



# Maidenhead Civic Society

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# NEWS

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*The Green Way, a 1980s project with the Ramblers, comes into its own*

*See page 12*

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

# The Chairman's Page

Rarely a month goes by without a clutch of seminars, lectures or scholarly articles on the importance of public participation in planning – involving the community from the concept stage, right through the process.

As a civic society it's something we advocate repeatedly as the most reliable way of ensuring that what's designed and delivered is in the community's best interests.

On occasion the government is minded to underline it too. Though they then undermine it with announcements like the recent proposal to extend permitted development rights, to which we've objected strongly.

This time last year we were considering the first draft of a Vision & Charter for Maidenhead. This had been based on a wide public consultation that set out to discover what kind of town residents wanted Maidenhead to be. The hope was that the resulting document would be a blueprint for the future that everyone could sign up to.

The initial draft was disappointing but over the intervening months the steering group, on which the Society is represented, bolstered the commitments and built a community engagement forum in the form of a 'town team' into the process. Whether the revised version will emerge for another round of consultation, we shall have to wait and see.

One senses that politicians are reluctant to accept anything that's beyond their total control. That's understandable – they are our elected representatives. But there are big benefits in working together. Planning experts and academics extol numerous advantages of public participatory planning – everything from better accountability to ensuring the right decisions – but the one that underpins them all is election-proofing.

Our democratic system allows for regular changes in government, national and local, leading to a short term focus and a desire for quick wins. Involving the community in decision making encourages a longer term approach and continuity, which benefits society and the environment.

As 95% of respondents said in the Great Debate: "Planning should be above politics." And a proper mechanism for participatory planning, like a community forum, would benefit everyone.

*Bob Dulson*

# Your Society Needs YOU!

Our Civic Society was founded in May 1960. First plans were then being laid for the redevelopment of Maidenhead town centre and the Borough Council saw the need for the people of Maidenhead to participate in this process.

The Society's aims – then and now – are set out in our Constitution and are quite straightforward:

- (i) To **stimulate public interest in the area** (Maidenhead and district).
- (ii) To **promote high standards of planning and architecture**.
- (iii) To **secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of historic or public interest**.

In the beginning the majority of our members were what most of us would now call “the younger generation” – i.e. 30-45 yr olds. This cohort had a very real vested interest in the future of Maidenhead, and, by and large, has stayed with the Society to help achieve its objectives over the years. But the town centre is now in another phase of significant redevelopment and Maidenhead will continue to evolve. So the need for an organisation like the Civic Society has never been greater. New ideas and energy are needed to continue with the challenge. And herein lies the problem.

The inescapable truth is that:

- Most key office holders have been in the post for many years – several for more than ten years, some for more than twenty years and one for more than thirty!
- Most of the present Committee are over 70 years in age.
- The current Society Membership at large stands at some 300 persons and has been static for many years now.
- It is probably true that the vast majority of these Members are themselves of late middle age or above, i.e. 65+ and more likely 70+.
- **The Society is clearly ageing and will need rejuvenating if it is going to survive for more than the next few years.**

We can be rightly proud of the Society's achievements over the years and we can be confident that the town is a better place for the sustained efforts of current and past members. However, we need sufficient members both to maintain our “clout” and to secure the future – the latter being perhaps more important.

We now ask you – as existing members – to see if you can consider enrolling at least one other new member. We need younger people – perhaps the recently retired – who have the time and energy to become involved. Perhaps you have children living locally and of an age where they, too, have concerns about the town's development.

On top of this, the way the Society – or indeed any organisation – communicates today must involve the use of the social media platforms that are now part of the fabric – such as Facebook and Instagram. Today's younger generations are by and large comfortable with this and probably will expect to be informed via this route. So we seek new members who could also assist us in progressing to an effective use of these media.

Please give serious thought to all of the above. We'll be following up on this in the next edition of the Newsletter, with a pull-out membership application form and an a little incentive for you!

