



Maidenhead Civic Society

Estd. 1960

NEWS

Issue 1/23

February 2023



The Royal Stag

*This proud-looking beast at the Waterways quarter should inspire some much-needed confidence in the future of Maidenhead
(See more on page 20)*

Visit our website: www.maidenheadcivicsoc.org.uk

From the Chairman

We live in interesting times in Maidenhead as redevelopment takes place, and the Civic Society is still relevant – even more so – today, adding a local voice. The Civic Society plays a vital role within the local community and should be recognised by the local authority, as a **statutory consultee** when considering planning applications as Maidenhead develops.

In 2007, the Planning Inspector who was reviewing the Local Plan at that time said that the growth should occur in Maidenhead and advised the Local Authority to find additional sites for redevelopment. I know the recent adoption of the current Borough Local Plan that happened in February 2022 is certainly causing a concern amongst local residents and members of our society. This is why we should continue Bob's legacy in continuing to grow our membership and voice any concerns that we have as an organisation.

I have been appointed the interim Chair of this wonderful society and we must look forward and encourage people to join to get involved and voice their views for the benefit of Maidenhead. Maidenhead Civic Society is a long-established community organisation that has a wealth of knowledge and achieves a lot locally, though perhaps it's not always obvious.

I am extremely grateful to all the committee members with their knowledge and expertise in the range of activities and look forward to working with everyone as we move forward together.

*Derek Wilson MBE
Interim Chair*

From the Editor

Membership Update May 2023

We're pleased to welcome the following new members this membership year: Mr Neil Savin, Mrs Viviane Miranda Holland, Mrs Joan Francis, Mr Akshay Pal and Mr Ian & Mrs Eileen Caird. If you have any friends, relatives or neighbours who may be interested in joining us contact Joyce Delasalle, telephone 07917 876145 or email joyce@delasalle.me.uk.

Newsletter Contributions

Readers will see that in this edition we have several contributions from members in addition to the usual pieces from the Committee. Please be inspired and send in items that you think may be of interest or present a different viewpoint. The Society is a broad church and at the end of the day it's the views and concerns of all our members that give the Society its strength and authority.

AGM – Feedback

The Society held its 62nd Annual General Meeting on 16th November last year. Some 35 members attended the meeting which was again held online via Zoom. Apart from routine business two new Trustees (i.e. Executive Committee Members) were elected: Jane Wright, Nicholson Centre manager, and chair of Maidenhead Town Partnership; and Tim Burt, a retired Operations Director from the telecommunications industry. They bring much needed new (and younger) blood to our deliberations. Welcome!

At the meeting there was discussion as to whether it was now time for us to consider reverting to face-to-face meetings. The general consensus was that now the dangers of Covid had largely abated we should be meeting together in person where possible and reserving the use of online meetings for occasional routine matters. But it was acknowledged that some still had reservations. The Executive Committee have noted this and will work towards this goal during the year. And to kick off the process we have arranged for two significant “live” events, the details of which can be found later in this Newsletter.

The Society also gave a “thank you” to Bob Dulson for 14 years of leadership of the Maidenhead Civic Society. He has made a huge contribution and made a great difference and has led with professionalism and humour. It has been marvellous to have him as a chairman. Bob was presented with some fine wine and theatre tickets in recognition and gratitude. He will continue to serve as a Committee Member. For the meantime, former councillor Derek Wilson has undertaken to act as interim chair of the Society until May. This will keep the Society on an even keel and give it another six months to find a permanent chair or agree another way of operating.

In his final address Bob quoted from a survey of members who had joined in the last 12 months. He noted: “Though the sample was small (15), we were struck by the unanimity of their views, both on their reasons for joining the Society and their concerns for Maidenhead which, in many cases, amounted to the same thing: the scale, type and affordability of new housing, and the state of the town centre. There was almost universal condemnation of the number of flats and high-rise buildings and people questioned the evidence for 70% of the Borough’s housing being allocated in Maidenhead. There was also concern that a town plan for the centre might never materialise and that people who were now shopping in other places where parking was much easier might never return.”

A recent recruitment campaign had successfully helped the Society to maintain membership numbers at well over 300. “But we need younger, more active support,” said Bob. “Too much effort is falling on too few shoulders. Frankly, as it stands, the Society is struggling to meet its regular commitments; moreover, new initiatives are becoming impossible to undertake.”

Planning Matters

The future shape of “our” town is primarily in the hands of planners – both elected and professional, councillors and officers. It is also largely dependent on developers. It is good to see the redevelopment of **The Landing** is well underway, even if the height of 19 storeys and the provision of yet more flats is not what we want. Famously, the leader of the Council has observed that Maidenhead has too many flats, yet still they come. In addition to the two main permitted schemes – Nicholsons Quarter (600 plus) and St Cloud Way (400 plus) – there is the flatted development of West Street and the south side of York Road in the pipeline.



A drone-camera view wells illustrates how the Landing development will dominate the skyline (photo courtesy of Dean Feltimo)

Our potential exposure to the vagaries of the fortunes of developers is highlighted by the circumstances surrounding the proposals for **Nicholsons Quarter**. This is the flagship redevelopment that will redefine the future of Maidenhead Town Centre for decades to come. Since the scheme was first approved there has been a considerable shift in the dynamics. Financially, interest rates are up and funding will be more of an issue. In market terms, property values are down, and the oversupply of flats (particularly in Maidenhead) will exacerbate this problem. In practical terms the scheme is troubled by issues with contested compulsory purchase, most significantly Smokey Joe's. Furthermore, the phased redevelopment of the Nicholsons Quarter scheme was dependant on the first phase construction of a new Multi Storey Car Park (MSCP) towards the east of the site. This new MSCP would replace the existing Nicholsons MSCP which would then be demolished as part of the wider scheme.

