GREEN WAY

You may have seen in the Advertiser our letter and photos of the flooded section of the Green Way under St Cloud Way. This is a longstanding problem due to a cable buried in the stream bed in 1992 – a long time before the waterway was created.



*The flooded section of the Green Way in mid-April 2023*





*Walking on the flood wall 14<sup>th</sup> June 2023*



*Ditch being dug for cable in the stream bed in 1992*

When the waterway was constructed, it was not possible to dredge the area where the cable and water pipe (further north) were buried to the same depth as elsewhere and



therefore instead of the flood wall being built as specified in the application, a “temporary” brick wall was built there instead. The brick wall leaks and so to date most of the water was collected via a set of drains and removed by a pump. The recent disaster that saw people walking along the top of the flood wall is due to the fact that the electricity supply to the pump has not been working for months. Apparently, a mobile pump has been used recently to get rid of some of the water. In addition, the shallower water over this section has resulted in the Waterways workboat hitting the bottom causing damage to the propeller.

This situation is very unsatisfactory and committee members from both this Society and Maidenhead Waterways had a meeting with Cllr Jack Douglas recently to discuss the matter. The cable (and water pipe?) need removing. We will have to see whether the new cabinet is more effective than the old one in making things happen.

## **Volunteers Maintaining the Waterway**

*Richard Davenport*, Chairman of the Friends of Maidenhead Waterways writes:

Waterways volunteers have commenced a programme of work to protect and repair the timber capping along the banks of the restored waterway channel between York Road and the GWR.

RBWM’s contractors Tivoli do not maintain the waterway banks and have allowed wet foliage to lay on the wood, causing parts of it to prematurely decay. Some sections are badly damaged and already need to be replaced, despite their construction being only a little over 5 years ago. The specification when the waterway was restored promised a 20-year life for the timber .... provided it was properly maintained.



*A badly decayed section of timber which has completely broken down and will need replacing*



*Left: Volunteer Jordan Tolner working to fill part of the prepared trench with gravel*

*Below: A completed section of the 'French Drain', now protecting the timber toward the GWR*



Volunteers are cutting back the undergrowth hanging over the timber capping to allow a trench to be dug, lined and filled with gravel to create a 'French Drain' to protect the timbers. This will allow the wood to more easily dry out, reducing the risk of premature decay. Just under half of the channel length has so far been completed, with a trench dug, flash band added to protect the rear of the timber edge, a weed barrier membrane installed and the trench finally filled with – to date – 0.3 tonnes of gravel...!! So just another 1.3 tonnes to go...!!



## THE HISTORY OF OCKWELLS MANOR

### The Book Launch at Taplow Court

The launch of the new book “*Ockwells Manor – A history of the House and its Occupants*” published by the Society, and featured in the May Newsletter, took place at Taplow Court, the international base for SGI-UK, on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2023. We are very grateful to Robert Harrap, General Director of SGI-UK, and his team who ensured that it flowed seamlessly, and to our own members who acted as escorts for our patron and MP Theresa May, and the Mayor, Christine Bateson; heated and served canapes; and poured wine and soft drinks for all the guests.

Guests were also invited to visit the replica Ockwells Manor built by William Henry Grenfell as his estate office.



*Part of the 1990 Ockwells exhibition in the Norman Hall together with a banner of the Norreys coat of arms*



*Society members helping:  
l to r: Christine Jones, Eileen Goford, Ann Darracott, Joyce Delasalle, Bob Dulson, Sally Somerville, Angela Dulson and Sue Ross. Missing are Peter Goford and Tim Burt*





*Speeches were made by Robert Harrap; our patron, Theresa May MP, who also wrote the foreword for the book, and by Ann (the author)*



*Guests enjoying a drink and nibble after the speeches – and hopefully about to buy a copy of the book!*





*The Mayor of RBWM chats to Society Chairman Derek Wilson; Theresa May talks to Robert Harrap of SGI-UK, whilst Committee member Tim Burt is in background, acting as our sommelier for the evening!*



*Mike Stubbs buying a book. When he was a Planning Officer for the National Trust he led the NT's resistance to the 2010 attempt to lift the covenant on the field opposite the house – an effort Ann helped with*

## Brian Stein

On a sad note, the “high” of the celebration of the book launch was shattered by our soon learning that only three days later, on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> May, the owner of Ockwells Manor, Mr Brian Stein, had passed away, at the age of 80. Over the years he had been very generous in allowing frequent access to Ockwells to further our research.



Born in South Africa in 1943, Mr Stein served in the Israeli army as a paratrooper before coming to London at the age of 21. He owned the Maxwell's restaurant chain and managed a commercial property portfolio. In 2018 he was appointed as the Chairman of the Guards Polo Club, having been a member since 1987, and was patron of the Ockholt polo team.