**Remember:**



**Or before long, there'll be no Society at all!**

# Planning Matters

Revised plans for the proposed redevelopment of **Nicholsons Quarter** were being submitted by the developer Areli as our last newsletter went to press. This is the single biggest development in the regeneration of Maidenhead town centre. It is also the most impactful, in that the town loses the existing covered shopping centre and the “quarter” is reconfigured into a network of walking streets with retail, cafes and restaurants. To fund this redevelopment 655 residential flats will be built in two blocks up to 25 storeys high under the detailed planning application. In addition, a further 29,400 m<sup>2</sup> of residential development comes under an outline application. Assuming an equal mix of 1- and 2-bed flats with an average of 60m<sup>2</sup> plus 10% for communal areas, this outline area would generate a further 445 dwellings (29400 m<sup>2</sup> divided by 66 m<sup>2</sup>). The total number of flats within the Nicholsons scheme could be around 1,000 if some larger 3 bed flats were included in the mix.

As a stakeholder with a remit on planning issues it is impossible for Maidenhead Civic Society to fully support such a scheme and consequently we have objected to the proposals. Our comment letter is reproduced below. We acknowledge that our town centre has problems in terms of layout, parking, empty shops etc. We are not convinced that 1,000 flats in blocks up to 25 storeys high is the answer. Our latest estimate of town centre dwellings (north of the railway line) either completed, under construction, permitted or proposed, has reached 3,750 units, which includes the 550 units recently outlined in the Countryside consultation for St Cloud Way (the Magnet site). Of course, this total would increase further if Maidenhead United were to move to Braywick and the York Road football ground became available for development. Hopefully, this would not be for flats but a mix of style and size of family houses.

As you may be aware, the West Street Opportunity Area is also earmarked for 240 residential units, which are included our total estimate of 3,750 above. These will be largely generated by a high rise block of up to 20 storeys on the site of the current West Street public car park. But Shanly Homes have now submitted an application to develop the backyards and parking areas behind the old **Post Office** and the **Poundland** site next door at 106 to 114 High Street. The High Street frontages would be largely retained, but the land to the rear is set to become a 13 storey block of 108 flats, fronting on to West Street. In 2019 half of this site was granted permission for 14 apartments in a 7-storey block. This new scheme is on a completely different scale, and there’s potential for two more similar blocks between this site and the rear of Marks and Spencer. We have objected on the basis that the height, bulk and mass of the proposed block is excessive. The RBWM Tall Buildings Study suggests the south side of West Street having a maximum of eight storeys. The West Street Opportunity Area is designated for a potential 240 residential units - largely accommodated in a tower block on the site of the current West Street Car Park. Such development on the south side of the street would potentially more than double the number of new dwellings on West Street. The proposed height is overbearing and while we are in favour of tidying up the delivery yards and parking



areas behind the High Street retail units a maximum of seven or eight stories should be applied.



*Architect's impression of the scheme looking east along West Street*

In the last newsletter we were also awaiting the outcome of an application to redevelop **Zaman House** in Church Road in the Fisheries. The proposal was to demolish and replace with a block of 8 flats. Happily, permission was eventually refused. But now there is a further application which seeks to raise the height of the existing property with two additional storeys. The house is already excessively extended and in the flood plain but, although the latest application does not include any increase in footprint, the additional height is overbearing and completely out of character with the neighbourhood, resulting in a degree of overlooking and loss of privacy.

Every week the list of new planning applications published by RBWM has been reviewed to identify proposals of interest. As the Planning Group have been unable to meet during the pandemic these items have been regularly circulated by email for feedback from the group. Over the past three months we have commented on seven further applications, of which the following are noteworthy.

**Hitachi** at Whitebrook Park on Lower Cookham Road have given notice of the intention to demolish their substantial office building. You may recall that about a year ago permission was sought for change of use from offices to residential and conversion into 97 flats. This proposal was under permitted development and technically outside the normal planning process. We were reluctant to see more flats

in Riverside but we welcomed the fact that the living areas of each dwelling were above the minimum space standards, and that there was adequate parking provision and amenity space. However, the current application to demolish makes no reference to the intended future use of this large site. This is of concern. If several blocks of purpose built flats were to be proposed we would object in the strongest possible terms. We have a gross oversupply of flats in our evolving housing stock, and this location, far from the town centre on the fringe of the Green Belt, is completely unsuitable for apartment blocks. It is to be hoped that a development of family homes of mixed style and size is to go on the site with adequate parking and garden amenity space. To the east of the Hitachi site is the disused Stiefel Labs building where, back in 2016, permission was sought for the construction of 34 family houses set in a landscaped setting. Unfortunately, the use of the Stiefel site has not been resolved because, we understand, of flood plain issues. Nevertheless, we do not believe that permission to demolish the Hitachi building should be granted without information and agreement on a suitable proposal for the development of the site. As we go to print, we are pleased to note that permission to demolish has been refused – at least for the moment – because of the absence of a flora and fauna risk assessment.

