



Maidenhead Civic Society

Estd. 1960

NEWS

Issue 3/26

Aug 2026



*The Commonwealth War Graves Commission HQ building in Marlow Road.
If you've ever wondered what goes on here come and find out
at our AGM in September. More on page 23.*

Visit our website: www.maidenheadcivicsoc.org.uk

Chairman's Piece

RBWM are carrying out a scoping consultation for another new local Plan. This consultation is running between 30 July through to 13 September 2026. RBWM are asking for your views in a questionnaire, which can be found on their website <https://www.rbwm.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/development-plan/new-local-plan/new-local-plan-scoping-consultation>

In addition to finding out views from local residents they are also requesting a call for sites, to allow residents, land owners, or developers to bring forward sites that can be considered in the development of a new local plan. It was only in February 2022 that the previous local plan was adopted for future development. The Government is keen for development plans to be brought forward every five years, but there are only so many sites available within the borough. These would have been considered before and will have been discounted for a number of reasons such as green belt, maintaining green gaps between settlements, agricultural land that is graded for only that type of use, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) etc.

The same developers will bring back those sites for reconsideration, thinking that there is an opportunity for development. This is not only happening here within the Royal Borough, but occurring at neighbouring authorities, as more pressure is coming from central Government to build and the numbers are continuing to rise.

Maidenhead Civic Society needs to be involved in this process as a statutory consultee, where we can voice our opinion and have a say on where these properties are likely to be built. Unfortunately, the Borough do not consider the Society as a statutory consultee and this is very short-sighted as our members can bring a wealth of knowledge in helping shape the borough for the future. We need to lobby the borough, similar to when Bob Dulson did when the Society was involved in the Maidenhead Area Action Plan. Let us know your thoughts.....

Derek Wilson

Annual General Meeting

The sharp-eyed amongst you will have noticed that this year's **AGM has been moved forward to September**. This is in response to several comments that late November, with its dark and probably wet evenings, is not the best time of the year to encourage members to come out. We hope this new date will prove more acceptable and we look forward to seeing you there.

66th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE MAIDENHEAD CIVIC SOCIETY

**To be held on Wednesday, 23rd September 2026
at 7.45 for 8.00pm, in the Bromley Room, Methodist Church,
High Street, Maidenhead**

The evening will start with a presentation by Maj. Brian Rogers about the history and work of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission; **see page 23 for more details.** The business meeting will follow after a break for tea/coffee and biscuits.

AGENDA

1. Introduction by the Chairman of the Committee
2. Confirmation of the Minutes of the 65th Annual General Meeting
3. Accounts for the year ended 31st May 2026 (see pages 8 and 9)
4. Annual Report for 2025/2026
5. Election of the Officers. To elect a Chairman, an Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer, who shall be Committee Members
6. To approve the election of Members of the Committee. *See note below.*
7. Any other business.

Election of Officers

Officers are elected for a term of one year but are eligible for re-election at the AGM. Nominations for the role of Chairman should be accompanied by a seconder and the consent of the nominee, and be with the Hon. Secretary prior to the AGM.

Election of Committee Members

There currently are eleven Committee Members: Eileen Goford, Chris Bristow, Peter Child, Brian Davies, Ann Darracott, Brian Darracott, Joyce Delasalle, Lisa Curtin, Jane Wright, Tim Burt and Derek Wilson. Under the terms of the Society's Constitution the Committee shall consist of eight to twelve Members including the Officers. One third of the Committee Members who are not Officers must retire each year and shall be eligible for re-election, subject to the Constitution of the Society. Accordingly, Lisa Curtin and Joyce Delasalle will retire, and offer themselves for re-election; there will consequently be one vacancies.

The Membership is invited to make nominations for the positions of Officers and Committee Members. The nominations should be accompanied by a seconder and the consent of the nominee, and be with the Hon. Secretary prior to the AGM.

MINUTES OF THE 65th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE MAIDENHEAD CIVIC SOCIETY

Held at 8pm on 19th November 2025 at the Cox Green Community Centre

Apologies for Absence: Chris Bristow, Bob Dulson, Sue Ross, John Steward. There were 19 attendees.

Accounts: presented by our treasurer, Peter Child. It has been a financially satisfactory, quiet year. There is £13,500 in the bank. The very good events were the highlight of the year. Very many thanks to Joyce. Book sales are very good. There are only 12 left. Financial Report was accepted. Proposed: Brian Darracott, Seconded: Martin McNamee.

