



Maidenhead
Civic Society
Estd. 1960

NEWS

Issue 1/26

Feb 2026



*The Tempo building, near the railway station.
It'll be a while yet before it's completed*

Visit our website: www.maidenheadcivicsoc.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 272102

Note from the Editor

You will have read in the “Emergency” issue of our Newsletter that our long-standing printer – Denwall Press – regrettably ceased trading at the end of January, just as we would have gone to press. They have served us well over the years. This situation led the Committee to consider afresh whether we should seek another printer or move to a digital delivery basis. In order to inform this discussion, we sought your views on the way forward. We’re pleased to say that nearly sixty members responded. Whilst several said that they had a preference for a printed version, only two respondents were not at all keen on having a digital copy to read. The vast majority actually prefer something which can be read on a tablet or computer, and encouraged us to go this route – if nothing else, this being more environmentally friendly! And two members said this would be far better anyway, as they would be able to zoom in on their tablets and magnify the text as their sight wasn’t too good.

The decision was therefore taken to opt for a digital delivery via a link in an email. In coming to this position we also factored in the realisation that our pool of volunteers who distribute the Newsletters to you locally has been dwindling steadily as folk find they can no longer get about, leading to an additional burden on those remaining. This system is not sustainable going forward.

To put things into perspective, we have about 180 memberships (individual, family and life) for whom we have email addresses, and only 15 members who either do not have, or care not to use, an email and internet facility; they will continue to receive a printed version, though this may not be of such high quality printing as hitherto.

The Society has set up a bulk mailing facility with *MailChimp*. If this is ready in time you’ll see this noted at the bottom of the email. Otherwise the email will have been delivered by “normal” email. The link in the email will have taken you to the item on our website where you can read it directly or download it (as a stand-alone pdf file) to be read offline at leisure. It may be worth reminding you at this point that copies of all previous Newsletters back to 2003 are freely downloadable from our website

Going this route also gives us new flexibility in laying out the contents, and to issue an edition more – or less – frequently as the need arises. Once this new approach has bedded-in, we will also be able to consider refreshing the look of the Newsletter.

All this depends on you – the members – checking your emails and ensuring that anything from Maidenhead Civic Society does not end up in any “spam” or “junk” folders in your email system – yes, it happens! – and letting us know in good time of any changes to your email address.

Chairman's Piece

Maidenhead – *The times they are a-changin'*

The words of Bob Dylan, who wrote the song *The Times They Are A-Changing*, symbolise the change happening within our Town Centre.

We have learnt from the *Maidenhead Advertiser* that the Nicholson's Centre will be closing in June, and we also know that Marks and Spencer's will close their High Street store in the summer of 2026.

It will be a sad loss to the local community when these two facilities in Maidenhead disappear. Marks and Spencer's have been in Maidenhead for the last fifty years, and have served our community well, with only their food hall surviving in a new location at Stafferton Way. I share other residents' concerns that this will be a sad loss, and I would like their senior management to reconsider this closure again.

I remember a time when the Nicholson's Centre had the 'Rocket' sculpture in the centre. This centrepiece was at a time when youths used to congregate around it on Saturday. Then it was transformed into a shopping centre with a roof and a variety of shops, attracting shoppers into Maidenhead.

I would like to pay tribute to one of our executive members, Jane Wright, who manages the centre and has breathed new life into the town for many years, particularly during difficult trading times when people's shopping habits have changed, with people buying over the internet.

I sincerely hope that Areli do get on with the redevelopment once the centre closes, as the residents do not want a dormant town, as Maidenhead is a key strategic location for traders and residents alike, with the Elizabeth line connecting to London, just as it once was when horse-drawn carriages brought people across the toll bridge at Maidenhead in 1250.

It will take time for the new development to be completed, and I sincerely hope that Maidenhead prospers and starts the revitalisation of Maidenhead, as it has done in the past.