As you will be aware, things have been overtaken by events. The 1960's concrete of the existing Nicholsons MSCP has started to fail structurally and it is closed indefinitely. It was probably decades past its sell by date. The town now finds itself with both inadequate and/or unsuitable parking provision for shoppers, workers or other visitors. If the Nicholsons Quarter scheme is unable to proceed then the new MSCP will not get built and the parking issues will persist and blight the prosperity of our town. The ongoing uncertainty surrounding the anticipated disruption to retail activity in the town will extend beyond the four to five years already anticipated to deliver the Areli proposals.

On the subject of parking provision, it is ironic that it has taken so long for the loss of parking at **The Wilderness Centre** to get the attention it deserves. From the outset we raised the issue that the proposed redevelopment of the Magnet site would result in parking problems for staff, patients and visitors accessing the two doctors' surgeries, dentist and pharmacist in that location. Though there is parking provision for staff, and limited accessible parking there will be little parking available once the residential redevelopment of the St. Cloud Way site is completed. It should not be too late for some reconfiguration of the balance of parking between the new flats and the ongoing needs of The Wilderness Centre. RBWM are Joint Venture partners in the redevelopment scheme and should be ensuring that adequate parking is made available in the future to support the functioning of this key element of our medical infrastructure.



By the time you read this the Magnet may be completely gone

In our last Newsletter there were a number of applications on which you may be interested in an update. Three highlighted applications have all been refused planning permission. **2 to 4a Boyn Valley Road** had proposals to demolish the existing buildings and construct 10 x 2-bed flats. Refusal was by reason of inadequate parking, lack of amenity space and detriment to the character of the neighbourhood. The application to demolish a 3-bed detached house at **59 Norden Road** to create a block of 5 x 2-bed flats was also refused for similar reasons. Down at the Riverside the resubmission of the previously disallowed application for 5 x 4-bed town houses on the site of a detached bungalow known as **Culpeppers** at 53 Lower Cookham Road has again been refused. Nearby, a decision is still awaited on the proposal to demolish three bungalows at **66 to 70 Sheephouse Road**. As reported in the last Newsletter, a development of 8 x 4-bed detached houses is planned for the site. It is felt that such infilling and increase in density will be detrimental to the character of the immediate locality and risk similar schemes throughout the wider Riverside area. It is unusual that a decision is awaited after approximately six months.

In the last Newsletter we also referred to proposals to replace and upgrade the moorings and other marine facilities at **Taplow** Riverside. The location is on the backwater between Bridge Eyot and the Bucks bank. The border between RBWM and South Bucks runs down the middle of this watercourse. There is an element of the proposals that involves constructing a pontoon bridge to create a pedestrian link to moorings on the east side of Bridge Eyot. These moorings lie within RBWM and have therefore required an application to be submitted to Maidenhead planning authorities. Neither MCS nor RBWM have commented on the proposals, but it is noteworthy that many stakeholders are against the scheme – Environment Agency, River Thames Society, Taplow residents, Sea Cadets etc. The main complaint is that the proposal would restrict navigation by installing a permanent floating pontoon across the watercourse. Although we are generally supportive of investment in river related business activity, on reflection this proposal is something about which we should have expressed concern.

We continue to review the list of weekly planning applications. Although activity has been subdued in the last three months there are two proposals for flatted developments to bring to your attention. In 2021 there was an earlier permission for change of use under Permitted Development from offices to residential at **Thames House, 17 Marlow Road** to create 40 flats over three floors. A new application has been submitted to extend the third floor and add a fourth floor to create 33 new flats (24 x 1-bed and 9 x 2-bed). With one exception, the 1-bed flats are intended for single occupancy. This reduces the minimum acceptable living space from 50 m² required for two persons to 37 m² for one person. Whilst all the 1-bed/1-person flats meet the 37 m² requirement it is unclear how it is ensured that they are not occupied by two people – which would make the living conditions substandard. Likewise, all but one of the 2-bed flats is for 3 people – which reduces the minimum space requirement for a 2-bed flat. The provision of 1-bed/1-person flats is relatively new to Maidenhead's housing stock; there may well be a demand. What we do know is that there are too many flats in total. In addition, the extra height of the additional storeys will result in

a degree of overlooking and loss of privacy for nearby houses to the rear located in The Crescent.

There is another proposal for a flatted development further from the town centre. At **5 to 5c St Marks Crescent** there is an application to clear the site and create a block of 20 flats with 2 retail units on the ground floor. There is adequate parking including a Lower Ground Floor and all the living units meet the minimum space standards. Each flat has a small terrace or balcony, but amenity space is limited for the size of the development. The real issue is the continued construction of yet more flats away from the town centre.

There has been a consultation from Cala Homes on their proposals for **The Elizabeth Quarter**, which is the name they have given to their development of Maidenhead Golf Course. Feedback was submitted on behalf of MCS and this is reproduced below:

Feedback on Consultation re Elizabeth Quarter (Maidenhead Golf Course)

Maidenhead Civic Society was established in 1960 in liaison with the Local Authority to represent the views of like-minded residents of the un-parished wards of Maidenhead. As might be expected much of the focus has been on planning issues. We accept the Borough Local Plan in principle and the need for the designated housing targets to be delivered, although we regret the disproportionate emphasis on development in Maidenhead. We also accept the suitability and sustainability of the Golf Course site because of its proximity to Maidenhead Station and Town Centre.