Chairman's Annual Report: Appreciation was expressed to the Executive Committee: Ann Darracott - Heritage; Brian Darracott - Newsletter, Martin McNamee - chair of Planning; Eileen Goford – Hon. Secretary; Joyce Delasalle-Membership and Events; Peter Child - Hon. Treasurer; Chris Bristow - Facebook; Lisa Curtin - Instagram.

There were various events over the year including: dinner at Moor Hall; Talk on Flooding in Cookham Parish Hall by Professor Robert van de Noort, introduced by Baroness Theresa May. Work parties have replaced missing boundary stones and we have, as usual, helped marshal the Boundary Walk. We said goodbye to Tina Sell. The main area of concern in Maidenhead is the lack of parking - only 100 spaces for shopping in the Town Centre compared to parking in Bracknell.

Election of Officers: All current Officers proposed by Brian, seconded by Ann Darracott.

Election to Committee which can have 8-12 members: Martin, Jane and Tim all retired and offered themselves for re-election. Chris Bristow was elected to the Committee. Brian Davies will take over from Martin McNamee as chair of Planning. Martin has served for 18 years and in a speech said it had been a pleasure to work with the Planning Group.

AOB: None

The formal business of the AGM came to a close at 9:50pm, having started at 9:35pm.

The business meeting had been preceded by an excellent illustrated talk about the Maidenhead Neighbourhood Plan by Ian Rose and Andrew Ingram, co-chairs of Maidenhead Neighbourhood Forum.

ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE YEAR 2025-26

Our AGM is a time to reflect over the past year, and, as Chairman, I must first thank all our Committee and Group members whose efforts make sure all our activities and events go smoothly.

Planning

The role of the Planning Group has remained largely as before since Brian Davies has taken over as chair of the group from Martin McNamee. Planning applications and approvals or rejections are monitored on a weekly basis, but as before, only certain types of application are reviewed. It has been particularly noticeable how long certain contentious planning applications are taking before a planning officer provides a ruling. Since the last AGM, 13 planning applications have been reviewed. We objected to six, made proposals to amend or apply conditions to five, and endorsed two (the library and waterways). Three of those we objected to have been refused, one was withdrawn, and one related to potential minor modifications to an approved plan was granted. The remainder are still under review, most well past the determination date.

Regarding approval of schemes submitted over a year ago, notable cases are the Nicholsons Quarter, Lawnfield House care home (granted by an inspector) and a development of a 7-storey block of flats to the rear of the former post office. Whilst proposals to redevelop Sierra House at St Mary's Walk have been approved in principle, a protracted legal dispute with High St. tenants who are not being relocated is ongoing, with no sign of any resolution. There is a continuing but slowing trend to convert redundant offices to apartments, particularly in the areas which are not considered to be within 10 minutes walking distance of the railway station.

A letter has been published in Viewpoint in the Maidenhead Advertiser recording our concern that the plan for SW Maidenhead is not proceeding as originally intended and it is unclear as to exactly what infrastructure improvements will be made and when these will happen. The role of the "green spine" seems unclear and is confusing.

The recently introduced Planning and Infrastructure Act aims to deliver 1.5 million homes and accelerate critical green energy projects. Key changes include mandatory housing targets, streamlined green belt reviews ("grey belt"), and faster major infrastructure approvals. The tilted balance approach to housing projects means that there have to be compelling reasons for an application to be refused.

The Maidenhead Neighbourhood Plan 2024-2039 has now been endorsed and should give weight when certain planning decisions are made, particularly in conservation areas.

Maidenhead Bridge

It has been brought to the attention of the Committee that next year will be the 250th anniversary of this bridge. As a result, MCS will work with MMAHS and Maidenhead Heritage Centre to give this event prominence and hopefully provide an impetus for RBWM to undertake certain repairs and remedial work. The response from the council (Conservation and Highways) has so far been disappointing (or non-existent). There is a plaque on the abutment adjoining Bridge Gardens which was erected by the former Maidenhead and District Civic Society, and it is proposed to give this a clean and paint the lettering which provides a history of the bridge.

Projects

The Green Way: The long running saga of the leak onto this route at the A4 underpass due to a cable in the stream bed continues. Maidenhead Waterways Partnership Group have devolved responsibility to solving it to the Green Way Working Group. VirginmediaO2, who now own said cable, say it's active, but they don't know where it goes and they cannot release any information about it, referring us to the RBWM planning department. Lack of response from planning suggests the cable was put in without applying for permission.

North Town Moor: We continued to support the activities of the conservation group, *Make Space for Life*.

Heritage Trails online:

- 1) *Kings Heritage Trail* connecting Ockwells, Lillibrooke and Shottesbrooke has been tested. Currently it is a linear trail because of safety issues at Church Hill. A small circular family friendly walk has been added.
- 2) *Millennium Walk* is now fully waymarked. An online version is being developed, adding heritage information beginning at the Hurley end.