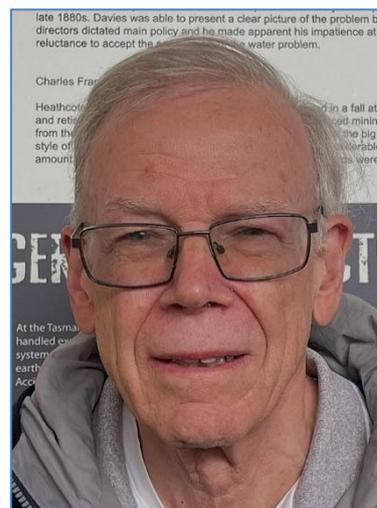
Derek Wilson

New Chair for Planning Group

As you are probably aware, I have taken over as chair of our Planning Group from Martin, who will continue to provide valuable input and stand in for me when I am abroad. My background is in the planning of major construction projects (time and sequence), not town planning, but my knowledge of construction and familiarity with construction drawings will, I hope, be beneficial.

To reduce our workload to a manageable amount, we will probably not comment on planning applications unless they meet at least one of the following criteria:

1. They involve demolition, new construction, or significant modifications in a conservation area in Maidenhead [Conservation areas Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead](#)
2. They are significant projects that affect the character of Maidenhead – visual, traffic, parking, amenity space, etc.
3. They have aroused strong feelings among some Maidenhead residents or MCS members who may wish MCS to take a view. I can also write to the Maidenhead Advertiser if I perceive that there is group support to do this.



The Civic Society does not have a special status regarding comments on planning applications, unlike other bodies and statutory authorities such as the EA, HSE, Natural England, Historic England, Berkshire Archaeology, National Highways, drainage and utility companies, neighbouring Town and Parish councils, etc. Nevertheless, we naturally hope that our comments will be carefully considered.

Any comments that do not comply with the RBWM Borough Local Plan (BLP) 2013-2033, associated SPDs, Government legislation, or the soon-to-be-approved Maidenhead Neighbourhood Plan (2024-2039) are unlikely to carry much weight. Because of the balanced approach that RBWM now has to take into account (lack of 5 years forward housing supply), if the pros outweigh the cons, any application is now likely to be approved. This means that we must consider carefully any objections, which should be based on a considerable disbenefit if they are to be accepted. We may choose not to comment on certain planning applications, which, although they could be improved, are largely compliant with current guidelines and legislation. We often mention overdevelopment of a site, lack of parking or restricted access, size of units, or an unsuitable location as issues. Relating any issues to the National Design Guidelines may be helpful – [National design guide - GOV.UK](#)

Brian Davies

Planning Matters

A major planning decision has been the approval of the **Nicholson Quarter** application at the Panel meeting on 20th November, following an earlier deferral to resolve certain issues. Public toilets will now be incorporated in the scheme, and there will need to be an agreement on the ongoing maintenance of the facility when the project is complete. The high-rise blocks will comply with the latest fire regulations, which require dual staircases. The quality of the retail space has been improved regarding permeability and frontage, although there will be an 11% reduction in total retail space. Proof must be demonstrated that there will be no adverse wind tunnel effect when the development is built, among other requirements.

A principal concern of the Society was the lack of provision for parking. As anticipated, there was no improvement offered to the inadequate provision within the scheme. The planners and developers have convinced themselves that “numerically” there are enough spaces to serve Maidenhead in the future. However, the location and quality of those spaces are an issue. As a result of these concerns, there will be a planning condition requiring the developer to provide between £250k and £600k towards the upgrading of existing car parks, especially Hines Meadow. The existing shopping centre is expected to remain open until at least July 2026, and Nicholson House and Brock House will be retained. It is expected that some shops will close down permanently, whilst others may relocate elsewhere in Maidenhead if there are sufficient suitable vacant shop units. The redevelopment could take as long as 5 years before it is fully complete.

In 2026, the UK government is proceeding with significant reforms to the statutory consultee system to accelerate the planning process and support economic growth. The formal consultation period on these reforms concluded on January 13, 2026. On behalf of the Society, Bob Dulson has responded to these proposals, which seek to speed up the planning process, particularly in relation to large housing schemes close to railway stations. This may restrict any influence that other parties (including RBWM) and we may have on the amendment or attachment of conditions to such planning applications.

Building F is the final phase of The Landing development in Queen St (now known as **One Maidenhead**) and comprises a ground plus seven-storey commercial office building with associated public realm and landscaping. A construction environmental plan has been submitted for approval, which states “the works are expected to be carried out from Q1 2026 with Practical Completion in Q3 2027”. An entrance will be constructed off Queen St (described incorrectly as Queens Road in the Construction Management Plan). This project, together with Nicholsons Quarter demolition and construction work, will generate a large volume of construction traffic along Broadway over the next two years.



