



# Maidenhead Civic Society

Estd. 1960

# NEWS

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Issue 4/21

November 2021

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***Maidenhead's new station forecourt  
Will it live up to its promise to be an attractive gateway into the town?***

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

# The Chairman's Page

The Waterways Fun Day at the end of September was a cracking idea by our friends in the Waterways Group to celebrate their remarkable achievement and we were happy to support it. It had real community spirit, was well organised and fun. Let's hope it becomes a regular fixture.

It was good to out and about again and see so many of our regular contacts. As well as the Waterways folk, we chatted with friends from the Heritage Centre, Chamber of Commerce, Town Partnership and Neighbourhood Forum as well as a few councillors, including the lead members for planning and highways.

Another pleasure on the day was being able to appreciate at close quarters just how much the redevelopment of Chapel Arches is improving this area of the town centre.

This retail/apartments mix with integrated residential basement parking (big tick there) was designed by the local, award-winning team at TP Architects. Not only is their design sympathetic to the period character of this part of the High Street, skilfully merging new with old, but by opening up a vista to the north and incorporating waterside arcades, terraces and bridges, there's a completely new sense of spaciousness. I've a feeling this could become a regular venue.

We're promised attractive public spaces, of course, in both The Landing and Nicholsons Quarter developments, if and when. Though further doubt on the timeframe for the latter has arisen from insider talk that it's on the market again. However, we will learn more about the town centre when RBWM's new Director of Place, Andrew Durrant, joins us as the guest speaker at our AGM. There's more on this later in this edition of the News

To those new members who've just joined us: Welcome! If you're inclined to be more than a supporter and get involved in any of our activities, please, drop us a line.

*Bob Dulson*

## **A Note about the AGM**

Once again, it has not been possible for us to hold our AGM in a face-to-face meeting, and, as was the case last year, we will hold our meeting online via Zoom. Two weeks prior to the meeting, all those members for whom we have an email address will receive a "Keeping in Touch" email with details of how to join the meeting, the agenda and supporting papers. It is regrettable that some members will not be able to participate but we currently see no way around this. Please keep an eye out for the invitation, and then join us on the evening.

# 61<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE MAIDENHEAD CIVIC SOCIETY

To be held on Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021  
at 8.00pm, via Zoom

The business meeting will be preceded by an online talk by our guest speaker Andrew Durrant, RBWM's Executive Director of Place

## AGENDA

1. Introduction by the Chairman of the Committee
2. Confirmation of the Minutes of the 60<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting
3. Accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021 (see page 9)
4. Chairman's Report for 2020/2021
5. To approve the election of Members of the Committee. *See note below.*
6. Election of the Officers  
To elect from the Committee Members a Chairman, an Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer
7. To consider a resolution regularising the use of **virtual meetings** (see below)
8. Any other business.

### ***Election of Committee Members***

There currently are twelve Committee Members: Bob Dulson, Eileen Goford, Peter Child, Martin McNamee, Ann Darracott, Brian Darracott, Joyce Delasalle, Roger Panton, Ian Rose, Tina Sell, Mac Kenny and Derek Wilson. Under the terms of the Society's Constitution the Committee shall consist of eight to twelve Members including the Officers. One third of the Committee Members who are not Officers must retire each year and shall be eligible for re-election. Accordingly, Brian Darracott, Ann Darracott and Tina Sell will retire. Brian and Ann Darracott offer themselves for re-election, and there will consequently be one vacancy.

The Membership is invited to make nominations for the position of Committee Members. The nominations, in writing, should be accompanied by a seconder and the consent of the nominee, and be with the Hon. Secretary at least 14 days prior to the AGM.

## **Virtual General Meetings**

As part of the national response to Covid-19, the government and Charity Commission put in place special arrangements for permitting delays to Annual General Meetings; the use of digital or telephone approaches for holding of Annual General Meetings; and special dispensations with respect to reporting. As these special arrangements end, the Charity Commission have recommended that each charity carries out a review to understand whether approaches to holding Annual General Meetings are permitted within their own Constitution or Governing Documents. With respect to the holding of Annual General Meetings, there are typically three types of wording within Governing Documents: those that specifically allow digital or telephone based Annual General Meetings; those that specifically prohibit these approaches; and those which are silent on the matter. For cases where digital or telephone meetings are specifically allowed, no change is needed; for those where digital or telephone meetings are specifically prohibited then a change of Constitution is required. The Constitution of Maidenhead Civic Society is in the category of charities whose Constitution is silent on the matter. Whilst there is nothing to specifically prohibit the use of digital or telephone based Annual General Meetings, the Charity Commission have recommended that a resolution is proposed to the members as follows:

**It is proposed:** That, for reasons of good governance, the Society may continue to hold its Annual General Meetings and any Extraordinary General Meetings virtually using videoconferencing technology for as long as the Committee deems it necessary. This will include permitting online voting, alongside traditional methods. This approach allows greater participation of the Society Membership in the governance, scrutiny and review of the Society. In due course it may be possible to revert to face-to-face meetings, possibly combining with virtual events, and this will be considered when appropriate.

## **MINUTES OF THE 60<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE MAIDENHEAD CIVIC SOCIETY**

**Held on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020 via Zoom**

31 persons in attendance

- 1. Apologies for Absence:** Jill Powell, Bob and Ann Beauchamp
- 2. Approval of Minutes of 59<sup>th</sup> AGM held 20 November 2019:** The minutes were taken as read and approved. Proposed by Derek Wilson. Seconded by Brian Darracott.
- 3. Accounts for the year ending 31 May 2020:** The Treasurer reported a satisfactory financial year, which closed with an £800 surplus. Expenditure was in line with that of last year, though we did spend more on room hire. We enjoyed good membership support despite cancelling many events because of Covid-19. With thanks to Peter Child, his Report and Accounts were accepted. Proposed by Martin McNamee, seconded by David Snelgar.

4. **Chairman's Report:** Taken as read. There were no questions.
5. **Election of Members of the Committee:** Joyce Delasalle, Roger Panton and Ian Rose retired but having offered themselves for re-election, were re-elected. Proposed by Derek Wilson, seconded by Tina Sell.
6. **Election of Officers:** Bob Dulson as Chair, Peter Child as Hon. Treasurer and Eileen Goford as Hon. Secretary were re-elected, proposed by David Snelgar and seconded by Brian Darracott.

In the absence of a guest speaker, members of the executive committee spoke about issues in their particular field. This presentation was then followed by a discussion amongst those attending under 'Any Other Business'. Full details of the presentations and discussion were printed in the February 2021 edition of the Newsletter.

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT OF THE YEAR 2020-21**

It's been a year of mixed fortunes. As Covid again played havoc with our events programme, the rash of flats in town became an epidemic itself, and plans were nodded through for the tallest building Maidenhead has ever seen. On the upside we've seen a positive response to our membership campaign and in April a government planning inspector endorsed our call for a much-needed town plan involving the community.

### **Planning**

Like the Executive Committee, members of the planning group have not met in person since the start of the pandemic. Instead, the weekly list of planning applications has been reviewed remotely and over the year, after feedback from the group, comments and/or objections were submitted on about 40 applications. Regrettably, some major schemes – notably the regeneration of Nicholsons Quarter with its 25-storey tower and the replacement of Moorbridge Court and Liberty House with multi-storey flats – have been permitted with little modification. In addition, we responded to consultations on the government Planning White Paper, the Borough Local Plan and the proposed RBWM Housing Strategy.

We sincerely hope that proposals in the Planning White Paper which would reduce community participation and input will not proceed, and we appreciate the efforts of our patron Theresa May MP in leading parliamentary objections to many elements of the proposed legislation and championing our case.

We were cheered by modifications made to the emerging Borough Local Plan (BLP) by the Planning Inspector who, in accord with our position, has stipulated that a town plan is a necessary supplement to the BLP and that this should be drawn up with stakeholders and the local community. She also determined that in future buildings in the town centre should not generally exceed seven storeys. Though sadly, this ruling cannot be retrospective.

Civic Society members are active in their support of Maidenhead Neighbourhood Forum in achieving recognition and designation from RBWM planning department, so that an effective Neighbourhood Plan can be delivered to sit alongside the Borough Local Plan – when it is adopted.

We hope to resume face-to-face Planning Group meetings in the next few months, when it feels safe to do so. Renu Gugral has stepped down from the group and Rudi Sheldon has indicated that he will not be able to attend actual meetings when they restart. We thank both of them for their involvement over the past two decades. In the meantime we were pleased to welcome Tony Monk to the group and look forward to his input in the years to come.