On a smaller scale, literally, is an application for the change of use of **Best One, 3A Altwood Road**, from retail to residential. This is a proposal to convert the shop area and rear storage space into 6 studio flats, all single-storey. However, the studios are seriously undersized ranging from 22 m<sup>2</sup> to 32 m<sup>2</sup>. The minimum Nationally Described Space Standard for studios is 37 m<sup>2</sup>. In addition, the studios have no parking spaces or outside amenity space. They do have bike racks and the provision of two spaces for motorcycles. Whilst every opportunity should be taken to maximise the number of dwelling units, substandard dwellings are detrimental to the durability and quality of the housing stock.

There are two applications which warrant a mention on which we have made the decision not to comment. A 7-storey block of 49 flats is proposed for the site of the **Spiritualist Church** off York Road. Parking spaces are provided at the ratio of only 0.5 per dwelling, though this has become the established norm in this area. This will be the third block south of York Road on the west bank of York Stream. Two blocks of similar size (on the sites of the Social Centre and St John's Ambulance) have already been granted permission. This development is referred to as the final piece of the jigsaw of the Waterways development.

An application has been re-submitted for the large open green space to the south of 18 to 20 **Ray Mill Road East** also known as **Deerswood Meadow**. This site has been identified for residential development for many years and the last application was in mid-2019. We were broadly supportive of the previous application, which did not please some of our members. The previous application was refused, primarily because of flood plain issues and lack of affordable housing. This new application does not appear to have changed significantly. About 60% of the site is proposed for development with the balance of the site – lower lying and to the east – retained and enhanced as public open space. Of the 80 dwellings, 35 are flats, largely to provide an element of affordable housing. A total of 158 parking spaces are provided. We

will adopt a neutral position on the application. Whilst it is accepted that there are flood plain issues, the provision of affordable dwellings exceeds the target of 30%. The restricted width of the access road from Ray Mill Road East is not deemed to be of concern. These matters can be determined by the Planning Panel.

### **Planning Group Comments on Nicholson's Quarter**

This scheme involves the demolition of the Nicholson's covered shopping area in Maidenhead and a presumption that shelter from the elements in a replacement retail environment will no longer be required. The scale of the project will mean at least 5 years' disruption and upheaval in the heart of the town. Although planning expediency requires speedy decisions, it does not seem appropriate that plans of this magnitude are afforded only the same time for public consideration as a loft conversion. Less than four weeks between the submission of revised plans and the deadline for comments is inadequate.

The street level applications of the scheme are appealing. Opening the original North/South and East/West thoroughfares will improve the permeability of the town centre; and central meeting points such as Nicholas Winton Square will create a social focus. We welcome the reintroduction of some of the historical names and connections which are associated with Maidenhead's heritage. The variety in size and end use of the retail units will create an interesting diversity of shopping, dining, drinking and other leisure activities and services. The juxtaposition of the scheme with the High Street Conservation Area is important in ensuring that the town centre functions as a whole. However, there are potential problems for shoppers and other pedestrians with the lack of shelter from wind and rain. Whatever modelling is undertaken, the likelihood is that the bulk, height and mass of the buildings will create wind tunnel or canyon effects at street level. Even with stepped back upper floors there will be limited sunlight/daylight.

Regretfully, the sequencing of the redevelopment of Maidenhead Town Centre means that this Nicholson's Quarter proposal follows a stream of previously approved schemes of residential flats. To fund the overall scheme it is necessary to include blocks of flats which will contribute to the estimated 3,000 such town centre dwellings completed or in the pipeline. Whilst the status of the Landing proposals in the King Street/Broadway/Queen Street triangle is unclear, there are further developments to come such as St Cloud Way, to be followed by West Street. The viability of the Nicholson's Quarter scheme is largely dependent on delivering 346 residential flats in Zone 5 and a further 307 units in a Senior Living format known as Zone 6. To deliver this number of properties the development will feature a 25-storey tower block – euphemistically described as a landmark.