One Maidenhead. Building F will go up just to the right of the tower crane

The Range, located in Stafferton Way, has been granted approval to divide the shop unit into two, with **M&S Food** occupying one of the units, which will have an increased mezzanine floor area. The car park exit to Stafferton Way is poorly designed and is likely to become even more congested than it is currently.



“The Range” at Stafferton Way retail park. The M&S food hall will occupy the right-hand (eastern) side of the divided unit

We objected to a 70-bed dementia care home at the site of **Lawnfield House** in Westmorland Road, primarily with concerns regarding traffic, parking, and proximity to neighbouring properties. RBWM refused permission, concerned that there was an oversupply of such accommodation and that they would be liable if residents ran out

of funds and then required council support. An appeal for a 58-bed home was launched by the applicant, which has been granted by the inspector, with RBWM offering no defence.

In Cookham, a new application by Elegy for a **crematorium** has been submitted on Copas fields, Long Lane (AL27). The previous application was withdrawn. The Cookham Society and Parish Council oppose the plan, saying that it is inappropriate for the green belt, would impact on the nature of Cookham village, and would blight the views of Cookham from Maidenhead (the facility is 10m high with an 11m smokestack). They also believe that 4 cremations a day would have a dangerous impact on traffic.

We have objected to the change of use for a **barbershop** to become a hot food takeaway in **Oldfield Road** on several grounds, which include the fact that the site in a residential area is unsuitable and the proposal lacks detail. A previous similar planning application had been approved over 3 years ago (now expired) when the adjacent convenience store was larger, and the rear of it occupied the premises.

The council has agreed to ‘start conversations’ with residents about what **Maidenhead United**’s fresh plans to relocate from its historic York Road site could mean for the town and specifically Braywick Park. As might be expected, there are strong views for and against this proposal. The Planning Group will comment if and when a planning application is submitted.

A four-storey office building at **72-80 Moorbridge Road** (near Waitrose) has finally been permitted to be converted into 27 flats after two applications and some amendments.

In Forlease Road (also near Waitrose), there is an application to demolish an existing pair of semi-detached houses (**33 and 35 Forlease Rd**) and replace them with a new two- to three-storey residential building of 12 flats of 1, 2, and 3 bedrooms with limited parking. We have objected to this application, which has limited parking and amenity areas. If approved, this may lead to the approval of similar schemes in the future.

The proposal to redevelop the **Sierra House** site, St Mary's Walk, has been agreed in principle, and an extension of time granted until 20th February 2026 to resolve S106 issues. The neighbouring apartments facing High Street have issues with rainwater leaks, and residents are unhappy that their flats will neither be improved nor demolished, and access to a fire escape will be restricted. The developer maintains that they cannot afford to buy these properties, which will be greatly impacted by the adjacent demolition and construction activity. During the construction period, Providence Place may regularly become obstructed and will need to be closed to traffic at certain times.

The Council adopted the **Maidenhead Town Centre Shopfront SPD** on 27th January 2026. There is no indication as to when the **Parking SPD** final version will be issued.

On 27th January 2026, the Cabinet Council decided that the **Maidenhead Neighbourhood Plan 2024 – 2039** can proceed to a neighbourhood plan referendum, and this is now fixed for Thursday 19th March – see the next article.

A decision on the application to build a 4-bedroom house in the back garden of **51 Switchback Road** has been deferred once more to 20th February 2026.

Councillors have approved a seven-storey block of flats behind the former **Post Office building in Maidenhead High Street**. We objected to the height of this development. Buildings at the rear of the old Post Office (110-114 High St) will be demolished for the new housing, and two new commercial units at 106-108 High Street will also be built, with 49 car parking spaces planned. There will be no affordable housing.

Plans have just been submitted to change the use of the site in Pinkneys Green of a former public house known as the **Boundary Arms** to a children’s day nursery, and the Society has submitted comments highlighting problems with the scheme.