## Membership

Prevented again by the pandemic from promoting the Society at the usual fetes and festivals over the summer, we embarked instead on a recruitment drive which to date has boosted membership by around 10%.

Members were asked to encourage relations, neighbours or friends to join using a form in the May newsletter which offered a year's free membership. The same offer was made in a door drop to almost 1,800 homes around Maidenhead.

During the last financial year, however, promoting the Society was very difficult, although we did managed to attract 4 new memberships and were pleased to welcome Anthony Monk, Mr & Mrs R Hewins, Mr & Mrs A Ingram, Mr & Mrs A Alexander. Figures for the 2020/21 year-end were:

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>
Total Membership (Family, Honorary, Life, etc)	233	232	227	223	219	208
Total Members (Excl. Corp)	344	340	329	322	306	294
Life members (Headcount)	94	91	86	82	78	74
Honorary Members	19	18	17	14	18	17
Corporate	1	1	1	2	2	2

In September we were able to attend two events in the town, The Town Show and The Waterways Fun Day, where it was good to be able to speak directly to interested members of the public. The Society is constantly on the lookout for those with a bit of time, energy and passion to help make Maidenhead a better place. Anyone interested should contact a member of the committee or email our membership secretary, Joyce, on [joyce@delasalle.me.uk](mailto:joyce@delasalle.me.uk).

## Events

Despite our hopes for 2021, apart from the two events noted above, we were able to organise only one event ourselves this year – a visit to Waltham Place. This was the last event to be organised by Tina Sell who has decided to stand down as Events Organiser and from the executive committee after more than a decade. We are deeply indebted to Tina for the many enjoyable experiences she's brought us, from talks and themed teas to jazz evenings, and wish her well. The search is on for her successor and we look forward to arranging events again as soon as we can but there is still a reticence to meet in large numbers as Covid remains rife.

## Projects

**Battlemead Common:** This has become a “hurry up and wait” exercise in patience. The Steering Group, of officers, councillors and local residents, recommended opening up the causeway path over the East Field from April to after the Boundary Walk in October. This provides the remaining bit of a missing link in the Millennium and Boundary Walks and a circular walk with the Thames Path for those months. The recommendation was unanimously confirmed by the Cabinet on 30th September. Two weeks later certain councillors decided to play political football with it and have called it in. Let's hope politics doesn't overturn a community-led decision.

**Green Way:** Meetings have continued with The Green Way Working Group (GWWG) on line and with Make Space for Life (MSFL) in sessions at North Town Moor in person. Ann continues to monitor fauna in the pond which is OK though no newt larvae were recorded this year and the pond now needs desilting. Good Gym and MSFL volunteers removed reeds from the pond in June but the silt remains. So it's on our list!

At the request of Maidenhead Waterways (MW) Ann monitored fauna in the waterway during a six-month trial of a bacteria treatment to control blanket weed. She was joined at the start of the trial and at the end by an Environment Agency ecologist. The results showed that the treatment not only controlled blanket weed growth but improved the water quality too. A result that MW is happy about!!

In December, because of Covid, St Luke's annual Christmas Tree Festival became an outdoor Christmas Tree Trail. We received very positive feedback on the decorated tree we placed at a junction on the Green Way which had become a very popular walk and something of a lifeline during lockdown. The paths, however, took a pounding and we have campaigned for improvements before the coming winter. (This Christmas the Tree Festival will be held again in the church; see page 23)

**Ockwells Manor:** Our planned book on Ockwells which will, for example, put on record photos of the Victorian restoration that neither the Historic English archive nor the National Trust possess, is at last nearing completion.

## Looking Ahead

The Society will continue to scrutinise upcoming planning applications and strive to represent considered community opinion on these and other planning matters as it has done for the past 61 years. At a time of disquiet about what's happening in the town centre, we hope also to be able to stimulate and inform considered debate soon with the publication of a revised version of *Making Maidenhead a Better Place*, our strategic review of amenity, first produced in 2004.

In conclusion, I'd like formally to acknowledge the efforts of each of our officers, committee members, distributors and volunteers, as well as the support of our members themselves, who are all looking to make a difference.

*Bob Dulson*

## TREASURER'S REPORT 2020-21

The annual accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021 are set out opposite. The main points from these accounts are as follows:

Overall, there was a surplus for the year of income over expenditure of £291. Last year there was a surplus of £803. The main reasons for the reduction in surplus are the decline in membership numbers, the absence of income generating social events and the one-off printing costs for the mail shot to recruit new members.

