



Maidenhead Civic Society

Estd. 1960

NEWS

Issue 2/24

May 2024



Spot the new plaque! See more details on page 7

Visit our website: www.maidenheadcivicsoc.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 272102

Notices

Membership Secretary

After nearly twelve years in the role, Joyce Delasalle has decided it is time to stand down and so the Society is looking for a new Membership Secretary.

The postholder plays a key part in managing annual subscriptions and maintaining the membership database. **Without this, the Society would have difficulty functioning properly.**

It's an important job at the heart of the Society and would suit someone who obviously has an interest in what we do and is comfortable using a computer.

Joyce will be on hand to share her knowledge and expertise in handling tasks like membership applications, payment reminders, and preparation of lists for the distribution of the quarterly Civic Society Newsletter.

Anyone interested and prepared to support the Society in this way should contact the Newsletter Editor – Brian Darracott – at info@maidenheadcivicsoc.org.uk or on 07796 834542 in the first instance.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER

We would like to remind our members who pay by cheque that your subscriptions are due on June 1st. If you would like to change the way you pay to a Standing Order the details are: Lloyds Bank, Sort Code 30-95-36, Account number 00277876. Subscriptions have not changed for the coming year but could you please check that your Standing Order is for the correct amount as listed below. Your prompt payment would be appreciated as this helps the Society carry out its good work on behalf of the members and to the benefit of Maidenhead.

If you have any queries please contact me on joyce@delasalle.me.uk or telephone 01628 637342.

Single membership	£15.00
Family Membership (2 members at one address)	£20.00

Planning Matters

We covered the proposed development of Maidenhead Golf Course in our last newsletter and we will return to the Cala Homes scheme later. There has been one other major application in the early months of this year. There are plans to demolish **Lawnfield House** at 3 Westmorland Road to create a 70-room care home on the site. The plot which is on the eastern corner of the junction with Bath Road is significant in size and currently accommodates a distinguished, if faded, Victorian detached villa. It could have additional family homes introduced to the plot, like No. 5 Westmoreland Road which is adjacent. A case is made in the application regarding the increasing demand for such care home accommodation in Maidenhead. However, the latest data would suggest that Maidenhead is well provided for in this regard compared with surrounding local authorities. Our full letter of objection is provided below.



Lawnfield House, Westmorland Road

In our Newsletter of May 2023 we first brought to your attention the application to create a nursery/pre-school at **Maidenhead Court Boathouse**. This is a listed riverside building in a Conservation Area. The vagaries of the planning system dictated that an application for change of use was not required, as both the existing use as offices and proposed use as a nursery school were within what is known as Class E. However, the first application was regarding heat pump and cooling system installations, and related sight and sound screening. At the end of last year a subsequent application gave details of the landscaping and boundary fencing of the site. It was clear from the submitted plans that a 1.8 metre metal picket fence required for safeguarding of the children was proposed. No elevations or visuals

were provided to illustrate the visual impact. Within days the Conservation Officer had responded that there were “no objections from a conservation perspective”. Now that the fencing is erected, it is clear that the traditional aspect of the listed building from the towpath has been destroyed. Although the fencing is set back an estimated 7 metres from the towpath boundary, the black-painted fence appears as a solid visual screen, completely obscuring the ground floor elevations of the building. It has the appearance of a compound – although whether for children, dogs or prisoners is only made clear by the prematurely erected advertising sign for “**n.family club**”.



Above: the former boathouse in May 2023; below: the same view in May 2024



As we go to print there are applications pending for five information/advertising signs on the site. Permission has not been granted – yet signs are already in place. In addition, there is a large multi-coloured temporary advertising banner attached to the compound fencing. It is concerning that the supposed protection of “heritage assets” by listing and conservation regulations is evidently so ineffectively applied.

Regretfully, Maidenhead is witnessing a decline in the number of banks and building societies serving the town. **Bank of Scotland** on the High Street has been closed for a number of years and permission has already been granted for change of use of the existing upper floors. An additional structure is now proposed over the car park area to the rear. Two floors of accommodation will be constructed creating a total of 6 x 1-bed flats – which just meet the minimum space standard of 50 m². Likewise, **Halifax BS**, located 100 yards to the east, has more recently closed with the ground and first floors being retained for commercial use. There are two alternative applications for residential development of the 3rd and 4th floors which have already been submitted. One proposal is for 9 x studio flats which will accommodate between 9 and 18 persons – depending on how cosy the sleeping arrangements are! The alternative is for 7 flats: 6 x 1-bed/2-person, and 1 x 1-bed/1-person. The maximum number of residents in this scenario is 13 people. Whilst the minimum space standards are achieved, there is no provision of amenity space. We have not commented on these proposals which are part of the ongoing introduction of residential accommodation above retail space in the town centre. This is further evidenced by the recent approval of 6 flats on the first and second floors above **Poundland** (formerly Wilkos) at 88 to 90 High Street.