Society member Diana le Clercq has expressed concern regarding ivy covering the Taplow end of Maidenhead Bridge, possibly causing damage to the stonework. She has asked the Council for a Conservation Plan for the bridge to be implemented, which seems to be a reasonable request. (FYI, Highways England has a document “CG304 Conservation of highway structures” which has a list of strategies and actions to be followed). This request has not yet been actioned by RBWM (Councillor Hill), with no date given for implementation, so she has approached MCS to ask if we have any record of repairs to this bridge. A quick search through the RBWM Planning database has failed to discover any planning applications relating to this Grade 1 listed structure. The Society will be supporting Diana in pressing for early adoption of a Conservation Plan for Maidenhead Bridge.

Finally, the Society has responded to the council’s **Environment and Climate Strategy 2026-2035**, which sets out plans to increase energy-efficient homes, increase EV charging, and create a nature recovery network that covers 30% of the borough.

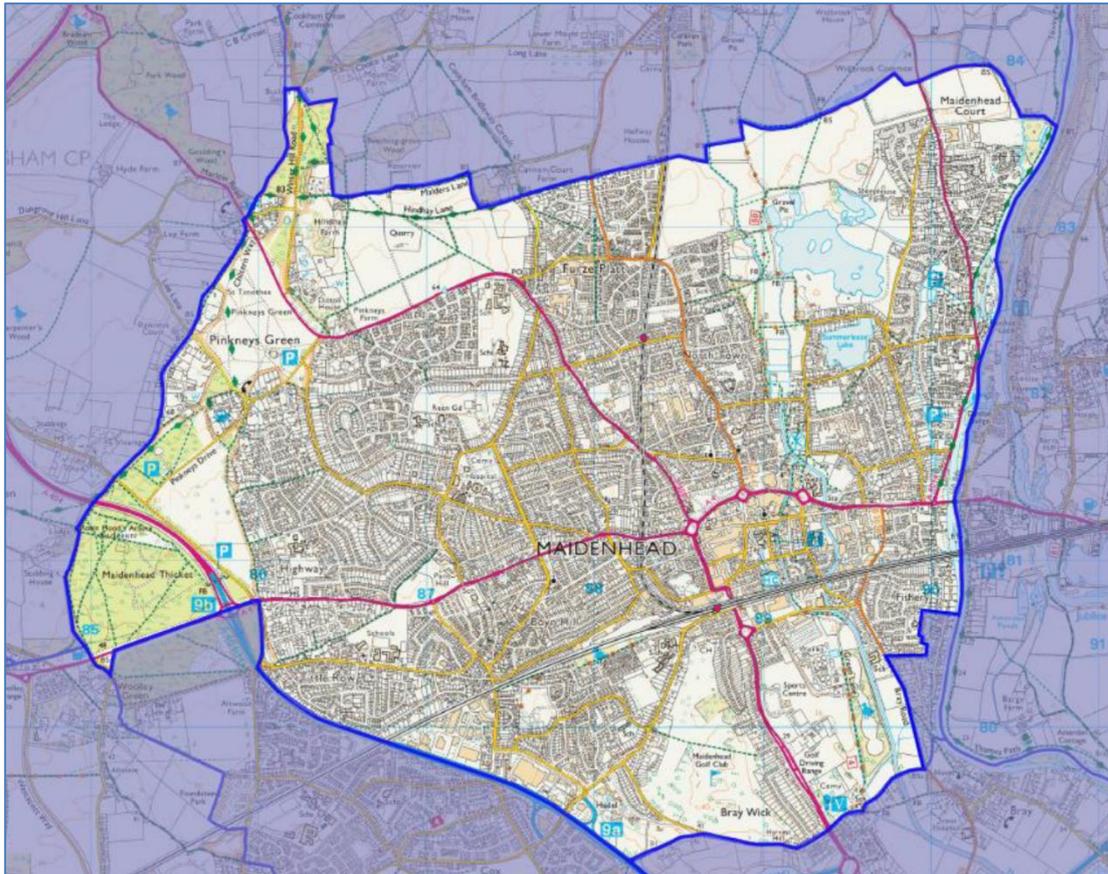
All the Society’s comments on these and previous planning applications can be viewed on our website here: [MCS Planning Comments](#)

Brian Davies

Maidenhead Neighbourhood Plan

Referendum March 19th 2026

For years, Maidenhead had been the only part of RBWM without a **Neighbourhood Plan** either in place or in development. And yet it is the Borough's primary growth area, so it is important for locals to have a voice.