### Income

Total income has declined by £768 from the previous year. Subscription income (which includes top-up donations) and gift aid declined by £322 and we had a net reduction of 12 in membership numbers. Sadly, there was only one social event during the year, which broke even; last year the jazz evening and themed teas produced a surplus of £413. However, income was boosted by voluntary donations totalling £300 resulting from advice given in respect of local projects.

### Expenditure

Expenditure overall has reduced by £256 on the previous year. Several areas of expenditure (the newsletter, insurance, the website and annual subscriptions) remain much the same. Hire of rooms for meetings declined by £312 because all meetings were held by Zoom, for which the annual subscription is £144. Printing costs for the recruitment mail shot were £320. General expenses were lower by £235 partly because of the lower level of general activity and also because expenditure on new posters in the previous year was £126.

### Balance of Funds

The Society accounts show bank funds in hand of £11,966 compared to £11,781 in the previous year. As at today funds have risen to £12,752

*Peter Child*



# MAIDENHEAD CIVIC SOCIETY - Charity No. 272102

## Annual Accounts for Year ended 31st May 2021

<u>2019-2020</u>		<u>2020-2021</u>
<b>INCOME</b>		
350	Donations/Grants/Bequests	364
2,860	Subscriptions Received During Year	2,580
59	Interest On Bank And Other Deposits	12
636	Tax Refunds On Gift Aid	594
413	Surplus on social events	0
<b>4,318</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>3,550</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
<b>Administration</b>		
373	General Expenses, Printing, Postage, Etc.	138
1,363	Newsletter	1,358
456	Hire Of Rooms, Speakers And Meeting Expenses	144
374	Subscriptions	431
285	Insurance	285
364	Ockwells And Associated Projects (Net Costs)	283
0	Printing costs for membership drive	320
300	Website	300
<b>3,515</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>3,259</b>
<b>803</b>	<b>SURPLUS of Income over Expenditure</b>	<b>291</b>
11,295	Balance Brought Forward	12,098
<b>12,098</b>	<b>Balance Carried Forward</b>	<b>12,389</b>
<b>FUNDS</b>		
2,041	Bank (Lloyds TSB)	2,214
9,740	Charities Deposit General Fund (COIF)	9,752
726	Subscriptions & Insurance Payments In Advance	597
(409)	Member subscriptions in Advance and Expenses paid in June	(174)
<b>12,098</b>	<b>BALANCE OF FUNDS</b>	<b>£12,389</b>

# Planning Matters

In terms of planning applications things have been relatively quiet since our last Newsletter. The weekly list of new applications is reviewed regularly to ensure that any applications of interest are notified to our Planning Group members so that any proposals of concern can have comments or objections submitted in a timely manner.

The most frequently occurring trend in recent months has been for change of use from offices to residential use with conversions of office blocks to flats. There have recently been five such applications: Vanwall House, Thames House, Belmont House, Hanson House and Hitachi at Whitebrook Park.

**Vanwall House** at Norreys Drive and **Thames House** on Marlow Road have both been approved by the planners under Permitted Development rights. **Belmont House** on the junction of Belmont Road and Hargrave Road has been refused. A number of dwelling units in this proposal are smaller than the minimum living area required by the Nationally Designated Space Standards. Although some earlier schemes for change of use from offices to residential have been permitted with undersized dwelling units, it appears that the planning department is now enforcing minimum space requirements and deeming that such proposals do not qualify for Permitted Development Rights because of non-compliance on the minimum size of dwellings. A decision on **Hanson House** which is located on Castle Hill roundabout is pending.



*Hanson House, at the foot of Castle Hill*

This application is for 15 x studio flats and 5 x 1-bedroom flats. The size of dwellings appears satisfactory. Because of proximity to the town centre only 0.5 car

spaces per dwelling are required by RBWM parking policy – so only 10 spaces are provided. It remains unclear just who drives half a car, or indeed how the spaces are allocated. As with all office conversions there is inadequate provision of amenity leisure space, although in this case Kidwells Park is close by.