It is understood that the current administration are in discussions with the developers of both the **Elizabeth Quarter** on the Golf Course and **Nicholsons Quarter** in the town centre. On the Golf Course scheme, it is hoped to reduce the total number of dwellings, scale back the number of flats and replace them with high density family homes with amenity space – both for the open market and affordable/social rental. The green open spaces are to be opened-up with improved access. In the town centre the short term issues caused by the necessary demolition of the Broadway Car Park persist. Outline planning permission for the Nicholsons scheme was granted in 2021 and it is regrettable that there appears to be little progress with getting on with the scheme. There have been delays with compulsory purchase and the financial fundamentals are more adverse than when permission was granted. No one wants to see the 25 storey “landmark” block being built and it is hoped that the height will be scaled back. However, the ongoing uncertainty and lack of progress is bad for the town, with everything on hold and no likelihood of a new multi-storey carpark.

The appeal against the refusal of the scheme for the **Spencers Farm** site has taken place and the decision of the Inspector is awaited. If the appeal is upheld it will reinforce the view that residential development sites identified within the Borough Local Plan (BLP) cannot be challenged. This is unfortunate because whilst each site might be untouchable in principle, in reality there will surely continue to be issues with the volume, density, design, access and other issues relating to each designated site in the BLP.

This edition of our Newsletter usually includes a review of the planning and housing data from the annual Authority Monitoring Report published by RBWM. Unfortunately, because of staffing issues it will not be published till the end of May,

although it refers to data for the year ending March 2023. An analysis will be included in the next Newsletter.

Lawnfield House, Westmorland Road – Civic Society response

This is a full application for the proposed construction of a residential care home, comprising parking, access, landscaping and associated works following demolition of existing buildings on site.

This large residential plot is occupied by a detached Victorian villa and could alternatively accommodate additional residential dwellings – as evidenced by the adjacent back garden development of No 3a Westmorland Road. However, we object to this proposed development as a residential care home which will create an excessive and overbearing structure.

The footprint of the buildings extends too close to the boundaries of the plot, so that the perceived height, bulk and mass are out of character with the prevailing streetscape. The tri-form design of the three wings results in the structure extending close to the boundaries of the site. In particular, the northwest corner (the junction of Westmorland Road and Bath Road) has a building line only metres from the boundary. This is well in advance of the prevailing building lines of adjacent properties. Such proximity to the boundary will increase the perception of height, bulk and mass. The maximum ridge height is 12 metres, which is much higher than surrounding residential properties even though heights reduce outwards to mitigate the visual impact. The number of rooms is excessive at 70 and requires the construction of a basement level to provide ancillary services (catering, laundry, staff etc.)

Parking provision is completely inadequate for a 70-room care home. Only 19 spaces are proposed (including 2 for Blue Badge holders). Although residents will not have vehicles, the number of staff and the likely number of visitors will result in residual/overflow parking on neighbouring roads. In the case of staff, such parking will be long-term. This will increase the already considerable pressure on parking on surrounding streets. It is also noted that there will be a negative impact on trees on or near the site, including lime trees which are characteristic of the street-scene

It is accepted that an ageing population will increase demand for such care facilities in the future. The scheme also attempts to soften the external visual impact of the blocks by breaking up the elevations in terms of design and materials. However, we object to the proposal which attempts to maximise the development of the site to the extreme and delivers a scheme of an overbearing height, bulk and mass with inadequate parking provision.

Martin McNamee

SOCIETY REVIVES DESIGN AWARD TO HONOUR WATERSIDE QUARTER

The transformation of Chapel Arches into a “must-go” town centre destination has been recognised with a Design Award by the Civic Society. Committee members had unanimously approved the award recommendation at their meeting in January. It is the first such award by the Society in over a decade.

At a brief ceremony, held on site at Waterside Quarter in March and attended by a number of our committee members, Michael Shanly, chairman of the developer Shanly Homes, was presented with a plaque by the Society’s patron, Theresa May MP.



Along with Theresa May and Michael Shanly at the presentation were: Katherine Croom, MD of Sorbon Estates who manage Waterside Quarter, Robin Dorran, development director of Shanly Homes, and Society executive committee members, Tim Burt, Ann & Brian Darracott, Bob Dulson, Lisa Curtin and Joyce Delasalle.