The Maidenhead Neighbourhood Plan area consists of the 7 unparished wards of Belmont, Boyn Hill, Furze Platt, Oldfield, Pinkneys Green, Riverside and St Mary's (which includes the town centre)

How did we get here?

The plan was drawn up by the Maidenhead Neighbourhood Forum – an offshoot of the Civic Society (the former Maidenhead & Cox Green version had foundered because Cox Green has its own Parish Council). As soon as we were officially designated in early 2023, we started a series of public consultations – meetings, drop-ins, newspaper articles and online surveys.

These generated scores of suggestions. Several had to be excluded (e.g. litter removal, healthcare provision) because they don't come under Planning Policy. The rest were reviewed, filtered and then collated into six Topic Groups.

The volunteers in the Topic Groups used the suggestions to draft initial Planning Policies, which then went through an extensive process of internal review and public consultation, including input from specialist consultants, before the final draft was submitted to RBWM in September 2025.

It is important to understand that the Neighbourhood Plan (Plan) cannot override the Borough Local Plan (BLP) adopted by the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead (RBWM) or the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). But it **can** add detail and fill policy gaps where those sources are silent, and if the Plan is adopted it will have equal weight in planning decisions with the Borough Local Plan and other council policies. Inspectors will also be required to take into account the Neighbourhood Plan when deciding on appeals against planning refusals. We are confident it will become a force to shape the long term character of Maidenhead over the next fifteen years in tandem with those other planning sources and the RBWM Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).

Below are some key highlights from the Plan – the full version can be read at the MNF website (<https://mnf.org.uk>)

Design and Character

Design policies aim to curb inappropriate height/mass, maintain human-scale streetscapes and preserve/restore a sense of place. Tall buildings are restricted to specific zones, with defined maximum heights. Character Areas are identified with guidelines from a new Design Code. New buildings must provide adequate internal and external space, be visually compatible with their setting, and retain mature trees wherever possible.

Housing Strategy

A pressing need for genuinely affordable homes led to policies which will require 30–40% affordable housing on qualifying developments. The plan also promotes a better balanced housing mix, with emphasis on more 3- and 4-bed family homes, and policies to avoid oversupply of small flats. Community-led and key-worker housing are encouraged.

Getting around

Policies support a transition toward active travel and improved public transport access. New developments must connect to existing cycling and walking networks, incorporate safe access for all users, and provide sufficient parking. Interchange facilities (where people change transport modes, e.g. Maidenhead station) must include real-time information, step-free access, and weather-protected areas.

Climate and Sustainability

The plan supports the RBWM's 2050 Net Zero target through requirements for minimising operational and embedded carbon in all major developments. Developers must demonstrate energy performance using nationally recognised benchmarks. Renewable energy generation is encouraged onsite, and developments must follow the principle of efficiency first, then clean generation, then offsetting.

Biodiversity strategies include identifying green and blue corridors (for example, the area along the recently restored waterways), requiring Biodiversity Net Gain within RBWM, and mandating Sustainable Drainage Systems. Tree retention and urban greening are core to the environmental strategy.

Built Heritage

The town already has several Conservation Areas and a number of nationally Listed Buildings which are protected. This plan adds heritage policies to protect other locally significant buildings and streetscapes. More than 20 important green spaces are also identified, characterized and protected.

And now – the Referendum March 19th. Please vote “yes”!

Please put this date in your diary: it's the final hurdle in an extraordinarily long and complex process. There will be a single question:

“Do you want the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Maidenhead to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?”

Maidenhead: vote YES on March 19!

- Green Spaces protected
- More 3+ bed family homes
- Heritage assets protected
- Biodiversity gain to be local
- Newbuilds: net zero policy

The Referendum on Maidenhead Neighbourhood Plan will be on 19th March.

More details about the Plan are available at <https://mnf.org.uk>

Maidenhead needs this Plan!