Spencer's Farm Development: We remain in touch with Bellway, the developer, regarding a diversion of the route of the Boundary Walk/Millennium Walk within their development.

Ockwells Manor: Only ten copies of the book about the history of the house remain. Ockwells is still being restored

Events

In September Professor Robert Van de Noort gave us a talk on Flood Risk Management in a time of rapid climate change. This was a very interesting and well attended talk as it was of great interest to many local groups.

At our 2025 AGM Andrew Ingram and Ian Rose from the Maidenhead Neighbourhood Forum explained where they were, the development of the Plan and the next steps.

In July held a lunch at Moor Hall and Brian Davies our Chair of the Planning Group gave a talk on “The History of Heathrow Airport”.

If you have any ideas of places you would like to visit please let me know as it is always possible that other members would be interested. Also if you have any friends or relatives that would be interested in joining or helping at any of our shows please contact me - Joyce Delasalle - 07917 876145, or joyce.delasalle@btinternet.com.

Membership

Figures for the 2025/26 year-end were:

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2026</u>
Total Membership	222	218	222	226	210	210	200
-							
Hon Members	18	17	18	20	20	20	17
Life Members single	37	36	37	32	31	30	28
Life Members Family	42	38	42	36	34	32	30
Single Members	75	74	75	78	72	75	74
Family Members	138	140	138	152	136	136	130
Corporate Members	2	2	2	2	2	1	1
<u>Total Headcount</u>	<u>312</u>	<u>307</u>	<u>312</u>	<u>320</u>	<u>295</u>	<u>294</u>	<u>280</u>

Unfortunately we have not been able to recruit any new members this year and have sadly lost a few members that have been members for many years. If you have any friends or relatives that would be interested please pass my details onto them.

TREASURER'S REPORT 2025-26

The annual accounts for the year ended 31st May 2026 are set out below.

The main points from these accounts are as follows:

There is a surplus of income over expenditure (including stock write down) this year of £638 compared with last year's surplus of £113. Once again, this year has been a relatively quiet financial year with no major projects undertaken. The increase in surplus has been generated principally by a reduction in expenditure (see below).

Income

Income was almost identical to last year – subscriptions including gift aid increased by £92, while interest income decreased by £76. Two successful events (the annual dinner and a talk on flood management) generated a surplus of £159. Sales of the Ockwells Manor book have dwindled. There are now only 11 books remaining in stock and it has been decided to write down the value of this stock to zero. If you want a copy, act now – there probably will not be any left next year.

Expenditure

Expenditure has decreased by £893. The main reason for the decrease has been the move to electronic publication of the newsletter, a reduction in cost so far of £328. This change took place halfway through the financial year so there will be a further reduction in expenditure apparent in 2026/2027. No expenditure was undertaken on the website this year, a saving of £300. "Major" items of expenditure were also lower this year; a new amplifier microphone was purchased for £149, whereas last year expenditure on the Guards Club gate (still working successfully) and the Millennium Walk signage came to £705. Donations include a well-deserved retirement gift for Martin McNamee, our Planning Group Chair for many years. The only significant increase in expenditure (£299) was the equally well-deserved farewell lunch for the distributors of the newsletter.

Balance of Funds

The Society accounts show bank funds in hand of £13908 compared to £13357 in the previous year, an increase of £551.

The current financial year has started satisfactorily.

Peter Child

MAIDENHEAD CIVIC SOCIETY - Charity No. 272102
Annual Accounts for Year ended 31st May 2026

<u>2024-2025</u>		<u>2025-2026</u>
INCOME		
75	Donations/Grants/Bequests	35
115	Surplus on sales of Ockwells Manor book	67
125	Surplus on events	159
2,509	Subscriptions Received During Year	2,594
529	Interest On Charities Deposit Account	453
592	Tax Refund On Gift Aid	599
3,945	Total	3,907
EXPENDITURE		
Administration		
238	General Expenses, Printing, Postage, Etc.	104
0	New amplifier microphone	149
511	Guards Club gate	0
1,208	Newsletter	880
0	Farewell lunch for distributors of the newsletter	299
162	Hire of meeting rooms	232
100	Donations	300
430	Subscriptions	430
433	Insurance	446
194	Millennium Walk signage	0
76	Ockwells Manor book - sundry expenses	17
180	Other Projects (Net Costs)	82
300	Website	0
3,832	Total	2,939
113	SURPLUS of Income over Expenditure	968
0	Write down cost of last 11 Ockwells Manor books	(330)
13,307	Balance Brought Forward	13,420
13,420	Balance Carried Forward	14,058
FUNDS		
1,860	Bank (Lloyds TSB)	1,957
11,497	Charities Deposit General Fund (CCLA)	11,951
(680)	Moor Hall lunch - income received in advance	(36)
0	Accrual for farewell lunch for distributors of the newsletter	(194)
72	Deposit for events	100
446	Insurance for the year paid in advance	450
(375)	Member subscriptions for 2026/2027 received in advance	(170)
600	Stock of books of Ockwells Manor (note A below)	0
13,420	BALANCE OF FUNDS	£14,058