Waterside Quarter, combining restaurants, retail and residential homes, has made a feature of the waterway and opened up inviting new vistas and streamside walkways. A unique and innovative design had created an enticing and engaging new area in our town centre while retaining nostalgic influences of the former Colonnade. The Society also commended the developers for their extensive community engagement before and throughout the process.



The Waterways Quarter (photo courtesy James Camplin, Flight Surveys)

Theresa May said: “It is totally appropriate that the Civic Society which encourages the best in building design should reward this development which has completely transformed and enhanced this area of the town centre.”

Michael Shanly said: “We are extremely proud of the Chapel Arches redevelopment. It was an ambitious vision to transform this area of the town and bring the waterways back to life, but with a great team, and like-minded stakeholders, we’ve achieved it. To receive this recognition from the Civic Society is an honour.”

Council leader, Simon Werner, who had also accepted our invitation to the presentation but was unable to attend on the day, said: “I’ve watched this development from the early planning stage and I’m delighted that it has emerged as a major focal point in our town centre, exceeding expectations. I applaud the Civic Society’s decision to reward it with their design award.”

The Awards scheme, originally initiated by the Civic Society in the 1970s, was taken over by the Borough and ran biennially until 2005 when it lapsed. It was revived briefly in 2010 but the Society has not made a similar award again until now.

Waterside Quarter, which completed last year, is the final phase of a three-phase development which over 10 years has seen the rejuvenation of the waterway, the creation of a community amphitheatre and the renovation of some historic High Street premises alongside quality homes with underground parking in all phases including Chapel Wharf and The Picturehouse. The Shanly scheme was attracting public attention well before its recent completion and has already become a regular venue for events like the Waterways Fun Day.

Civic Society planning chair, Martin McNamee, said: “With 182 new homes and a variety of shops, restaurants, cafes and offices, Shanly Homes has brought an exceptionally attractive new neighbourhood to the town centre in exemplary fashion. This development has been instrumental in the regeneration of the area focussed on the Maidenhead Waterways project. It has introduced a vitality and interest to the street scene with a wide choice of wining and dining options. The elevations of the residential block have a variety of building materials and architectural features, while the higher floors are set back to reduce the visual dominance of the building. We would certainly welcome more developments of this quality and standard as regeneration continues.”

Bob Dulson

Some Earlier Design Awards

Over the years the Civic Society has made a number of design awards. They mostly followed the example here. A few that come to mind were awarded to these developments:

- Bishop’s Court, Boyn Hill, development
- Tithe Barn Estate, Bray
- Waterglade House, High Street (now called Brock House)
- Interior restoration of Oakley Court Manor
- Regent House, King Street
- Oaklands office development, 1 Bath Road (top of Castle Hill)
- Fredericks Hotel refurbishment



See if you can find them!

Projects

BATTLEMEAD COMMON – PROBLEMS AND CHANGES

Battlemead Common you may remember was created by the Royal Borough by purchasing, farmland, part of White Place farm. The stated aim was to provide additional public open space and fill in a missing link in the Millennium Walk. This walk follows the Boundary Walk from Pinkneys Green. The link closest to the boundary stones, the causeway path, was opened this year on 28th March in time for the Easter weekend and remains open until the end of October. The northern perimeter path gives access to the river in the other months.

Problems

Access: Currently there is no public car park on the new common. The able-bodied can walk there but there is no provision for the disabled. The 2019 plan for a car park included four disabled spaces. The Council say that with regard to parking, “*the area in question is a service area rather than a carpark and is opened and used for vehicles and equipment when the Natural Environment team are carrying out maintenance work on site at Battlemead.*” The photos below show the result of the lack of parking. We have pointed this out to the Royal Borough.



Motorists park in the space in front of the barrier into the common (despite the warning sign)



Motorists also park on the highway verge at the pedestrian crossing

Impact of Flooding: When it floods, the flow in the White Brook reverses, flowing into the Thames instead of out of it at Islet Park. From Cookham water eventually flows across the east field of Battlemead Common to enter the Thames near Islet Park. Since the North Maidenhead Flood Bund was constructed the amount of water involved has increased and therefore also the power of the flood.

For some reason, bales of grass cut last autumn were left in situ so when it flooded in January 2024 these very heavy bales were swept along by the flood until they reached the northern fence of the causeway path. On 22nd April they were still there. Our information is that the bales will be removed when the ground is dry enough to use a tractor. Given that the ground they are lined up in is wetland and the bales are on the wet side of the fence, we will be interested to learn how this is to be achieved.