Our detailed comments are as follows:

Site and Local Plan Allocation: This section refers to “up to 2,000 homes”. Historically, a figure of 2,600 homes has been quoted and indeed this remains the number quoted in a later section. A 600-plus variation requires some clarification.

Supplementary Planning Document: This section is scant on detail. There is no mention of housing type / mix. Maidenhead is suffering from an oversupply of flats and a lack of new family homes. It is anticipated that the northern section of the site will be more dense, with “affordable” flats up to eight storeys high. We believe that the only flats in the Elizabeth Quarter should be in the affordable sector. There is no need or demand for open market flats.

Masterplan Evolution 1 and 2: The split between higher density in the north and lower density in the south, with park and wooded open spaces is combined with the new school facilities and a neighbourhood/medical hub to the south of the site. It is not clear how much of the demand for education, medical care and retail will come from within the Elizabeth Quarter. If there is considerable use from outside the development then there will be traffic access/egress and parking issues.

Project Vision: This is the first specific mention of 600 affordable homes although there is no information regarding the nature of affordability – subsidised rent or shared ownership – or the intended identity of potential occupants such as key workers etc. There is reference to the three access points, two on Harvest Hill Road and one on Shoppenhangers (See Transport Management below.)

Community Facilities: Other than the two schools there is little detail in this section. What are the facilities intended for the medical centre/GP surgery? What other social facilities will be included, and what will be the range of local retail, especially in view of the proximity to town?

Public Spaces and Landscaping 1 and 2: This is a very important element of the scheme if green and wooded areas are to be retained and the visual density of the housing development is to be mitigated. The Plaza area to the north is obviously the most densely developed, but the Green Spine running south will open into Woodland and Parkland to reach the Glade. With the large number of dwellings being proposed it is important that an “impression” of green space is delivered and public access facilitated.

Transport Management: This section refers to the total of 2,600 homes. It is ineffective in explaining how the traffic movements and parking demands associated with a potential 8,000 residents plus up to 3,000 pupils and staff will be handled. The standard of Harvest Hill Road will require a significant upgrade, with a further significant housing development to the south of the road. Neither Harvest Hill Road nor Shoppenhangers Road facilitate a right turn onto the A308 Braywick Road. It is essential that these junctions are reconfigured to allow egress southwards onto Braywick Road.

Sustainable Travel: Cycle and pedestrian routes throughout the site will be critical, especially northwards towards the station and town centre. Although it is to be hoped that car use will be reduced over the next two decades, in the short-term vehicle usage will continue at current levels. The long-suggested introduction of a transport hub at Maidenhead Station would increase the level of bus use, especially for residents of Elizabeth Quarter. Obviously, plentiful EV charging points are required throughout the development.

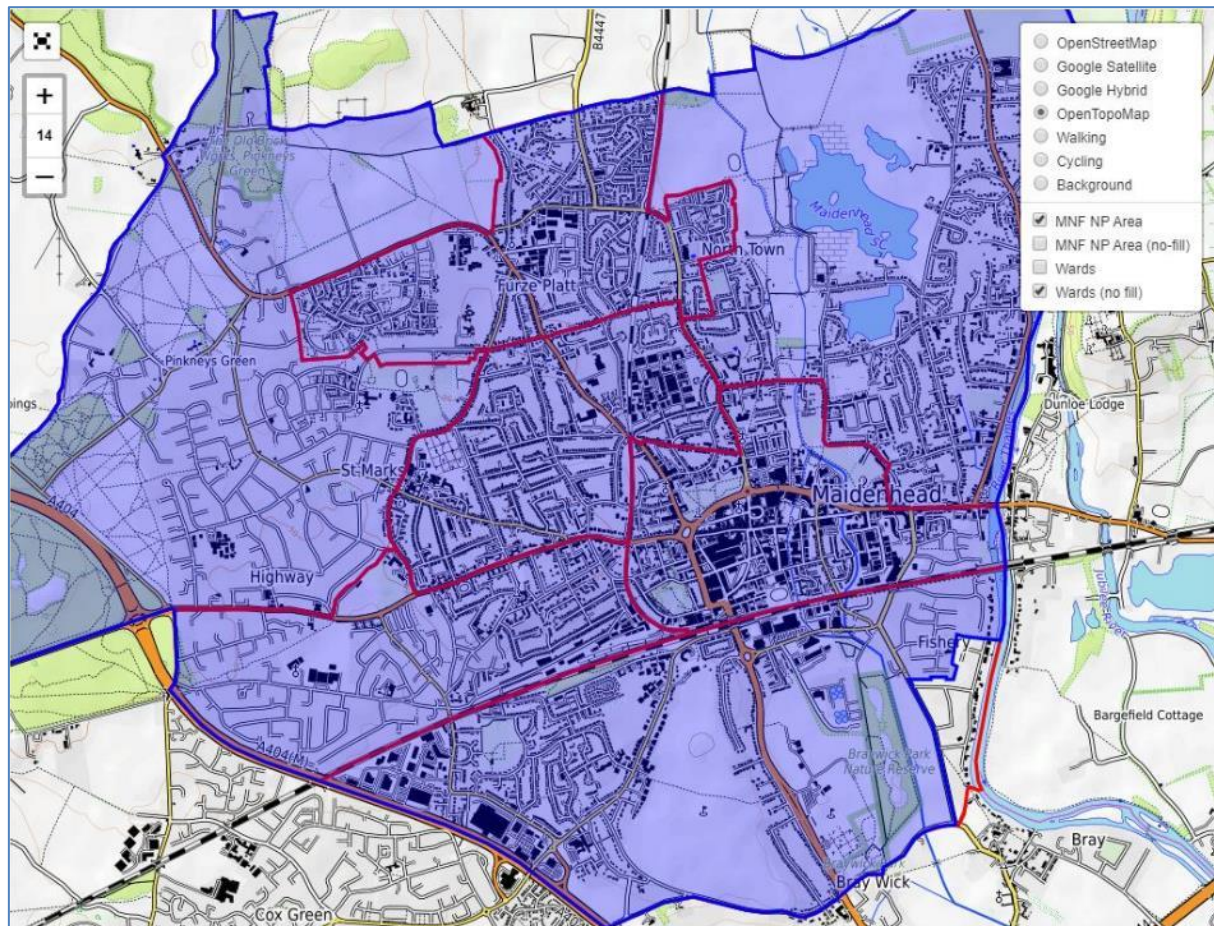
Ecology and Sustainability: Please avoid “greenwashing”!