Note on the book on Ockwells Manor

150 books printed at £30 each

Note A 31 May 2026, 11 (2025: 20) Books in Stock at £30 each, written down to £0

Peter Child - Hon. Treasurer - 1st July 2026

Planning Matters

Some of the many planning applications mentioned in the May newsletter have yet to be determined. There is now a vast backlog of planning applications awaiting a decision. The reasons for this will be explained in the November 2026 newsletter, together with possible measures to rectify the situation.

One of these delayed decisions relates to **Poundland 88 - 90 High Street**, submitted in May 2024 to demolish the rear of the building and build an 8-storey block facing West St. MCS objected because of the height overshadowing neighbouring properties. The application has now been approved, and the Planning Officer has stated that, as the 8-storey height is only one storey more than a neighbouring building, and is not visible from the High Street, it is acceptable. It seems that the overshadowing of neighbouring properties was not a reason to reject the application.

RBWM has reconfirmed that they intend to sell part of **Braywick Park** for use by **Maidenhead United FC**. We will comment in due course when a planning application is submitted for the relocated stadium later this year. Access will be from Vicus Way.

An application has been made to demolish **Cowley House and Cowley Lodge** in Ray Park Road (photo below), to be replaced by a block of 13 apartments. Demolition of a perfectly good building, previously used as a care facility, which adds to the neighbourhood environment and is sympathetic to this, should be avoided if at all possible. It is also in a floodplain, and the statutory biodiversity increase of 10% has not been achieved.



Cala Homes has submitted the details required by various conditions relating to the outline planning application for the first phase of the **Golf Club development**. One of these submissions relates to the “green spine” which runs through the golf club development. Upon studying this application, it became clear that the concept of a green spine has become fudged. The spine appears to be the principal point of access for 1,500 properties and the associated cars and delivery vans, two schools, a shop, medical centre, buses, refuse vehicles, construction lorries and vans, etc. Yet, there is a pretence that this spine is a delightful ecology-rich walkway reserved for cyclists, pedestrians and the occasional bus. Comments have been submitted to this effect, but as the council has a vested interest in getting this development approved and underway, these comments may be ignored.

The developer of the Haleon **site in Norreys Drive**, Firethorn, has submitted a planning application for two very large and one much smaller warehouse on a speculative basis. The application seeks permission to run 24/7 operations with deliveries and exports using articulated trucks. The site is in an area designated for industrial use. Residents are naturally concerned about the impact of noise and light pollution for 24/7 operations. Another issue which MCS has commented on is the suitability of the road network in the vicinity to serve continental-sized articulated lorries. The small roundabouts on Shoppenhangers Road are not sized to take such vehicles. Furthermore, these roundabouts pose a danger to cyclists, who are encouraged to use this form of transport to go to work, thus limiting the perceived need for parking spaces

The new proposal to build houses at **Kim in Altwood Bailey** has been rejected.

The application to self-build a 4-bedroom house in the back garden at **51 Switchback Road** has finally been approved, subject to a long list of conditions. Approval of this application opens the door for similar proposals to develop the back gardens of houses in the area.

The application to turn the **Boundary Arms pub** into a children's nursery has been refused, primarily on the grounds of a lack of parking. The Maidenhead Advertiser quoted the comments made by MCS regarding the application when reporting on the refusal.

A proposal to develop the **Costain House car park** has been submitted. The Costain House site has previously been given approval to be developed for apartments. The application for the car park site does not conform to the BLP in several respects, but the applicant seeks approval under the tilted balance legislation. The limited parking and the height of the proposed building are both adverse issues which would be partially ameliorated if the height were reduced by one storey and the proposed parking provision kept intact.

Another office car park site in **Norreys Drive (Highway House)** was selected as the site for a very large care home three years ago. Despite objections from us and a refusal from the council, the application has been granted on appeal.