*View of plastic wrapped hay bales from Cliveden
(photo courtesy James Camplin, Flight Surveys)*



Above: Hay bales lined up along the slightly-bent causeway fence

Left: Civic Society member Joan Francis inspecting the bales

No sheep or cattle have yet been put on the east field due to the very wet ground conditions (not to mention the hay bales!). Jason Mills, Natural Environment Manager at RBWM, hopes they can be deployed for conservation grazing purposes after the summer hay cut in July. By then the current bales will have to have been removed in time for new hay bales to be created and also removed.

Changes

The photos of the causeway path below show how the east field has altered over the years. The wetlands created on either side of the causeway, were originally the result of poaching by cattle which in the past was minimised by dredging the White Brook and spreading the silt on the banks of the stream.

September 2002

When the east field was part of White Place farm and was used for grazing cattle



January 2019

When recently purchased by the Royal Borough



January 2023

Plant changes on the wetlands of the east field have helped reduce the area of open water seen in 2019



90TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MB 1934 BOUNDARY STONES



The Society is helping Rotary Bridge to celebrate the placing of boundary stones round an expanded Maidenhead Borough in 1934. Walking round this new perimeter is the basis of the annual charity Boundary Walk. Prior to 1934 the perimeter was marked in a “Beating the Bounds” ceremony which has been performed occasionally since then with the addition of the Mayor, Town Clerk, uniformed personnel, and councillors being bumped on the stones and ladies and girls being kissed. Children who attended were given a souvenir sixpence. Health and safety issues now preclude such bumping (and kissing!) but we would like to continue the tradition using just the sixpences.

As you may have gathered from a recent letter in the *Maidenhead Advertiser* we are keen to obtain 90 sixpences to distribute to participating children to celebrate this anniversary. If anyone has these little coins and is willing to donate them please contact the editor on 07796 834542.



“Beating the Bounds” in 1909 and 1973 in pictures

Prior to 1934, carrying the mace around the boundary was the custom, though it seems not a lot of “bumping” on the existing boundary stones occurred. That said, some athletic activity was evidently involved! In his 1971 book “*A History of Maidenhead*” J. Wesley Walker described the 1909 event.



“Bumping” appears to have come in with the new set of stones in 1934. We are grateful to Mark Stevens, Head Archivist of Berkshire Record Office, for an account of the 1963 ceremony (which took two days), and to Maidenhead Library for these photos.



Left: Mayor Euphemia Underhill being bumped; right: the mayor Euphemia Underhill in the “Maidonian” with the mace

For a full account of the history of Maidenhead’s boundary stones click on this online article by Chris Bristow (one of the boundary stone seekers!):

<https://maidenheadinpictures.com/2023/12/31/history-of-maidenhead-boundary-stones/>

Ann Darracott

Events

VISIT TO BURNHAM ABBEY Monday 3rd June 2024

Burnham Abbey was founded for a community of Augustinian Canonesses in 1266 by Richard, Earl of Cornwall, brother of King Henry III, reputedly in thanksgiving for his release from captivity after the Battle of Lewes in 1265. The full history can be read online at www.burnhamabbey.org/history.htm.



Unfortunately the few remaining members of the order have had to move to Gerrards Cross and the Abbey is now empty. However, we have been able to arrange a private visit before the empty buildings are put up for sale. As some parts are quite cramped we must limit the number of people per visit to 20. We have therefore organised for one visit on Monday 3rd June but if we reach this number we have the opportunity of a second visit on Friday 7th June. It would be helpful if you could respond by 28th May if wishing join us.

The cost per member is £7.00 to include a cup of tea and biscuits. All profits will be donated to the Abbey. The address is: Lake End Road, Taplow SL6 0PN (opposite West Town Farm's entrance) and car parking is available in the grounds. Please arrive at 1.45pm for 2pm. Before making payment please contact Joyce on 07917 876145 or joyce.delasalle@btinternet.com. Bank details: Maidenhead Civic Society, Sort Code: 30-95-36; Account No. 00277876. Cheques should be made payable to "Maidenhead Civic Society" and handed/posted to Joyce Delasalle, 7 Laxton Green, Cox Green, Maidenhead, Berks, SL6 3HW.

Please note: There are quite a few stairs involved so it's not recommended if you have a disability.

TAPLOW COURT OPEN DAYS

Once again, the house and grounds will be open to the public on the following Sundays: 5th May, 2nd June, 7th July, 4th August, 1st & 8th September (National Heritage Day). The grounds are open from 12.30-5pm and the house from 2-5pm. Tea and cakes are available to purchase from 2pm.

JAZZ EVENING AT MAIDENHEAD ROWING CLUB 28th September 2024

Back by popular request, we're planning another "Jazz evening" at Maidenhead Rowing Club. More information in the August Newsletter.