We await with interest the more detailed proposals on the mix and type of housing and other elements of the scheme which will be forthcoming.

Martin McNamee

NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM GETS THE GO-AHEAD

We are pleased to confirm that the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead has agreed to formally “designate” both the Forum (MNF) and the Area (the seven unparished wards of Maidenhead – Belmont, St Mary’s, Riverside, Furze Platt, Pinkneys Green, Boyn Hill, and Oldfield – shown in purple in the plan below), so we can begin to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan.



It's been a long (long!) time coming, so here is a reminder of what a Neighbourhood Plan is. It's mainly about where things should go as Maidenhead grows and evolves, i.e. Planning Policy for new developments; so not day to day things like litter, maintenance or services. It will sit alongside the RBWM-wide Borough Local Plan (BLP), adding Maidenhead-specific policy detail that RBWM must take into account when ruling on planning applications.

As you can see from the town's changing skyline, many planning decisions have already been taken. A Neighbourhood Plan cannot undo existing planning consents, or contradict policies already in the adopted BLP. But it can address the future, setting development policy on issues where the BLP is vague or silent at the local level such as designation of local green spaces, built heritage, and sustainable transport links.

RBWM Planning Department refused designation of the Maidenhead Area and Forum back in early 2020. The reasons for refusal seemed to be either based on minor technicalities which could have been resolved, or on subjective opinions such as the

area being “contrary to current best practice”. We were given good advice by Cllr David Coppinger, then lead member for planning, to engage in dialogue with RBWM Planning before submitting a new application to be designated.

We also wanted to do a sanity check on the area sought (the whole of unparished Maidenhead) and to seek independent advice on whether it really was contrary to best practice. Locality (the umbrella organisation promoting Neighbourhood Planning) put us in contact with one of their consultants called Dave Chetwyn, who turned out to be very helpful, experienced and plain-speaking. He was in no doubt that trying to subdivide Maidenhead for planning purposes, as proposed by RBWM at one stage, would be bad planning – and said so.

Dialogue with RBWM was initially slow and difficult, possibly due to an under-resourced planning team, but gathered momentum and direction when a new officer joined the team. We were then able to get down to what the key issues were, what the actual hoops to be jumped were, and how RBWM was going to decide whether we’d jumped them. The criteria in the legislation appear well-defined until you get down to the detail, and it’s RBWM’s call whether the criteria are met. And there’s no right of appeal.

After the inevitable delays caused by Covid, we had a face-to-face meeting with RBWM Planning and with Dave Chetwyn joining remotely. Looking back this was probably the turning point, as we were able to discuss issues live (it’s very easy just to say “no” by e-mail) and agree a course of action. One valid point that came out was a lack of diversity in the Forum’s membership, and we have now reached out to get a wider range and better gender balance.

A few revised drafts of the application later, we were advised by RBWM that we could proceed to a formal application – a very welcome sign that the dialogue had worked. The formal consultation followed, and we were pleased to get over 100 responses from residents, overwhelmingly positive. The Borough was able to designate the Area, and us as a Forum.

What happens next? A Neighbourhood Plan is based on what local people want, so our first step will be to research opinion in the town, and we would like as many people as possible to give us their views on what new policies are needed and how they could be shaped. Watch out for more news about this, by email as well as in the *Advertiser* and on social media.

So now we have work to do, and to see what policies we can put in place for Maidenhead within the confines of the BLP. So, if you care as much about the town as we do, please do consider joining the Forum to help.

Ian Rose and Andrew Ingram
MNF

BACK TO THE OFFICE

It's important to encourage office workers who pre-Covid worked in an office (who are now working from home) to return to the office. This will revive the town centre economy. Everyone wants a vibrant town centre; however, without office workers this is going to be challenging.

Pre-Covid, mid-sized towns (similar to Maidenhead) would expect approximately 10,000 office workers within 10 minutes' walk of a train station. Post-Covid office attendance is now about 20-25% of what it was. So for Maidenhead, that's possibly 7,500 office workers who are not going about their usual daily business and leisure activities in the town centre.

There appears to be a collective decision for office workers not to commute any more. The question arises:

'What will be the impact on the town centre economy in the future, for landlords, tenants, employees, pension funds and communities?

Change is inevitable but it's usually gradual and may take a decade or two. Office buildings are good in so many respects! They will have at least five times the number of employees/visitors in occupation compared to the same size residential building.