Amazon MGM has submitted an application to enhance the **Bray film studios**. Although outside the Maidenhead boundary, this application will be of interest to Maidenheadians for three reasons: 1) A slight increase in traffic along the Windsor Road, 2) Employment opportunities in the vicinity and 3) Preservation and modernisation of listed Down House. On balance, the benefits for Maidenhead residents clearly outweigh the minor issues such as the small increase in traffic. However, some local residents are concerned about traffic, light pollution and construction noise and the Society will only lend its support to the application if Bray Parish Council is also supportive.

The **Maidenhead Neighbourhood Forum** has now been dissolved following the formal acceptance by RBWM of the Neighbourhood Plan 2024 – 2039. Former members of the Forum who are MCS members have been invited to review those planning applications which we choose to comment on for adherence to the Plan.

Attempts have been made to engage RBWM Highways Department in the upkeep of **Maidenhead Bridge**, so far with little success. Quotes have been obtained to clean and paint the lettering on the Civic Society plaque recording the history of the bridge on the Maidenhead abutment.

RBWM Council has just published an **Asset Management Framework**. They state, “By taking a long-term view of the council's property portfolio, the framework will help ensure council assets are aligned with service needs, identify where investment is required, improve the use of existing buildings, reduce unnecessary costs and ensure the estate continues to support high-quality public services as local needs evolve”. Of particular interest to Maidenhead residents will be the future of schools, car parks and most of all, the Town Hall and library, which were labelled “not fit for purpose” in 2020. A planning application has recently been submitted to install electrical trunking in the **library** and to undertake other unspecified remedial work. A report notes that this listed building is in poor repair. The dilapidated **Stafferton Way car park** is closed to enable an upgrade to its lighting, fire alarms, CCTV, and electrical systems. No planning application was submitted for this work. Lifts and a damaged cladding panel have yet to be repaired at the nearby **Vicus Way** car park.

The application to build a **crematorium** in Cookham, close to the Maidenhead boundary, has been rejected by a vote of RBWM councillors. Whilst Maidenhead residents may feel that a local crematorium is desirable, the proposed location was vehemently opposed by many Cookham residents.

Brian Davies

SIGNS OF THE PAST TIMES

In 2007, over 120 signs were removed by RBWM council in the Windsor, Maidenhead and Ascot areas, focusing on the gateway routes into the main town centre. Nearly twenty years later, it is now time to undertake a similar exercise. In addition, the condition of mandatory and advisory road signs also needs to be addressed.

The proliferation of signs is caused by:

1. Temporary housing development signs left in place.
2. Contractors' signage (e.g., Crossrail) left in place.
3. Temporary signs warning of a new hazard, such as a change in priority or a new roundabout. Under UK regulations, signs warning of new road layouts are generally expected to be removed within **3 months**.

There are also examples of badly placed road signs, superseded road and pedestrian signs, and signs that are either so faded or obscured that they are non-compliant. Foliage frequently hides road signs for much of the year. Local highway authorities and councils have a statutory duty to maintain traffic signs and road markings. The increasingly hot and bright summer days may be partly responsible for the more rapid deterioration of both road signs and markings. Here are some examples of faded, redundant, obscured, or badly placed signage. I am certain readers will be able to spot many others in the neighbourhood where they live or on routes they frequent.



You won't find Forest Bridge School if you follow this sign, two years after it moved.



School sign on the right-hand side of the road, red border to the triangle faded and almost invisible. Fortunately, most regular drivers are aware that there is a school nearby. The red warning sign of a new road layout was finally removed after over a year.



The empty red circle sign prevents vehicles from entering, and pedal cycles cannot be ridden but can be pushed. Vehicles should screech to a halt and turn round. Good that only a few motorists know the meaning of this sign. Better paint the number "40" on it!



Three signs showing the footway to Bray.



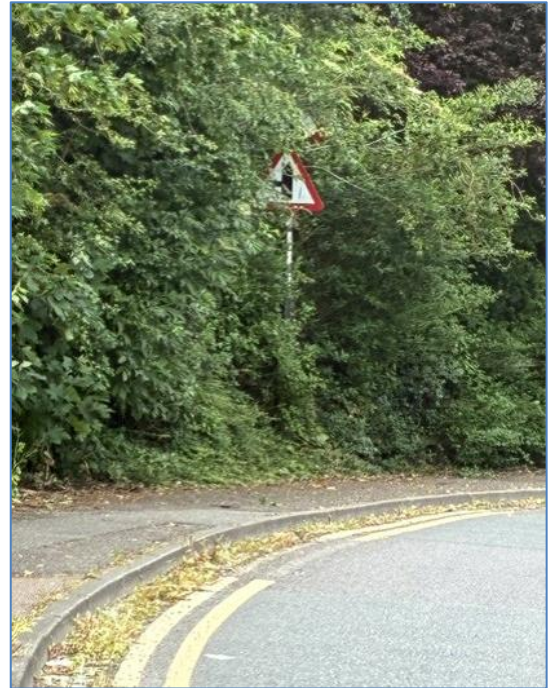
The Watermark apartments were completed in 2022. Behind is a yellow direction sign to Cooper Square apartments.