It is understood that the majority of these high rise apartments will have balconies as leisure amenity space, but the historical social problems associated with such living conditions are well documented. Maidenhead is a town not a city and it is important that the bulk, mass and height of our town centre development is proportionate to the setting. The prevailing height of residential developments in the town centre should be 7 or 8 storeys. The permitted application for The Landing regretfully went to 17



storeys. This precedent has been taken as a yardstick to facilitate the introduction of a further 8 storeys in this scheme. The supporting documentation suggests that community feedback indicated 60% support for a 25-storey block, but it is clear that amongst the members of Maidenhead Civic Society this is the single issue to which the majority take exception. Furthermore, we do not believe that the RBWM Tall Buildings Study does support 25 storeys. The maximum height of this development should be no higher than that permitted for The Landing. If permission is granted for 25 storeys then consideration should be given to a mix of uses, e.g. commercial, offices, civic, hotel, etc, in addition to residential.

Following the terrible events at Grenfell Tower there is a focus on the fire risks associated with high rise blocks. Although the Design and Access Statement refers to a Fire Strategy for the development no details are provided. The 25-storey block of Zone 5 is divided into two separate cores – 5A and 5B. Each core has only a single staircase. However, in the light of the Grenfell experience, we understand that two staircases are recommended – one for evacuation of residents and another for access by emergency services. Sprinklers are also recommended throughout. It will be interesting to see the comments of Berkshire Fire and Rescue as consultees on the proposal to introduce a 25-storey block to the town centre.

We note the variety of dwelling types in Zone 5, although we have severe reservations about the suitability of high rise units for family living. We are pleased to observe that the areas of the various flat types adhere to the Nationally Described Space Standards. However, we are concerned that there are no detailed plans provided for Zone 6 – the Senior Assisted Living element of 307 units – which may well be intended to include smaller living units. We are also unhappy at the large outline element of this application for a further 29,400 m<sup>2</sup> of residential and 29,700 m<sup>2</sup> of business use, where no details are provided. The number of flats still to come is unclear, and we believe that with a project of this significance full detailed planning permission should be sought for the total scheme. As it stands the scheme has 653 dwelling units in the full application and an unspecified number of flats in the 29,400 m<sup>2</sup> within the outline application.



*Architect's impression: "Sydenham Place"  
looking east along Broadway*

There will be a total of 1,319 car park spaces in the scheme of which 700 are for public parking. The Multi Storey Car Park (Zone 4) has been reduced in height and size from the original proposals and now has a capacity of 885 spaces. We are unsure on what basis the decision to reduce the number of parking spaces by approximately 390 was made. The original proposed capacity for an extended Nicholsons Car Park was increased by RBWM to allow for the under-provision of parking associated with the Landing development. It is assumed that the reduction in MSCP capacity has been mutually agreed with RBWM. We note that the size of parking spaces is being retained at the current standard, and it is to be hoped that vehicle size will start to decrease over time. However, the provision of only 125 charging points for electric vehicles is inadequate, and it will be expensive and disruptive in the long term to retrofit more charging points. In fact, just as disabled spaces are located at lower levels, other lower floors should be exclusively for electric vehicles to positively encourage the switch to electric.

We would point out that the introduction of two new bus stops does not in itself improve getting around town. The local bus service is a poor and inadequate; they run infrequently and often not after 6pm or on Sundays.

Positive elements of the scheme include the landscaping and introduction of many trees to soften the setting. We welcome the treatment of the west end of Broadway and setting back Sydenham Place to improve access from the south. The new settings of lanes and yards will create individual quarters with their own character. However, the introduction of meeting places and public realm raises potential problems with accountability for long term maintenance.