## THE MILLENNIUM WALK

### Waymarking the Hurley to Maidenhead Riverside Route

Members may remember we celebrated the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the inaugural walk of this route in 2020, led by our patron, Theresa May MP. Last December, in conjunction with East Berks Ramblers, we approached the borough's Local Access Frum (LAF) with the proposal that the route be waymarked – both the main route and the link across to Marlow. This was given the go-ahead and a small group from both societies began surveying each route. Funding for the main route has come from our society, the Ramblers, together with some help from the Royal Borough's Parish Paths scheme and Rotary Bridge. The Marlow Link will be done when more funding is obtained.



Society Committee member Tim Burt has done a wonderful job collating and ordering the required materials and we hope that the main route will be waymarked in August. The Millennium Walk broadly follows the northern boundary of Maidenhead from Pinkneys Green to the Thames, so the work will be complete certainly by the Boundary Walk at the beginning of October. (The pink dots on the disc mark nail positions.)



# Events

## VISIT TO MAIDENHEAD HERITAGE CENTRE

**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023, 7pm**

We have organised a private tour of the Maidenhead Heritage Centre, which is in Park Street. The tour will include a talk on how the history of our town is curated (which is more complex than most people realise!), as well as Maidenhead's (unknown) motor industry; Stone Age and Roman times; how transportation being the reason Maidenhead came into being; and the carriage trade and Brunel. Upstairs, the talk will be more specifically about the history of ATA and also a demonstration of the Spitfire simulator. There will be an opportunity to book the simulator for another day at a discounted price.

The tour is free, but a donation to the Heritage Centre can be made on the day. As we are limited to a maximum of 25 people this will be done on a first come basis, but if the numbers exceed this we will be able to book another evening later in the month. To reserve your place please email Joyce Delasalle on [joyce@delasalle.me.uk](mailto:joyce@delasalle.me.uk) or phone on 07917 876145

## LILLIBROOKE REVISTED

In April 2016 we visited **Lillibrooke Manor** for a tour of the site and afternoon tea. Since then, a lot of work has been undertaken and on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> July this year 43 members and visitors were given a very warm welcome by Alys of Lillibrooke Manor for a tour of the grounds and buildings, followed by a delicious afternoon tea.



*Half the group poses whilst the others tour the house*



It was amazing to see how they had transformed the Tudor manor house (grade II listed) and surrounding grounds, barns, stables and tack room since our visit in 2016. Lillibrooke is now a venue for weddings and other events enabling accommodation for multiple guests. It was so nice to see historic buildings being restored for future generations to appreciate. Truly an asset to our local community.



*Again this time: a hearty afternoon tea*

### **Lillibrooke Manor – before and after renovation**

Lillibrooke Manor house (Grade II listed) dates from the Tudor era and I think was most likely built in the mid-C16th when John Englefield held Lillibrooke and his elder brother, Sir Francis Englefield, lived with his wife, Katherine, a descendent of John Norreys Esquire, in nearby Ockwells Manor house. Both houses feature Tudor arch stone chimney pieces and wood panelling.

The manor house was part of a farm, originally called Lowbrooks, but by 2015 the manor house and adjacent farm buildings had been sold and Lillibrooke became a events/wedding venue. Considerable renovation has taken place and the photos below show the manor house in 2015. The Society first visited in 2016 and again this year.





*The west front - note the small porch has moved!*



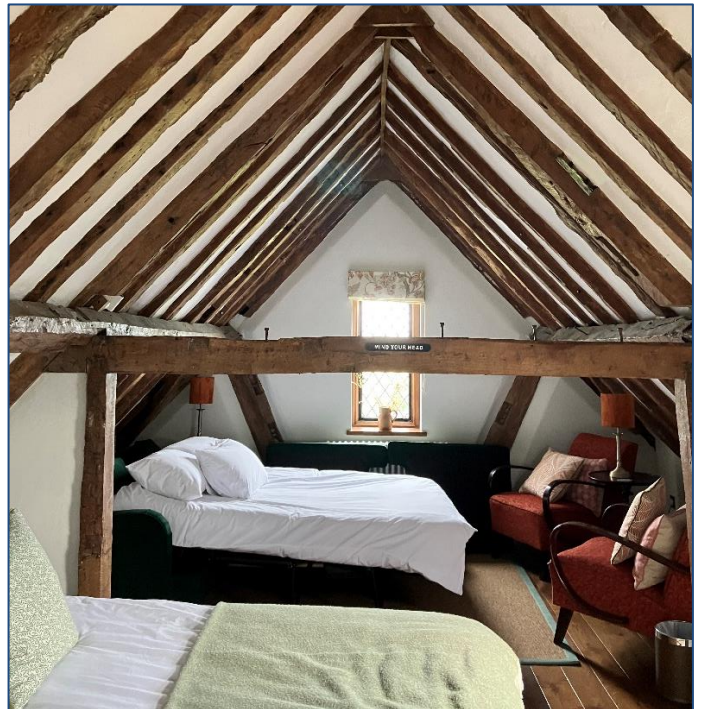
*In 2015 the door to the small porch, all of uncertain date, had the initials BES on the inside latch - it's a mystery!*