The Loftings were completed in 2019. The red border on the “give way” sign has completely faded. The give way sign on the opposite side of the road faces the wrong direction and has been in this state for over a year! This is on the busy Stafferton Link road.



A route to the Magnet Leisure Centre liable to flood. Some things never change, but where is the Magnet Centre?



Spot the “road narrows” sign. It is directly above the “road junction” sign, but is completely hidden.

The biggest culprit in sign proliferation is the large number of new housing development signs that remain in place long after the development is fully, or nearly fully, occupied. Signs should normally be removed within 3 months of 80% of the homes being sold. The council can charge developers the cost of removal if they do not do so when they expire.

RBWM has a webpage to report problems with street furniture. [Report a problem with street furniture | Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead](#).

Perhaps we should compile and submit a more comprehensive list – any volunteers?

Brian Davies.

Projects

INVASIVE SPECIES OF MAIDENHEAD

Non-indigenous invasive species from elsewhere in the world are bad for the natural environment as they compete, often very successfully, with indigenous species, sometimes suppressing them completely e.g. the grey squirrel.

This article is not exhaustive but does describe those plants and animals that the Society has had some dealings with in Maidenhead.

1) Invasive Plants: *Azolla* – a fern

Azolla covered the White Brook on Widbrook Common in February 2026. Dense mats block sunlight from submerged plants and thus deplete oxygen levels in the water.

Specially bred weevils are used as a biological control of the invasive *Azolla*. It is known that this weevil, originally from North America, is now naturalised in the UK. However, the British climate restricts the weevils activity hence the *Azolla* growth in February. The weevil bites a hole in the fern frond into which it lays an egg. The larva when it develops eats the fern voraciously until pupating in the frond and creating another adult weevil. Thus, the weevils clear the water surface of *Azolla*.

The Society contributed to the cost of specially bred weevils ordered by the National Trust and these were distributed in the White Brook in July. Interestingly, by then most of the *Azolla* had already been eaten. This suggests that naturalised weevils had produced larvae when the weather warmed and these ate the *Azolla*, prior to the distribution. However the more weevils the better!



February 2026 Azolla covering the White Brook



Left: July 2026 William Booth, Area Ranger of the National Trust (left) and Ian Rose of Maidenhead Waterways about to distribute weevils.

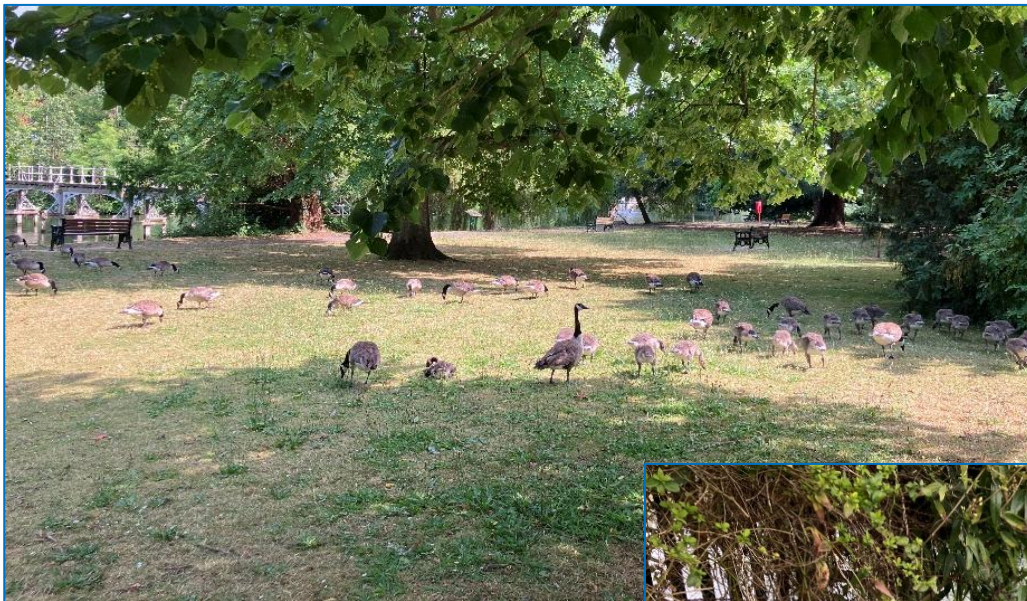
*Right: The tiny Azolla Weevil *Stenopelmus rufinasus*, just a few millimetres long*



Ian distributing weevils on the remaining patches of Azolla – the green plant covering the surface is duckweed (the three above photos courtesy of the Communications and Marketing Team, National Trust).