As previously stated we welcome the attempt to generate a new retail, dining and leisure landscape for Maidenhead. However, the viability of the scheme hinges on the need to introduce 653 new flats and 31,000 m<sup>2</sup> of offices to fund the redevelopment at street level. We object to the application as currently proposed for the following reasons:

- The height, bulk and mass of the scheme is excessive for a town the size of Maidenhead.
- The height of the landmark tower at 25 storeys is also excessive.
- The social concerns associated with high rise living, especially for families.
- Potential fire risk associated with tower block residential units – in particular a single staircase in Core 5A and Core 5B
- The scheme requires the introduction of a further 653 dwelling units, which are all flats.
- The absence of pedestrian cover/shelter from the elements at street level.
- Lack of detailed plans for the Outline element and the Senior Living proposals in Zone 6.

*Martin McNamee and Bob Dulson*

# Now you see it – now you don't!



*Permission was granted in 2019 for the demolishing of the terrace of houses known as “Death Row” at 23 to 31 York Road, together with the adjacent Anchor pub on the corner of York Road and Park Street.*

*Following recent demolition, the site is being used as a temporary carpark, among others for those visiting the Desborough Suite for their vaccination.*



*Architect's impression of what will be built on the site before too long.*



# Projects

## THE GREEN WAY – A LIFELINE IN LOCKDOWN

As noted in the last Newsletter, the St Luke's Christmas Tree Festival, where we have sponsored a tree for many years, was not possible for obvious reasons. Instead the church organised a Christmas Tree Trail (CTT) which ran from 9<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> December and in which the Society participated.



Those with long memories will remember that the *Green Way*, a streamside walk from Cookham through Maidenhead to Bray, was an idea of Peter Nevell of East Berks Ramblers (EBRA) that became a joint project of the Society and EBRA. The Society published the first leaflet (*left*) in 1985, with illustrations by Society member, the late Jack Widgery.

The idea was that sponsored trees would be linked by trails on the church website so that people could go for walks, spot them and vote for the ones they liked on line. Our tree was in the Shepherd's Trail and got 30 votes! Hopefully participants would also donate to the chosen charity, the Air Ambulance.