The saga continues with the Hitachi office block at **Whitebrook Park** at the northern end of Lower Cookham Road. The latest application for this site was for conversion to 88 residential units. Although the overall size of all the dwellings meets minimum space standards, the planners regard some flats as having bedrooms that are too small and/or narrow. In addition, the application has been refused because Prior Approval is required for Transport and Highways impact, flood issues and matters relating to noise, contamination and daylight. Because of the unsuitable location away from the town centre, we would prefer that the conversion into flats did not take place even though adequate parking and amenity space is provided. There is a concurrent application for demolition of the offices, and with the proper designation of the site for residential use the most satisfactory result would be a residential estate of family homes, which are in short supply. It is to be hoped that this will be the eventual outcome.



*A lovely aerial image of Whitebrook Park showing the Hitachi building in the centre, with the old Stiefel Laboratories building behind – both long empty  
(Image by Thames valley Drones, <https://www.thamesvalleydrones.co.uk>)*

There is one potential development site which is currently undergoing a pre-application consultation. The **De Beers** site is primarily bounded by Gringer Hill, Belmont Road and Hargrave Road. Originally the entire site was signposted for redevelopment, but it is now proposed to retain the existing office buildings and only develop the northern section of the site, which is currently open land including tennis courts. A three-sided U-shaped block of 3 to 4 storeys is proposed to accommodate



46 senior living apartments of 1 and 2 bedrooms. 35 parking spaces will be provided and the site will be accessed from Gringer Hill at a point north of the Craufurd Arms. A formal application is expected in the coming months, and the developers are expecting a planning decision in late spring 2022. Whilst we remain concerned about the over-provision of flats in the open market, there will continue to be a demand for retirement apartments such as those proposed for this site.



*The De Beers site with the area to be developed shown in yellow*

There is a significant concern that relates to the potential disruption to our town centre caused by the simultaneous construction of the two major schemes which are imminent – **The Landing** and **Nicholsons Quarter**. A phased implementation plan has been lodged with RBWM by the developers of the Landing. This is the largely flattened site in the triangle of King Street, Broadway and Queen Street. The scheme will be delivered in five stages, each stage being completed at an interval of six months. The final stage due for completion in the spring of 2025. Whilst Broadway is being developed on the south side as part of The Landing, the Nicholsons Centre project will be commencing on the north side. Nicholsons Multi Storey Car Park (MSCP) will be demolished following the construction of the new MSCP which will be located further east (behind the buildings comprising Queen Street North West Side.) As the existing Nicholsons Centre becomes due for demolition, all the existing retail businesses will have to be relocated in the High Street or elsewhere in town – or even leave Maidenhead. The likely completion date of Nicholsons Quarter has not been published, but realistically the earliest will be in 2026.



The heart of our town is destined for at least five years of disruption and upheaval concentrated on the area southwards from the High Street. It is to be hoped that some mitigation plan is being developed by the Borough to minimise the potential disruption to the normal commercial life of the town. There is a danger that much retail and commercial activity lost in the interim never returns to the town once the bulldozers and tower cranes have gone. Indeed, whilst the town is in upheaval many residents will avoid Maidenhead entirely. The current disruption caused by the construction of a simple pedestrian crossing to Kidwells Park does not augur well for what is to come. The situation will be even worse if the redevelopment of West Street and the old Magnet site on St Cloud Way runs alongside the Landing and Nicholsons schemes.

It is essential that the Borough and the newly created Town Team develop a masterplan to work with the developers and all interested parties to ensure that the potential disruption, loss of access and parking and risk to normal activity in the town is minimised during these long years of regeneration.

*Martin McNamee*

*From the Editor:*



The Chapel Arches scheme is fast taking shape and one of the Society's early ideas for the development of this area is nearing fulfilment. Speaking personally, I find the expanse of bare white paint over the two main supports to be rather stark. Surely something more inspiring could be found to adorn them, such as Maidenhead's coat of arms, for example. Let us have your suggestions and we'll put them forward.

# **A Civic Society is a force for good**

## **We need to increase membership**

Civic Voice, the national umbrella organisation for the civic movement, is conducting a poll on its website on how often people feel their views on planning decisions are considered. It is depressing to find that just 16% of respondents feel their views on planning are often or always listened to, while the rest – a whopping 84% – feel either they have no idea if their views are considered as there is no feedback (33%); sometimes their views are considered (28%); or their views are never considered (21%). That is a large proportion of people who feel that whatever their views around planning in their own areas, it makes no difference whatsoever to outcomes. The understandable impotence individuals feel about planning decisions is well demonstrated here in our own town. Anecdotal evidence suggests waning support, if indeed there ever was much, for the continued march of 1- and 2-bed flats with no green space allocated per dwelling, little consideration of wider infrastructure and misleading labelling of ‘affordable housing’. Small unit sizes and a complete lack of affordability as most of us understand it seem to be dominating Maidenhead; what about families and multi-generational households, and those on below median incomes who can’t save a deposit?