CIVIC SOCIETY LUNCH

Wednesday 26th June 2024, 12.30 for 1.00 pm

Next up, we are holding another lunch at Moor Hall, Cookham, SL6 9QH (details below). Our lunch speaker in June is **Robert Seatter**, Head of BBC History. His book “Broadcasting Britain: 100 Years of the BBC” delves into the rich history and cultural impact of one of the world’s most renowned broadcasting institutions. A respected BBC executive, Robert chronicles the evolution of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) over the past century, highlighting its pivotal role in shaping the nation’s identity and reflecting its social, political, and technological transformations.



The lunch is open to members and their guests, although numbers are limited. The cost is £30 per person for a 3-course meal and includes a choice of menu. If you wish to purchase drinks with your meal these can be ordered at 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 overleaf; 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 Tuesday 11th June 2024.**

The Menu:

Starters

- A) **Soup of the Day**
- B) **Cured beetroot** *Smoked mackerel, horseradish fraiche, walnuts, apples*
- C) **Tomato tartare** *Grilled goats cheese, honey spiced avocado*
- D) **Chorizo aranchini** *Soused vegetables, sweet onion relish*

Mains

- E) **Pulled lamb shepherd’s pie in red wine** *Herb roasted broccoli*
- F) **Chilli and sweet ginger glazed pork belly** *Asian greens, tempura oyster mushrooms, udon noodles*
- G) **Grilled fillets of red mullet** *Capers and prawns white wine cream, potato galette and leeks*
- H) **Soy glazed miso cod** *Chickpeas, nori*
- I) **Butternut Squash Gnocchi** *Torn mushrooms, onions, ricotta, pumpkin seeds*

Dessert

- J) **Japanese cherry bake cheesecake** *Hazelnut dukkah cream*
- K) **Coffee caramel panna cotta**
- L) **Carrot Cake**
- M) **Fresh fruit salad**

Booking Form & Menu Choice

CIVIC SOCIETY LUNCH at MOOR HALL

Wednesday 26th June 2024, 12.30 for 1.00 pm

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 Tuesday 11th June 2024

NAME

ADDRESS

.....

.....POSTCODE

PHONE:EMAIL:

Please reserve ____ place(s) @ £30.00 each. I have paid as follows (please delete as necessary)

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

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 - I	Dessert J - M
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**



News from the Heritage Centre

Exhibitions and Talks:

Until May 19th Maidenhead Heritage Centre has a display of pottery made at Odney in Cookham between the years 1942 and 1956. The pottery created pots that were purchased for the John Lewis Partnership and sold in their department stores. Started during the difficult years of the War, the venture encapsulated the creativity and practicality of the Partnership, and the talented man at the helm of Odney Pottery, John Bew. The collection on display at the Heritage Centre was bequeathed by Leslie Knight, one of John Bew's team, and is well worth a visit.

The 80th anniversary of D-day will be marked by a special Zoom talk "*Memories of D-Day*" by Richard Poad on **Tuesday June 4th**. It will be based on interviews he carried out many years ago with twenty Maidenhead people who took part in the invasion and the subsequent Battle of Normandy.

A totally different zoom talk "*Maidenhead and the Olympics*" will be given on **Tuesday July 23rd**, immediately before the opening of the Paris Olympics.

Full details and tickets for both these talks are available on <https://maidenheadheritage.org.uk> together with details and tickets for the Centre's ever popular River Thames Cruise on Tuesday September 3rd.

Tailpiece



Having earlier featured our Design Award for the new Chapel arches development, this is how the area looked in the very early 1900s

Dates for your Diary

Monday 3rd June 2024
Visit and Tea

Visit to Burham Abbey
1.45 for 2 pm.

Wednesday 26th June 2024
Lunch with Speaker

Civic Society Lunch
Moor Hall, Cookham, 12.30 for 1.00 pm

Saturday 28th September 2024
Jazz Evening

Maidenhead Rowing Club
Times to be advised

CIVIC SOCIETY – 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
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Newsletter & Website	Brian Darracott	01628 620280
Events		
Membership Sec.	Joyce Delasalle	01628 637342
Newsletter Distribution	Sue Ross	01628 626849

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2024

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

9th January, 13th February, 12th March, 9th April, 14th May, 11th June, 9th July, (13th August), 10th September, 8th October, 12th November, 10th December

The 64th AGM will be held on Wednesday 20th November 2024 at 7.45 for 8.00 pm.

**The closing date for copy for the next issue
of the Newsletter is 19th July 2024**

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