Maybe we should all consider encouraging our friends, family & colleagues back to the office for the benefit of everybody?

Mark Harris MRICS

....BUT WHAT ABOUT PARKING?

There are some interesting reports on the national news about the post-Christmas back to work pattern being observed. The pandemic forced many organisations to adopt remote working, often equipping employees so they no longer depend on the office to function. With the pandemic passing, the new work patterns seem likely to endure, with flexible or hybrid working increasingly the norm. How that will impact Maidenhead is unclear, as demand for traditional daily commuting has slumped and will surely never return, with all that means for every commuter driven business. Perversely, the decline in commuting and travel into our cities could yet lift trade in local centres, with Monday and Friday footfall increasing. Time for a fundamental review of Maidenhead's long term parking strategy, I feel – preferably without demonising the personal vehicle, which with the move to electric is no longer the environmental threat it once was.

Full details are still awaited on the (health & safety) reasons for RBWM suddenly closing the Nicholsons multi-storey car park (MSCP). Some sort of partial collapse seems to have happened. The consented Nicholsons redevelopment involves building a new more centrally located MSCP at the eastern end of the site – *prior* to closing the existing car park. It will be some years before the new MSCP is completed, so the

existing car park is badly needed to serve the town centre in the interim, despite spare capacity elsewhere. The newly opened Vicus Way MSCP (*below*) is not close enough to serve this need.



Some comments voiced by the public include: “This is crazy and will have a big impact on all businesses in town, as if they weren’t struggling enough” and “Another nail in the coffin for Maidenhead and this certainly will not help the businesses in the Nicholson's Shopping Centre”.

Richard Davenport

MAIDENHEAD’S BUILT ENVIRONMENT – DEFINITELY A CASE OF ‘COULD DO BETTER’

“Disappointing the outside does not match the inside. Maidenhead centre is ugly.” So said a 30-something visitor over the Christmas period, reflecting after a visit to the new micro-brewery and a pasta restaurant. Both establishments met with approval for their ambiance – “you cannot tell you are in Maidenhead!” – and prompted the comment above. Looking around with a visitor’s eyes, Maidenhead falls short in many respects of the aspiration of ‘Inspiring Places’ in the Town Corporate Plan. Like many official documents, it is hard to find anything but empty words. Some of Maidenhead’s latest blocks of flats have been compared to ‘cell-block prison architecture’, with no greening attempt at all to soften the impact of high walls.



In the space that was the Magnet Centre, there was an opportunity surely for Maidenhead to deliver on some of the blurb on the council website – the priority of tackling climate change and improving the natural environment as an example, given the Council has declared a Climate Emergency. Or the hope of a ‘ladder of housing opportunity.’ How wonderful if Maidenhead had a housing project that aimed towards these descriptors, thoughtfully designed such that it could be a candidate for the Housing Design Award for Sustainability from the Royal Institute of British Architects – one that offered affordable family homes people would be glad to live in.

Sadly, this does not seem to be likely with most of the development in Maidenhead. The RBWM Corporate Plan remains just blurb.

Though this sounds harsh, Maidenhead Civic Society has politely been providing common sense comments in various responses to Consultations for years, highlighting many of the issues. For example, in the Society’s response to the *Building Height & Tall Buildings SPD Consultation* submitted in October last year it says:

“Housing: From the Borough’s own statistics and from evidence on the ground, Maidenhead would already appear to be over-supplied with high-rise housing. MCS does not believe that high-rise apartments are the right answer to the housing crisis. Government surveys and opinion polls repeatedly indicate that almost everyone would prefer to live in a house in a street rather than a flat; in seven controlled surveys people living in high-rise dwellings were the least satisfied with their homes. And most people would always avoid multi-storey blocks, particularly since lockdown. In a recent MORI survey of 1,056 respondents, not one wanted to live in a tower block. Moreover, family houses are scarce and overpriced; the shortage of truly affordable accommodation is at risk of becoming a crisis; and a growing proportion of exclusive rentals does little to help the market. A better solution is called for.”

Despite this well-argued clarity from a respected source, the high-rises continue, the mix of housing remains limited, and Maidenhead seems content to allow its town centre and immediate area to continue with, to put it politely, pedestrian architecture that does not inspire or enable family units to settle. It seems to me that those in charge do not walk the walk; they only talk the talk.

Kathy Murphy

Heritage & Environment

ELIAS KUPFERMANN – A TRIBUTE

You may have read in the Advertiser of 19th January of the death on 12th December 2022, at the age of 57, of the local historian and author, Elias Kupfermann. Although not a member, he was a good friend of the society. I had known Elias over many years and worked with him on projects including our exhibition on the *Origins of Maidenhead* shown in Maidenhead Library in 1996. When the foundations of the chapel of SS Andrew & Mary Magdalene were uncovered during road works outside the Bear Hotel in Maidenhead, Elias was involved in the investigation and later in 1997 he and I carried the bridge-masters staves, to escort the new Mayor to St Marys for the mayor making ceremony.



The Mayor unveiling the Civic Society plaque marking the site of the chapel, founded in 1451, that was responsible for maintaining the bridge over the Thames

He also made a contribution to the Ockwells project loaning me a microfiche he had obtained from the Bodleian Library of the notebooks of Charles Kerry (author of the *History of Bray*). This led to the discovery of drawings of the armorial glass by Sir Thomas Reeve made in 1765 and copied by Kerry. On another occasion he alerted me to the sale of important Ockwells documents on eBay; I informed Berkshire Record Office and they bought them.