Maidenhead Civic Society looks at all large projects, longer-term plans and smaller applications in sensitive areas with objective eyes, not tainted by nimbyism. The Society is a tremendous, largely unsung, asset for the town. It comments on around 60 applications a year on average and is diligent in its quest to promote quality architecture and design for Maidenhead. The more members it has, the more powerful its voice.

It is difficult to find the time to get involved with local issues, the effort required to fit everything – even most things – in, leaving little brain space or time for extra ‘stuff’. Joining the Civic Society is a bit like outsourcing the work required to review and comment on planning issues for us all. One less thing to wish you had more time to do taken care of for you by others! At £20 a year for family membership, the cost is within reach for most of us. Membership is an easy way of keeping up to date with planning, the built environment and longer-term vision for Maidenhead, contributing through the Society to community wellbeing. ‘Easy’ is not a euphemism for skipping over tedious detail in this case, but a way to describe the Society quarterly news publication which is clear and jargon free in its explanations of Society work.

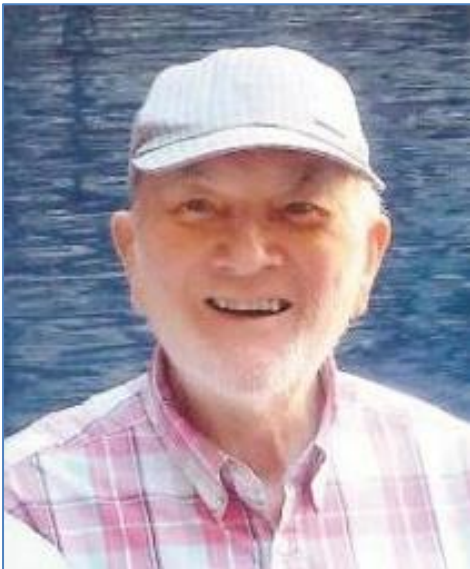
So we need to convince households that joining the Civic Society is a worthwhile action in their already frequently crammed lives. In maximising interest, perhaps there is a joint conversation to be had with other groups also aiming to improve the environment through different focus, e.g. Wild Maidenhead, Rotary, Lions, Neighbourhood Watch Groups, and offer the argument for joining the Civic Society

alongside individuals' other interest groups as complimentary and not necessarily an increase in time commitment?

Maidenhead Civic Society's recent recruitment drive has had some success and it would be great to build on that. Who does not want a group focusing on planning and environment with the aim of making Maidenhead a better place for us all to live in? A group that is apolitical, objective, and independent with a store of knowledge and expertise about local places? Come on people, sign someone up – the joining form's on the website!

*Kathy Murphy*

## **Dennis Lamb**



We are sad to note that long-time Maidenhead Civic Society member Dennis Lamb died peacefully at home in August, aged 95 years. He was a co-founder, former chairman and president of Middle Thames Ramblers, and a member of Maidenhead Heritage Centre.

He is remembered as an intelligent and very social person with a 'wonderful sense of humour' who 'liked to live life to the full.' He was interested in local issues and he enjoyed joining in with the things he belonged to and getting to know people in the organisations, going to all the social events. Among Dennis' achievements, he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in

Engineering (BSE) from The Open University at the age of 70.

Though Dennis liked to work 'in the background' of the organisations he was involved with, he was always ready to contribute, often organising walking holiday weekends away for the Middle Thames Ramblers, being involved in the group for nearly 50 years until the year 2000. The Ramblers remember that Dennis was often in 'campaigning spirit', fighting for the rights of ramblers, and 'did not give up easily'. For example, he is fondly remembered for having stood up for the ramblers' right to visit a pub after a long walk, after being denied entry by the landlord. In another memorable instance, he helped them navigate a sticky situation where ramblers walked too close to a house belonging to a member of the Saudi royal family, and were accosted by guards! "Rambling was a big part of his life," said Kay, his widow. "He carried on doing all these activities until extreme old age, until it became too difficult for him."