2) The Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Introduced from North America in the 17th century this wildfowl is a very efficient parent, outperforming most native species. The adults create crèches for multiple goslings which they move from one feeding spot to another. Guards Club Park was one such spot. They also produce a lot of excrement. After a couple of years of contacting the Royal Borough to clean it from the paths and having noticed that the geese and their flightless goslings were accessing the park via steps at its north end, the Society arranged for a gate to be fitted.



*Adult Canada Geese and goslings
in Guards Club Park*



Gate erected March 2023

The geese have attempted to squeeze through any gaps in the gate and adults can fly in but in 2026 the park is excrement free, unlike Bridge Gardens, the Reitlinger Gardens and Ray Mill Island.

3) The American Mink *Neogale vison*

This semi-aquatic carnivorous mammal was imported in 1929 for breeding for their fur. Some escaped and some were released by misguided animal rights activists. It has been linked to the decline of other animals such as water voles. When the Environment Agency dug a new ditch from the Thames to the Marsh Meadow Ditch at Cookham to get more water into the northern stream system, the new ditch was colonised by water voles. However, the mink ate them all.

In Maidenhead town centre it has been seen eating fish from the waterway.



October 2022: Mink taking a fish to eat through the timber cladding at Chapel Arches



September 2022: On the landing stage at Chapel Arches; a partially eaten pike, probably the result of mink predation (the above photos courtesy of Richard Davenport of Maidenhead Waterways)

Conclusion

Invasive species have a diminishing effect on native flora and fauna, as they compete with them for territory and resources. Certainly, in the case of the Canada Goose the only wildfowl that will make it back down is the swan.

The Convention on Biological Diversity concluded that invasive species are one of the leading drivers of biodiversity loss and species extinction globally. So, when earlier this year the Royal Borough asked for comments on the draft RBWM Environment and Climate Strategy 2026-2035, our response included notes on the impact of these invasive species in and around Maidenhead saying *We note that there is no specific policy for the control of these species in the draft strategy yet some impact public health and several impact biodiversity in their environment.*

Sadly, there is no mention of invasive species in the final strategy report. There is an ambition to protect and increase nature for biodiversity. One can only hope that some control mechanisms will be operating behind the scenes.

Ann Darracott

Bob Dulson

Just as we went to press with our May Newsletter, we learnt that Bob Dulson had passed away on May 4th after a short illness. This was a shock to all. Bob was Chairman of our Society from 2008-2022 – 14 years of superb leadership. He had been a member for over twenty years and remained a Trustee. He was a firm believer in Maidenhead and its potential and his attitude can be summed up by his “motto”: ***preserve the best, enhance the rest.*** And this also sums up the Society’s ethos in a nutshell. He was instrumental, with other members, in taking a critical look at the impact of Crossrail on local heritage in Maidenhead and was an active member of the Society’s planning group. Bob also chaired the Partnership for the Rejuvenation of Maidenhead (PRoM), a joint council-community body focussed on town centre regeneration. This body was responsible for drawing up the Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP) in 2011 – then dubbed “the most widely researched and consulted planning policy document the borough had ever produced”. Bob was also the instigator of the Society’s ***Maidenhead and Me*** art and photography exhibitions which invited people to show off the town through their artwork.



Bob will be greatly missed by all of us and we extend our sincere condolences to Angela, his wife.

Events

2026 MAIDENHEAD BOUNDARY WALK – VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED

The 2026 Boundary Walk will take place on Sunday 4th October. This is organised by the Maidenhead Rotary clubs and comprises a 13 mile walking path around the historic boundary of the Borough of Maidenhead, together with the option for a shorter 2.5 mile family-friendly route encompassing Boulters Lock and Brunel's Sounding Arch. Annually this event raises significant money for good causes and secured over £20,000 in 2025. This year to commemorate 100 years of Maidenhead Rotary there is a fancy dress theme where participants are invited to dress as their favourite decade from the last 100 years. Once again Maidenhead Civic Society has been requested to support this activity by providing volunteers in the morning to marshal the family-friendly walk and in the afternoon to assist at the road crossing between Widbrook Common and Battlemead. If anyone is able to provide an hour or two to assist then this will be greatly appreciated. There is no significant level of physical fitness required and the role can generally be performed from a seated position. A full briefing and instructions will be provided to volunteers prior to the event. Please contact Tim Burt by email at tilburt99@yahoo.co.uk.