His father was the American Impressionist painter Jacques Herbert Kupfermann (d.1987). Elias is survived by his mother, the writer Jeanette Kupfermann, his sister Mina, his wife Ewa and their young daughter Amber.

Elias has made a real contribution to the understanding of the history of this area. He was also a generous and helpful colleague and he will be missed.

GRAZING INTRODUCED ONTO BATTLEMEAD COMMON IN 2022

From an article on the RBWM website: “Last September the Royal Borough reported that livestock had been re-introduced to an area of Battlemead Common, north of Maidenhead, in an exciting new trial designed to help enhance biodiversity at the site. Almost 40 cows – Herefords and a Belted Galloway – were put onto the east field of the new common with plans to move some onto the north field. *N.B. Local residents will remember that cattle were often seen on the east field when it was part of White Place farm and there wasn't a damn big hedge in the way.*



Hereford Cattle on Battlemead Common 2022

Both fields are designated as grazing marsh priority habitat by Natural England. Conservation grazing is a way to maintain and improve certain habitats. It means areas don't become overgrown, encouraging a diverse range of plants and animals, including invertebrates, amphibians, birds, and, in turn, small mammals to thrive.

The cattle were removed from the east field in the autumn and replaced with sheep that will remain there until spring this year when they will be removed and the fields will be left to rest until July. The fields will then be cut and the hay collected before the cattle are reintroduced as a balanced way of managing the fields for the benefit of biodiversity.”

The Society welcomes this new development, though the Waterways group will have to keep an eye on what effect the cattle have on the White Brook. Shortly after being put on the east field they made a path through the fringing waterside vegetation to the brook where, as in the past, their hooves began poaching its banks. This doesn't do much for water flow!

In contrast, on the National Trust's Widbrook Common, on the other side of the Lower Cookham Road, where Commoners used to graze their cattle from mid- May to mid-November, no cattle have grazed there for the last two years. As might be expected this common has become overgrown but at least they aren't poaching the banks either!



Widbrook Common November 2021 – becoming overgrown except for the footpath!