# Projects

## **Battlemead Common and Rotary's Boundary Walk 2021**

In view of the machinations of certain local councillors regarding Battlemead (see Chairman's report above), it is particularly pleasing that we managed to open up the causeway path for this year's Boundary Walk as Rotary had already been given permission by the Royal Borough to use it. Many thanks to Bob & Angie Dulson and Derek Wilson who acted as stewards and also recorded how many walkers crossed onto Battlemead and how many walked back to Boulters on the road. The data indicate that a significant number still return by road and show that providing the shorter causeway route across Battlemead that follows the 1934 Maidenhead boundary will provide a much more pleasant end to this annual and quite strenuous charity walk.



A path from Widbrook Common to the Thames was proposed in the Cookham District Plan of May 1972; the East Berks Ramblers (EBRA) Silver Jubilee project of 1977; the RBWM Local Plan of 1999; the EBRA and Civic Society Millennium Walk project to celebrate the year 2000; and the recent RBWM Public Rights of Way Improvement Plans. The northern perimeter path on Battlemead does not follow the 1934 boundary whereas the causeway path does. Let's hope the missing link in both the Boundary and Millennium Walks will be open again in April (at least for six months of the year!) and that there are no more attempts to deny this benefit to the public.

*Happy families: boundary walkers on Battlemead Common*





*Above: the west end of causeway route opened for the 2021 Boundary Walk*

*Below: A view of the newly desilted White Brook visible from the bridge on the causeway route (and yes, I have pointed out the problems caused by planting willow slips next to water, not least of which is eventual silt generation!)*







*Above: a view of Cliveden seen by those walking the causeway route  
during the Boundary Walk  
Below: The east end of the causeway route that leads onto the Thames Path*





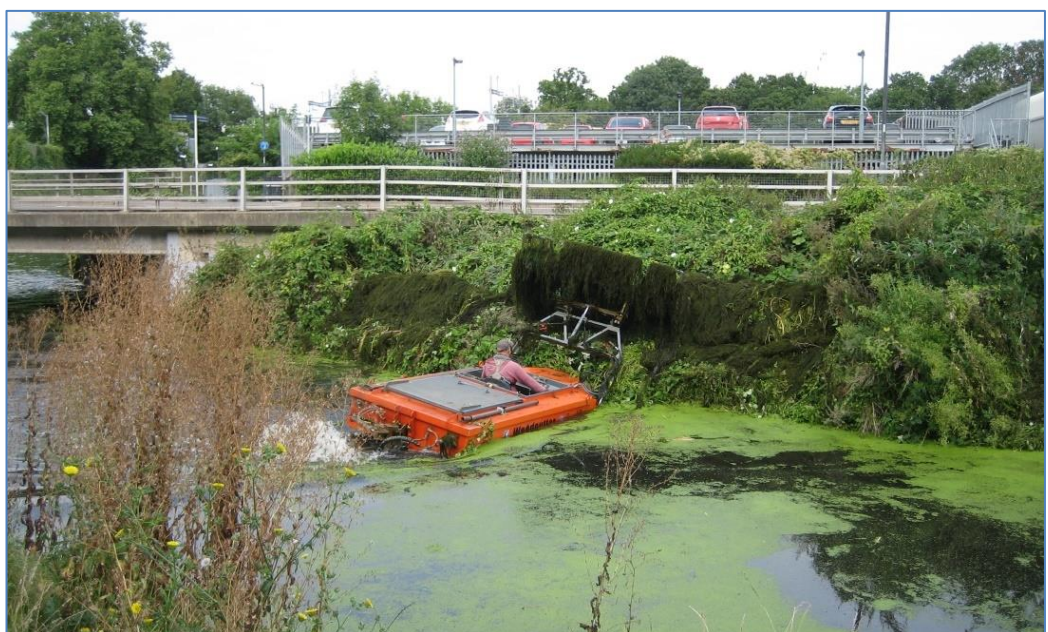
## The Green Way

### Weed Raking

As noted in the Chairman's report I have been monitoring aquatic fauna in the waterway to assess the impact of the use of Byofix (bacteria treatment to control blanket weed- filamentous algae)). Apart from Byofix the Royal Borough also hired a machine to rake the weed out of the waterway in advance of the Waterway's Fun Day on 25<sup>th</sup> September. There is a weed called Nuttall's Pond Weed, *Elodea nutallii*, which is a bit of a pest in canals and we have it in the waterway. It seems that the suppression of blanket weed by Byofix encouraged the growth of this pondweed. The machine removed an estimated 30 to 35 tons of assorted weeds that were dumped on the banks.