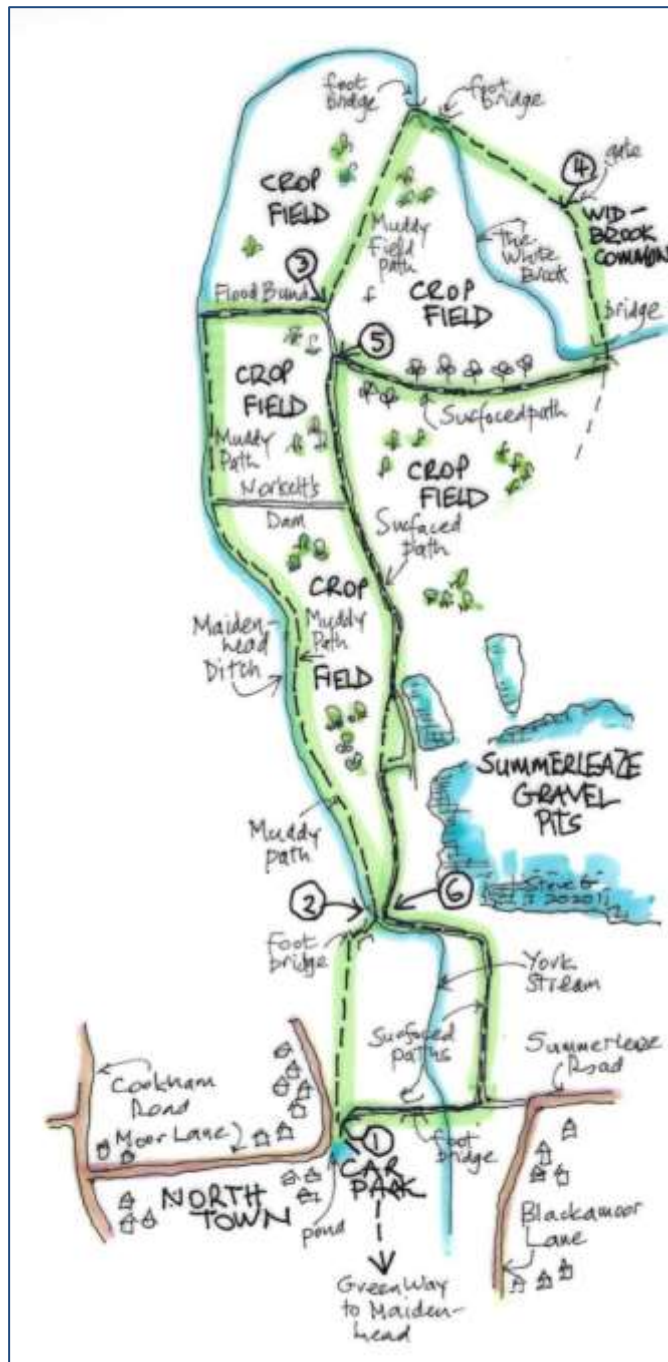


*Rev Sally Lynch of St Luke's and Bob Dulson with the Society's tree decorated with Green Way leaflets*

It was decided to locate the tree on the Green Way, in recognition of the role of the Green Way in helping residents cope with the current pandemic together with a banner proclaiming celebrating the “*The Green Way – a Lifeline in Lockdown*”. Both were placed at the junction of Green Way West and East, located just north of North Town Moor with the kind permission of Peter Prior of Summerleaze Gravel.

Knowing that Steve Gillions of EBRA had created a beautiful map with guide notes for the route we took in September last year, when we celebrated the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Millennium Walk, I asked if he could draw one to assist those unfamiliar with the Green Way paths north of Maidenhead and hopefully encourage those already familiar with the paths to re-visit and enjoy them afresh. He kindly agreed (see map) and we called it *The Lifeline Walk* that explores the northern part of the Green Way. It is available for download from our website and also a poster affixed to the banner has a QR code that enables walkers (with smart phones) to easily access the map and guide notes.

The walk explores the northern part of the Green Way. The whole walk is some 3½ miles but it is also possible to walk shorter sections of it. The paths are well-signposted and level, without stiles. Not all are surfaced and can be very muddy, so appropriate footwear is advised.



Christmas is now over and our tree has been removed but we have left the banner as the Green Way is still being heavily used (see front cover).

At the beginning of 2021 with vaccination being rolled out there is new hope for the return of a normal life. Until then it seems this joint project with the Ramblers will continue to make a real contribution to residents’ mental and physical health.



These are some of the views on the Lifeline Walk:



*Maidenhead Ditch*



*Commoners' cows on  
Widbrook Common*



*The White Brook from  
the bridge on Widbrook  
Common*

*Ann Darracott*

## GUARDS CLUB PARK & BRIDGE

The park and bridge was an award winning Silver Jubilee project of the Society, so we take a keen and constant interest. As you can see from the photos below fallen trees are endangering the bridge. Society member Christine Jones contacted the Royal Borough in February 2020, when the first tree was caught. We did the same in April. The Royal Borough contacted the Environment Agency who initially planned to remove the tree but seven months later said it was the landowner's (i.e. RBWM) responsibility. More recently another tree has become entangled and now the river is high with Guards Club Island flooded. Removal will have to wait. Let's hope the bridge isn't damaged!!!



*Initially one floating tree became lodged against the bridge support near the island, and then recently, acting as a damn, it snared a second tree that seems to have come down in a recent gale*





# Events

Sadly, there is very little to report due to the restrictions with which we are living. The Society's committee has managed to continue to function by making good use of Zoom, and indeed, we held our AGM last November in this way. It all worked well technically and a lively session was attended by more than 30 people. The abbreviated minutes of the proceedings of our AGMs are normally printed with the agenda for the following meeting – a year later. By then everyone's probably forgotten what went on, anyway. So, with a break from tradition we thought it would be helpful – and hopefully interesting – to present a full account here so you get a flavour of what went on and what you missed!

In the absence of a guest speaker, members of the executive committee first spoke briefly about issues in their particular field, and this was followed by a discussion amongst those attending under Any Other Business.

## 60th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**Projects:** Ann Darracott spoke about the Society's role in the creation of **Battlemead Common** and on the steering group, the Friends of Battlemead Common. The demands of different interest groups had been reflected in a series of several masterplans for the new common and a compromise seemed to be emerging. However, latterly, pending changes in the town hall, everything seems to have been put on hold, including a proposal we had made for an additional footpath which would take walkers through the charming willow fields south of the site.