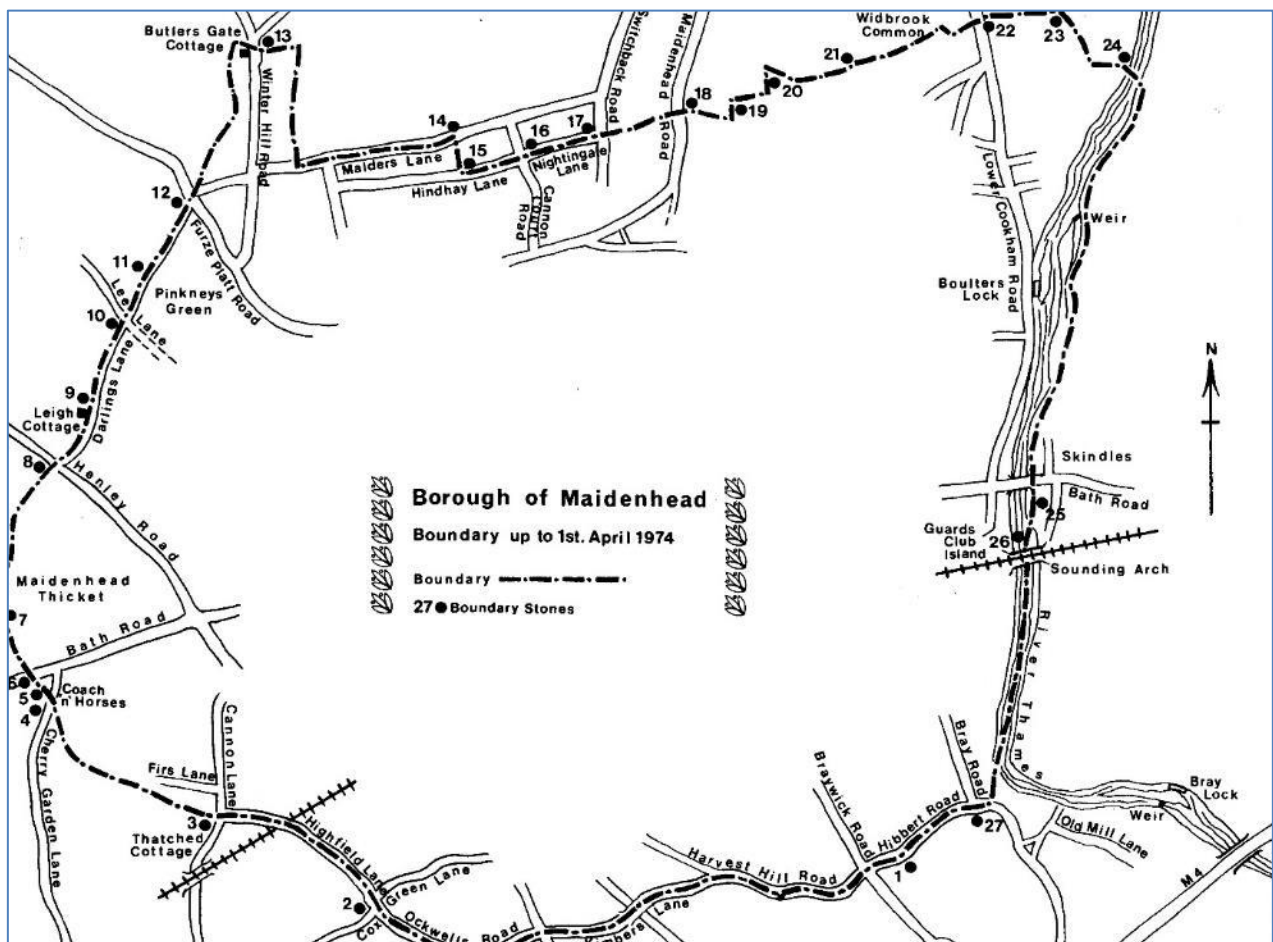
Ann Darracott

Two new initiatives have begun in connection with our long-standing work on footpaths and amenities in the local area. Firstly, new Society member Neil Savin, describes his efforts to locate and document all the boundary stones which marked the 1934 bounds of Maidenhead. And the Millennium Walk will, before too long, benefit from helpful waymarking signs (see page 19).

FINDING BOUNDARY STONES

If you look at a Maidenhead boundary stone, you will see it has “MB 1934” marked on it. The “MB” stands for Maidenhead Borough, and the “1934” refers to the year when Maidenhead borough expanded in size. Until 50 years ago, there was a ceremony carried out called ‘Beating the Bounds’. This was where there was a perambulation (walk) of the boundary led by the mayor along with other council members and officials. There were perambulations in 1934, 1949, 1963 and lastly in 1973. It then stopped when Maidenhead became part of Windsor and Maidenhead. In recent times, the perambulation has been replaced by the annual Rotary Club charity walk.

Maps by both the Tom Middleton and Michael Bayley Maidenhead show 27 boundary stones.



With the aid of this, I was able to find 13 stones. My big breakthrough came when I found a copy of the 1982 East Berkshire Ramblers booklet called ‘Beating the Bounds Around Maidenhead’. This booklet not only describes the boundary walk, but also gives clear instructions on how to find the 27+1 boundary stones!

The “plus 1” stone is along Ockwells Road, between the park and the manor. This stone, along with many of the harder to find stones, are often covered in layers of leaves, soil and ivy. The same was true of the stone on the Lower Cookham Road that is now fully visible.

At Butler’s Gate 40 years ago, stone 13 is described as chipped, but upright on the grass bank opposite the cottage. It is now on its side at the bottom of the bank. It badly needs removing to a safe location before being repositioned.



A forlorn boundary stone 13!

When the flood bund was constructed along the north-eastern boundary of Maidenhead, a boundary stone was found between stones 20 and 21 on the map. I have not had a chance to locate the stone that is in the wetlands part of Battlemead Common yet, but hope to, once this opens again in April.

I have been able to find 26+1 of the 27+1 boundary stones. The last one being stone 18, which should be along Maidenhead Road opposite the footpath near the Halfway Houses. Currently it is being used as steps in a nearby garden. On contacting the owner of the property, they are keen to see it restored to its proper position.



The yellow arrow points to stone 18 – used as a step

The one stone that I have not found yet is stone 15, in Hindhay Lane. If anyone remembers seeing this stone since 1982, then please let me know. There is also supposed to be a stone on the banks of the Thames on the Cliveden estate, which I also need to investigate; again any sighting would be useful. It would be nice to get the two stones re-positioned this year, and maybe even find some more before the 90th anniversary of their installation in 2024! I would like to thank Ann Darracott and Eddie Piekut (of Rotary Bridge) for their help.

Neil Savin

MILLENNIUM WALK

You will remember that in 2022 an updated version of the Millennium Walk map was published (see May Newsletter). However, it's a small map, so the Ramblers and ourselves approached the Local Access Forum for support to get the route waymarked. This was forthcoming so a small group, consisting of volunteers from both Societies, has been set up to do the necessary surveying.

As the Millennium Walk follows the Boundary Walk from Pinkneys Green to Maidenhead Riverside, we are liaising closely with another group searching for long lost boundary stones (see above).

STAGS AND FLAGS

The caption on the plate below the statue of the Royal Stag at the Waterways development reads: “The royal hunting pack used to meet annually in Maidenhead on Easter Mondays. One particularly special royal stag, known as Ceterwayd, was protected by the crown. Riders would endeavour to touch the animal during the hunt as a symbol of their horsemanship.” This statue gels nicely with the Berkshire flag.

In early 2017 a campaign, supported by the Society, was launched to design and adopt a flag for Berkshire and this was officially unveiled by HM Lord Lieutenant of Royal Berkshire, James Puxley, at the Royal County of Berkshire Show at Newbury Showground on Sunday 17th September 2017.

For many centuries Berkshire has famously been represented by a graceful device consisting of a stag standing under an oak tree and eating from its lower branches. This emblem is now used by many local organisations across the county.



The hart and oak refer generally to the forestlands of Berkshire and specifically to the legend of a late-14th century royal huntsman named Herne the Hunter. Legend has it that after various nefarious deeds by his jealous rivals, this one-time favourite of the king was dismissed from royal service and, distraught, he hanged himself from an oak tree which was then struck by lightning. The hart is “*one of the manifestations of his restless spirit*” and, according to Michael Drayton’s poem of 1627, a banner with this badge, or something very like it, was carried by the men of Berkshire at the Battle of Agincourt “*Barkshire a Stag, vnder an Oake that stood*”.



The emblem has been variously rendered in both monochrome and a variety of colour schemes; however, the original colour scheme was recently unearthed. This is a naturally brown stag surrounded by naturally coloured oak tree, leaves and ground set against a field of gold.