M a i d e n h e a d N e i g h b o u r h o o d F o r u m

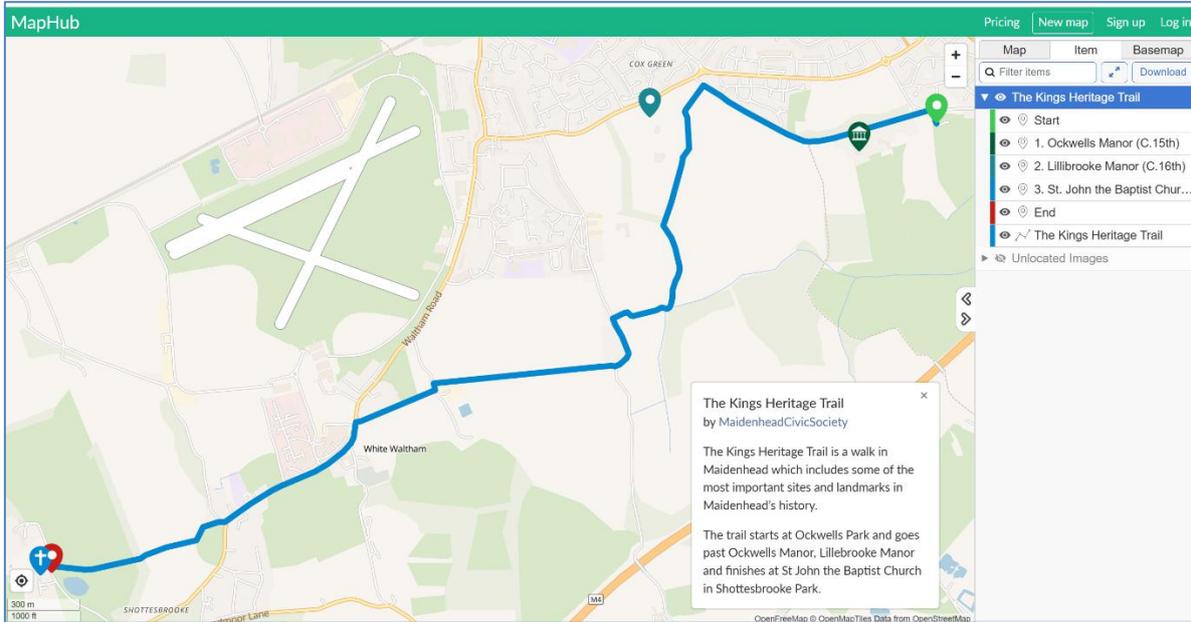
Thanks are due to all those who have supported the project over the last few years, especially Ian Rose as Editor and Co-Chair.

Andrew Ingram - Co-Chair, MNF

Projects

THE KINGS HERITAGE TRAIL

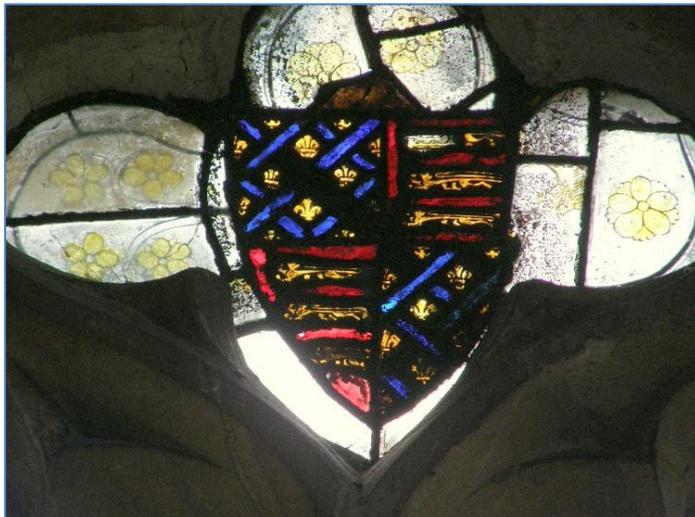
This is a new project designed to combine our interest in creating walking routes with making available on a user's mobile phone information on sites of heritage interest along the route. It is still a work in progress.



The trail is named for two Kings, as Edward III is represented by his armorial coat in St John the Baptist Church in Shottesbrooke, and that of Henry VI in the great hall of Ockwells Manor house.

Henry VI (d.1471) right

Edward III (d.1377) below



Lillibrooke Manor, formerly Lowbrooks Farm, is also included in the trail. Heritage information, photos and links to articles about the buildings on our website will be accessible via links on the user's phone display, though you might need good eyesight to read some of the text! This link [*Kings Heritage Trail*](#) will give you an idea of what we are attempting.

The trail has been created using existing public rights of way. Our aim of creating a circular route, with a more southerly return leg, is currently frustrated by the fact that the section of Church Lane near Waltham Place does not have a continuous, safe, footway. We really hope it will be possible to solve this problem, especially as this potential return route passes through the more pleasant countryside. Watch this space!