*In 2015 the house had recently been a family home; this room was adjacent to the then kitchen. In 2023 it is a comfortable sitting room*



*In 2015 the loft was empty whilst in 2023 it is a young person's bedroom*



*In 2015 this downstairs room was largely empty whilst in 2023 it has been transformed into a dining/meeting room*

The Society takes an interest in Lillibrooke partly because of its proximity to Ockwells. The future of the latter manor house is now uncertain for, as noted above the current owner, Mr Brian Stein has recently died and so it is likely to go back on the market at some point. Further, an accidentally discovered September 2022 report, funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) addressed to Slough Council and RBWM, entitled *Potential Locations for Development*, has alarmed both our Society and Cox Green Parish Council. The locations include putting **400 houses** in the field between the two manor houses! Ironically MHCLG's stated aim is "to create great places to live and work and **to give more power to local people to shape what happens in their area**" (Ann's emphasis). Wonder when they were going to tell us about it!!

## EVENTS VOLUNTEERS

As we have been able to start our events programme again, we are looking for volunteers willing to organise events for our members. We need a little group that can bring new ideas for events, talks and anything new for all ages. If you would like to join this exciting new team please contact: Joyce Delasalle, telephone 07917 876145 or email [joyce@delasalle.me.uk](mailto:joyce@delasalle.me.uk).

## MAIDENHEAD ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY (MAHS)

Society members may also be interested in the following talks in 2023 organised by Maidenhead's local history and archaeology group:

August 30<sup>th</sup>, Tony Wilmott: "Richborough: Roman Gateway to Britannia"

September 27<sup>th</sup>, Simon Durnford: "From Crusaders to Freed Slaves: the (Somewhat Quirky) Military Knights of Windsor"

October 25<sup>th</sup>, Heather Adams: "The Men in the Life of Jane Austen"

November 29<sup>th</sup>, Graham Barker: "The Rebel Emperors of Britannia – Carausius and Allectus"

December 13<sup>th</sup>, Jill Evers: "Turkish Delight"

These talks are generally held at the United Reformed Church, West Street, Maidenhead (7:30 pm for 8:00 pm) and live-streamed via Zoom ("doors" open 7:50 pm). Ticket prices are: live at the URC - £2 to MAHS members, £5 to others; Zoom - free of charge to MAHS members, £3 to others. Booking for all MAHS talks and events is via TicketSource at:

[www.ticketsource.co.uk/maidenhead-archaeological-and-historical-society](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/maidenhead-archaeological-and-historical-society).

For details of our talks or information about membership, please email [paul@c21networks.co.uk](mailto:paul@c21networks.co.uk)

## MAIDENHEAD HERITAGE CENTRE

*"Isambard Kingdom Brunel – the Entrepreneur Who Made Maidenhead"*

Maidenhead Heritage Centre, in Park Street, has a new temporary exhibition on Isambard Kingdom Brunel. This opened on Wednesday 12th July 2023. Entry is free!

# Dates for your Diary

Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023  
**Guided Tour**

**Maidenhead Heritage Centre**  
7pm

## MAIDENHEAD CIVIC SOCIETY

Patron                                      The Rt Hon Theresa May MP

### KEY CONTACTS

Interim Chairman	Derek Wilson	01628 621176
Hon. Secretary	Eileen Goford	01628 638238
Hon. Treasurer	Peter Child	01628 632300
Planning Group	Martin McNamee	01628 623203
Projects	Ann Darracott	01628 620280
Newsletter & Website	Brian Darracott	01628 620280
Events		
Membership Sec.	Joyce Delasalle	01628 637342
Newsletter Distribution	Sue Ross	01628 626849



### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2023

All meetings are online via Zoom until June and then back to face-to-face for the rest of the year; times may vary.

12<sup>th</sup> January, 14<sup>th</sup> February, 14<sup>th</sup> March, 11<sup>th</sup> April, 9<sup>th</sup> May, 13<sup>th</sup> June, 11<sup>th</sup> July, 12<sup>th</sup> September, 10<sup>th</sup> October, 14<sup>th</sup> November, 12<sup>th</sup> December

The AGM will be held on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023 at 8.00 pm

**The closing date for copy for the next issue  
of the Newsletter is 13<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

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