She also outlined the Society's plans to celebrate **The Green Way**, the public footpath from Cookham to Bray. Created in 1985 by the Society and the Ramblers in an award-winning joint project, it has been very well used during lockdown and become something of a lifeline. So in December the Society placed a tree at the junction of Green Way East and West, as part of a **Christmas Tree Trail** organized by St. Luke's Church, which was admired by many.

In another initiative the Society was trying to re-instate a symbol of a 600-year slice of Maidenhead's history at **Chapel Arches**. We have been in contact with the developers who removed half of the brass studs that outlined the footprint of the 1724 chapel from outside The Bear in Maidenhead when the pavement was reduced. The lost studs will be replaced in the new cycle lane, once the pandemic is over (we hope). Happily, our plaque is still there!! We were also seeking to reinstate the plaque on the Maidenhead Boy statue and, since March, have been striving to get a fallen tree removed from underneath Guards Club Bridge. This work has now been contracted.

**Communications:** The Society is frequently complimented for its Newsletter, published four times per year, but Editor Brian Darracott told the meeting it was only as good as the contributions received – “the greater the scope, the better” – and he extended an invitation to members to consider writing an article.

**Events:** The pandemic had devastated our programme which was very disappointing. But we were delighted, events organiser Tina Sell said, that the Millennium Anniversary Walk, originally planned for May, was able to take place in September with 50 people walking in socially distanced ‘bubbles’, led by our patron, Theresa May M.P..

Looking ahead, there were plans for an Annual Dinner in May 2021, if circumstances allowed, and for a visit to Waltham Place in June 2021. We were also keen to resume our Themed Teas – afternoon tea with a topical discussion – as soon as we were able.

**Membership:** The pandemic had also affected recruitment, said Joyce Delasalle, membership secretary. It meant events like Cox Green Fayre and Maidenhead Festival where we often attract new members had been cancelled. The Society was facing a serious and urgent challenge in terms of membership, she said, and we would be calling on current members to help recruit friends and relatives.

**Planning:** Planning Group chair, Martin McNamee told the meeting that the biggest single issue, as indicated in our Annual Report, was the long term **imbalance in our housing stock** being created by the ongoing overprovision of flats - rather than family homes. We had been highlighting this issue for more than three years, he said, but the situation was getting worse. Five years ago housing starts comprised 55% flats and 45% houses. In 2019 the proportion of **flats had increased to 84%**; that’s 591 flats compared to 114 houses. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment, which identifies the “target”, estimates the current requirement to be 45% of the total market for 1 and 2 bed flats (including affordable dwellings). On the open market the target is just 35% (7.5% 1-bed and 27.5% 2-bed).

We needed a planning policy to **discriminate positively in favour of building family homes**, said Martin, houses with garden amenity space. Without enough family homes people would have to move out of Maidenhead to start a family. The pandemic lockdowns had highlighted the shortcomings of raising families in flats with no open space, or working from home without a suitable workspace. The damage had already been done but the overprovision continued, so the situation would get even worse. We certainly did not need any flats outside the town centre, said Martin, and he encouraged members to object if they saw any proposed.

Cllr. Donna Stimson suggested we meet the Head of Planning, Adrien Waite, to underline our concerns and she offered to facilitate this.

Martin McNamee thanked his fellow Planning Group members for their continued support during lockdown. A new member, Tony Monk, had joined and the Group continued to review the weekly list of **planning applications** without meeting face-to-face.

It was noted that Areli had shared their revised plans for Nicholson's Quarter, retaining the 25-storey block of flats.

**Any Other Business:** A summary of items discussed:

- Members present felt a 25-storey building was far from being a beacon for Maidenhead. Judith Littlewood, a joint author of an HMSO 1981 report *Families in Flats*, thought it would be a symbol of an outmoded way of life. We were commended for our criticism of “tragic” tower blocks.
- All town centre building was being done without payment of the Community Infrastructure Levy with a huge negative impact on infrastructure.
- Does the Society have a view on building on Green Belt e.g. golf course? Some say the golf course is the ideal sustainable location for housing. Others that it should be retained as parkland. As Maidenhead expands, there needs to be an uncomfortable debate – which has never been had – on which areas to look at. Many areas of Green Belt were more brown than green. In the absence of that debate and because public opinion was polarized, the Society had remained impartial on the Golf Club and Claires Court Schools’ proposals, pending further developments.
- The Society would have to address its falling number of members. Our Strategy Group would meet in December to discuss ways forward. A suggestion to include a membership form in each copy of the Newsletter was noted.
- Sections of the community in Windsor were calling for their own town council. If successful, the same could happen in Maidenhead. This could have implications for the Civic Society. It underlined the need for continuing engagement with the community on planning issues which, in our view, would best be served by a planning forum, comprising local stakeholders, community reps and the council.
- Heritage Listing remains a Society ambition. RBWM’s Conservation team was keen to pursue and had recently asked for our support in their application for grant funding for the project.