Tim Burt

VISIT TO HURLEY – Short Guided Walk

Sunday 20th September, meeting at 2pm in Hurley car park.

Our May Newsletter noted that we are aiming to create a Millennium Walk Heritage Trail starting at Hurley, a place that has played a role in the history of several different centuries and especially during World War II. This is an opportunity to see some of its historic places for yourself on a short leisurely stroll through the village. We have arranged for Phil Mullins, author of the book *OSS Station Victor – Hurley's Secret War* to guide us for part of the tour and I will be on hand to point out the more ancient history; St Mary's Church will also be open. The local café (part of the shop) in Hurley will be open should you wish for light refreshments. Those participating will be sent by email an illustrated history trail describing the historic features of Hurley. Those without an email address will be sent a paper version.

If you are interested, please email Joyce at joyce.delasalle@btinternet.com or phone on 07917 876145. We're making a small charge of £5 per person to cover the Society's costs for the guide and a donation to Hurley Church for accommodating us. This can be paid either by direct bank transfer to our Lloyds Bank account at Sort Code: 30-95-36; A/c:00277876 quoting ref "Hurley Visit" or by cheque to Joyce Delasalle, 7 Laxton Green, Cox Green, Maidenhead SL6 3HW payable to Maidenhead Civic Society. **The deadline for booking is Sunday 13th September.**

Ann Darracott

CIVIC SOCIETY AGM

Wednesday 23rd September 2026, 7.45pm for 8.00pm

Note that our AGM is in September this year, and in our normal venue of the High Street Methodist Church. Our guest speaker is **Major Brian Rogers** (right) who will introduce us to the history of the CWGC and its work today. Beginning with how the Commission began, its work during the First and Second World Wars and concluding with its work today in maintaining and preserving our historic estate around the world. The presentation will also cover some of the 30+ memorials to the fallen of the two World Wars which were dotted around Maidenhead and nearby villages, although sadly some no longer survive. He will try where possible to cover the stories behind the erection of these memorials, and some of the names commemorated upon them.



Brian Rogers is a resident of Sunninghill and a semi-retired soldier of 40+ years' service. Having resigned his commission on reaching the upper age limit of 55, he continues to serve in his old role at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, albeit as a desk bound reservist. An accredited battlefield guide with the Guild of Battlefield Guides, Brian is also the Official Historian of the Household Cavalry, a Commonwealth War Graves Commission volunteer, and an active member of both the Western Front Association, and the British Commission for Military History.

News from Maidenhead Heritage Centre

Free admission for RBWM residents

The Heritage Centre is the answer to the question "Where shall we take the children today?" Many local people, from grandparents to their grandchildren, are taking up this free offer to discover more about the history of our town in our galleries.

Exhibitions

Opening at the Heritage Centre on August 14th and running into September is a new exhibition called "Maidenhead Rowing Club 150" which celebrates the 150th anniversary of the club founded by Lord Desborough, who as William Henry Grenfell was one of the rowers who crossed the channel in a racing eight.

Expect more temporary exhibitions during the autumn and winter, including one marking the 80th anniversary of the disastrous flood of March 1947. If you have any memories or photographs of more recent floods we would be pleased to hear from you.

River Thames Historical Cruise, Thursday 3 September

Tickets for this 5-hour trip on the river, with live commentary by Richard Poad, are on sale now via our online shop (maidenheadheritage.org.uk/shop) where you will find full details.

Dates for your Diary

Sunday 20th September 2026
Event

Guided walk – Heritage in Hurley
Hurley village carpark 2pm

Wednesday 23rd September 2026
AGM and Speaker

Civic Society AGM
Maidenhead Methodist Church, 7.45 for 8pm

CIVIC SOCIETY – KEY CONTACTS

Chairman	Derek Wilson
Hon. Secretary	Eileen Goford
Hon. Treasurer	Peter Child
Planning Group	Brian Davies
Projects	Ann Darracott
Newsletter & Website	Brian Darracott
Events & Membership	Joyce Delasalle

Enquiries to the Society: info@maidenheadcivicsoc.org.uk

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2026

All Committee meetings are at the Cox Green Community Centre, 6.30pm.

13th January, 10th February, 10th March, 14th April, 12th May, 9th June, 14th July, 8th September, 13th October, 10th November, 8th December

The 66th AGM will be held on 23rd September 2026 in the Bromley Room of Maidenhead High St Methodist Church.

**The closing date for copy for the next issue
of the Newsletter is 31st October 2026**

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