The “Weed Cutter” machine; in the water (*left*) and dumping the weed on the banks (*below*)





## Bugs & Beasties Dipping Activity

Maidenhead Waterways asked if I could organise some event relating to the waterway to take place during the Fun Day, and this led to a dipping activity at the Boat Lift site aimed at primary school children. Many thanks to Bridget Morris for her help on the day, Braywick Nature Centre for the loan of some equipment, and St Luke's Primary school for providing most of the children. They did very well recording 17 different aquatic species (see photos of a few of them below).



*Above: The weir on the waterway with the boat lift on the right.  
Below: Nine children plus adults at the Boat Lift – an ideal spot for sampling the waterway*





*Two budding  
freshwater biologists!*

*A few of the invertebrate species  
the children caught:*

- right: Damsel fly nymph;
- below: Dragon fly nymph and  
the smaller fresh water shrimp



*Ann Darracott*



## Events

### **AGM – Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021, 7.45pm for 8.00pm Presentation by Andrew Durrant, Executive Director of Place, RBWM**

Andrew is responsible for planning, highways, transport, infrastructure, sustainability and communities within the Royal Borough. In this role his key tasks are to lead the council in a manner that builds ownership and commitment, connects strategies to action, provides clear accountability, manages performance and delivers results; provide leadership and management, in collaboration with relevant parties, to ensure the council's vision and annual priorities are realised; actively pursue the engagement of residents and service users in service design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation; use evidence based practice to transform services securing significant and sustained improvements for residents; and lead on joint arrangements with external agencies on strategic planning of joint initiatives.



That's quite a remit and he has agreed to share with us some insights to his role and perceptions as well as any plans, hopes or aspirations he may have for the Borough and/or Maidenhead in particular.

### **Anything Else?**

We did manage to re-arrange a visit to Waltham Place and on a beautiful September morning fifteen members attended a walk around the fascinating garden rooms of the estate, guided by staff who work in the gardens and have an in-depth knowledge of how Waltham Place is managed. There was a particular focus on pollinators and how they are to be encouraged into our gardens. The morning visit ended with light refreshments including the chef's homemade cakes. Many thanks to Nina Morrow who organised the tour.

We look forward to arranging some other events in the New Year but as Covid infections are still very high, there is still a reticence among members to meet in large numbers. Nevertheless, 'Please, watch this space!!'

As our Chairman has mention in his opening piece, the Society mounted a presence at the recent Town Show and the Waterways Fun Day (*below*) as part of our current membership drive.



### **St Luke's Christmas Tree Festival**

The church plans to revive this popular festival, with appropriate social distancing measures, and the Society is again sponsoring a Christmas tree at the event. The chosen charity this year is the Thames Hospice. Last year our Christmas tree plus a banner *The Green Way a Lifeline in Lockdown*, was part of a Christmas Tree Trail, and cheered up residents walking the Green Way at the height of the pandemic. This year, apart from lots of trees to admire, there will be a raffle, a stall selling home-made produce and refreshments. Do come along (don't forget your mask) and bring your friends, especially if they aren't members. The church, on Norfolk Road, will be open on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup>, and Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> December from 10am to 7pm, and on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> from 12 midday to 6pm followed by the Christmas Tree Service.

## **Space to Spare?**

Does anyone have, or know of, spare space in a garage or store room to store the Society's gazebo and display materials? All we ask is that they're kept safe and dry, somewhere free of damp with easy, level access, as they're a bit heavy and unwieldy. We'd need to access them only a few times a year. It would be a great help. Contact Bob Dulson if you can help.

# Dates for your Diary

Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021  
**AGM**

## **Civic Society AGM**

A virtual meeting via Zoom. 7.45 for 8.00pm.  
Guest speaker: Andrew Durrant, Executive  
Director of Place, RBWM

Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> December to Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2021  
**Event**

## **St Luke's Christmas Tree Festival**

Fri 10am to 7pm; Sat 10am to 7pm; Sun 12 to 6pm

## **CIVIC SOCIETY – KEY CONTACTS**

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

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2021**

All meeting are online via Zoom until further notice

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

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

**The closing date for copy for the next issue  
of the Newsletter is 21<sup>st</sup> January 2022**

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