TONY WARD – AN APPRECIATION

Tony has died, aged seventy, as the result of a riding accident while on holiday in France with his wife, Jacqui. As well as running A W Woodlanders, he was a valuable member of the local conservation community, volunteering for Maidenhead Waterways and GoodGym, a group that combines good works with exercise. Though not a member of the Civic Society, he was a good friend and helped us in several of our projects.



Tony removing reeds in the stream on Town Moor in 2013

Ian Rose of Maidenhead Waterways says that not only did he do lot of tree work for them, but he also explained to volunteers how he did things and why. As a result, many of their volunteers know the basics of tree work and can tackle quite a few jobs.

In our [May 2020 Newsletter](#) Tony is recorded twice, removing tree debris from the White Brook (p14) and felling a tree stump next to North Town Moor pond (p16-17). Badger activity there had led to a build up of woody debris entering the water.



In 2021 he organised the removal of tree debris that had damaged Guards Club Bridge (see pp15-17 [May 2021 Newsletter](#)). The photo above shows the intrepid Tony up to his armpits in the swollen river waters about to wield his chainsaw!

The mail below sent to those on his email list in 2024 reflects his warm personality:

Hi, I am sailing across the Atlantic on a real sailing ship with no internet or phone coverage, I may check the mails at the two stop overs but don't bank on it. Enjoy what ever you are doing and don't wait to long to pursue your own adventures. "One life, live it", as they say. Sent with many Smiles, Anthony.

The absence of his valuable help in dealing with practical conservation projects will be keenly felt by the local community and our heartfelt sympathy goes to his wife Jacqui.

Ann Darracott

News from the Heritage Centre

MEMORIES OF THE NICHOLSONS CENTRE?

A special exhibition is being prepared for a vacant shop unit in the Nicholsons Centre, running from mid March until May or June when the centre will be closing down. Our organisers are appealing for local people to share their memories and photos of the centre, from what was there before such as Moffat Street and the Brewery to the first phase with shops including A A Fisher (Butcher), Steanes hardware store and Radio Rentals. You may also remember the Rocket in the middle of the Centre when it was roofed in, although the Rocket vanished in a much needed refurbishment many years later. If you can help, please contact us on 01628 780555 or email info@maidenheadheritage.org.uk

CURATORIAL VOLUNTEERS

We have recruited two volunteers as Joint Honorary Curators of the Heritage Centre collection. Emma Barnett and Paul Seddon are both deeply involved with the Cookham Abbey dig. Emma has lived in Maidenhead for most of her life and has always had an interest in local and social history. She runs the 10,000 member “Maidenhead History” group on Facebook. Paul has been promoting archaeological and historical research in this area for many years and chairs the Maidenhead and Marlow Archaeology and History Society. They both hope to recruit a team of enthusiastic volunteers to help with cataloguing our collection and helping with historical research. Please contact them via email info@maidenheadheritage.org.uk

OUTREACH AND LEARNING

Richard Poad runs our Outreach and Learning programme, giving talks on many local topics and also Air Transport Auxiliary to clubs near and far. In March he’s talking about Wind in the Willows for ‘The Big Read’ at Maidenhead Library and in April he’s giving his ATA talk to a group in Loughborough! He also runs workshops for local primary schools (years 5 & 6) on topics ranging from Brunel and Victorian Maidenhead to World War II. Richard is looking for volunteers to assist him with the school workshops, most of which happen in the summer term.

This month we are welcoming a group of partially sighted and blind people from Activeyes, which presents more of a challenge than the usual groups of Cubs and Brownies. Our handling collection includes many objects from Roman times to the present day which we hope will intrigue the group, along with the sound of our GWK car and the Spitfire simulator at full throttle.

RIVER THAMES HISTORICAL CRUISE, 3 SEPTEMBER 2026

Tickets for our popular 5-hour cruise with live commentary will go on sale immediately after Easter.

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
Newsletter Distribution	Sue Ross

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

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2026

All Committee meetings are now at the Cox Green Community Centre, 6.30pm until further notice.

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 a date in September 2026, to be advised.

**The closing date for copy for the next issue
of the Newsletter is 17th April 2026**

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