Earlier, during the formal business of the meeting, our Treasurer Peter Child reported a satisfactory financial year, which closed with a current account £800 surplus, and the Report and Accounts were accepted. Bob Dulson as Chair, Peter Child as Hon. Treasurer and Eileen Goford as Hon. Secretary were re-elected and committee members Joyce Delasalle, Roger Panton and Ian Rose retired but having offered themselves for re-election, were also re-elected.



## Something uplifting

A statue of the man known as the “British Schindler” was lit up to mark Holocaust Memorial Day earlier this year on January 27<sup>th</sup>. Sir Nicholas Winton smuggled 669 boys and girls, destined for concentration camps, out of Czechoslovakia in 1939. Great Western Railway (GWR) decided to illuminate the monument to him at Maidenhead railway station with one candle for each child he rescued. The statue of Sir Nicholas, who died aged 106 in 2015, was sculpted by Society member Lydia (Karpinska) Parker and first unveiled by the town’s MP Theresa May in 2010.



*Sir Nicholas Winton at Maidenhead railway station (photo credit: Simon Galloway)*

## News from the Heritage Centre

Maidenhead Heritage Centre is closed during the third national lockdown, but that doesn't mean that nothing is happening. Online lectures via Zoom have been held at 3-weekly intervals since last summer, and will continue until June or July. People from as far away as New Zealand and California have been joining in. Details are on our website, and if there is a talk that you would like to have heard you can request a recording. Our Facebook and Instagram pages are getting busier all the time. New online exhibitions will be added to our website in the spring and it is hoped to add a couple of local walks for when the weather improves.

Meanwhile we are recruiting a new museum manager and volunteers to help us with a project to scan a vast number of black and white prints which have been disposed of by the Maidenhead Advertiser. If anybody would like to help, please email us on [info@maidenheadheritage.org.uk](mailto:info@maidenheadheritage.org.uk). We would be pleased to hear from you.

# Dates for your Diary

None

## CIVIC SOCIETY – KEY CONTACTS

Executive Chairman	Bob Dulson, Bryher, Islet Road, SL6 8HT	627130
Hon. Secretary	Eileen Goford, 6 Laxton Green, SL6 3HW	638238
Hon. Treasurer	Peter Child, 34 College Road, SL6 6AT	632300
Planning Group	Martin McNamee, 14 Lower Cookham Road, SL6 8JT	623203
Projects	Ann Darracott, 6 Medallion Place, SL6 1TF	620280
Communications	Brian Darracott, 6 Medallion Place, SL6 1TF	620280
Events	Tina Sell, Marlborough, River Road, Taplow, SL6 0BB	628675
Outings Organiser	Mike Copeland, 14 Laburnham Road, SL6 4DB	634181
Membership Sec.	Joyce Delasalle, 7 Laxton Green, SL6 3HW	637342
Newsletter Distribution	Sue Ross, 3 The Chantry, 21 Boyn Hill Avenue, SL6 4EY	626849

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2021

All meetings are online via Zoom until further notice

12<sup>th</sup> January, 9<sup>th</sup> February, 9<sup>th</sup> March, 13<sup>th</sup> April, 11<sup>th</sup> May, 8<sup>th</sup> June, 13<sup>th</sup> July, 10<sup>th</sup> August, 14<sup>th</sup> September, 12<sup>th</sup> October, 9<sup>th</sup> November, 14<sup>th</sup> December

The AGM will be held on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021 at 8.00 pm

**The closing date for copy for the next issue  
of the Newsletter is 16<sup>th</sup> April 2021**

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