This emblem and colour scheme was used by Berkshire County Council as a device before 1947. With its strong local recognition and historic symbolism, the classic hart and oak with historic proper colours makes for the perfect Berkshire county flag.

Events

After a couple of quiet years due to Covid and lockdown we are pleased to be able to start our social programme again, with two water-themed events.

TOUR OF BRAY KELEHER WATER TREATMENT WORKS **Wednesday 29th March 2023, 12.00pm & 2.00pm**

To kick off, we have organised a couple of free tours of the Bray Keleher Water Treatment Works, Monkey Island Lane, SL6 2EE. The tours are the same, so you can choose whichever time suits.



The Bray Keleher Water Treatment Works abstracts and treats a maximum of 45 Ml/d of River Thames water and is of strategic importance in maintaining supplies to the western region of South East Water (SEW) but apparently not to Maidenhead. As noted in the Nov 2022 Newsletter, we are concerned about where the water supply will come from to service all the new flats in the town centre, given that groundwater pumping should not increase. This tour, and the later talk, is a chance to find out!!

The booking needs to be done directly with South East Water via the link below.
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/maidenhead-civic-society-bray-water-treatment-works-tour-tickets-511547360927> We will also send out this link again in a “Keeping in Touch” news email. If you are interested please confirm your email address to joyce@delasalle.me.uk, and if not on email please phone Joyce Delasalle on 07917 876145. NB: there are steps, gratings, uneven surfaces and generally a lot of slow walking/standing around without anywhere to sit down. As it is a working water treatment plant, anyone that comes must be able to comfortably stand/walk for 90 minutes and navigate slightly uneven footing.

As there are only 20 places available on each tour, we would encourage you to book soon.

CIVIC SOCIETY LUNCH

Tuesday 9th May 2023, 12.15 for 12.30pm

Next up, we are holding a lunch at Moor Hall (details below). There will be speaker from South East Water who will be talking about future water supplies in the Maidenhead area. With the prospect of a 45% increase in population over the next 10-15 years in Maidenhead, could our gushing taps be reduced to a trickle?

The lunch is open to members and their guests, although numbers are limited. It takes place at Moor Hall in Cookham. The cost is £26 per person for a 3-course meal and will include a choice of menu. If you wish to purchase drinks with your meal these can be ordered from the bar. We hope you will join us for a relaxed and informative lunch. It's a great opportunity to socialise with other members of the Society.

You will find a booking form at the end of the Newsletter; select your preferences from the menu below (and perhaps keep a note of what you've ordered!), indicating whether you have any special dietary requirements, and send it to Joyce Delasalle along with your cheque, or pay by bank transfer – details on the booking form – **no later than Monday 20th April 2023.**

The Menu:

Starters

- A) **Soup of the Day**
- B) **Crispy Squid Salad**, *with Chorizo, Lemon & Olive*
- C) **Pulled Beef Croquette**, *with Sweet Soy & Horseradish*
- D) **Grilled Halloumi**, *with Straw Beets, Parmesan*

Mains

- E) **Pan Chicken**, *with Carrots, Roasted Onion, Sprot Tops, Potato Pave, Thyme Chicken Jus*
- F) **Port & Cranberry Glazed Pork**, *with Saladaise Potatoes, Roasted Vegetables, Raisin Jus*
- G) **Charred Blackened Salmon**, *with Sweet & Sour Vegetables, Pak Choi and Shoots*
- H) **Tofu Stuffed Aubergine**, *with Warm Nicoise Salsa*

Dessert

- I) **Chocolate Parfait**, *with Peanut Brittle, Chantilly*
- J) **Honeycombe Brulee**
- K) **Coffee and Caramel Pear Tart**, *with Frangipane, Vanilla Ice Cream*

EVENTS VOLUNTEERS

As we are 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.

Booking Form & Menu Choice

CIVIC SOCIETY LUNCH at MOOR HALL

Tuesday 9th May 2023, 12.15 for 12.30pm

Please detach and send this completed form, together with your payment (see below) to reach Joyce Delasalle, 7 Laxton Green, Maidenhead, SL6 3HW

no later than Monday 20th April 2023

NAME

ADDRESS

.....

.....POSTCODE

PHONE:EMAIL:

Please reserve ____ place(s) @ £26.00 each. I have paid as follows (please delete as necessary)

I enclose a cheque for £_____ payable to “*Maidenhead Civic Society*”

I have paid by bank transfer to the account: *Maidenhead Civic Society*,
Sort Code: 30-95-36; A/c: 00277876, quoting ref “Moor Hall”

My party's names and menu choices are (continue on a separate sheet, if necessary):

| Name(s) USE BLOCK CAPITALS | Starter A - D | Main E - H | Dessert I - K |
|-------------------------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|
| 1. | | | |
| 2. | | | |
| 3. | | | |
| 4. | | | |

Please indicate if you have any special dietary requirements

If you have any problems, or for last minute cancellations, please contact
Joyce Delasalle without delay on 07917 876145

Dates for your Diary

Wednesday 29th March 2023
Visit

Tour of Bray Keleher Water plant
12pm and 2pm.

Saturday 22nd April 2023

Waterways Fun Day
10am – 3pm

Tuesday 9th May 2023
Lunch with Speaker

Civic Society Lunch
Moor Hall, Cookham. 12.15 for 12.30pm

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 further notice; times may vary.

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

The AGM will be held on Wednesday 22nd November 2023 at 8.00 pm

**The closing date for copy for the next issue
of the Newsletter is 14th April 2023**

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