

Hitcham and Taplow Society

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£2.50 to non-members



www.taplowsociety.org.uk

Hitcham and Taplow Society

Formed in 1959 to protect Hitcham, Taplow and the surrounding countryside from being spoilt by bad development and neglect.

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Cover picture: Cliveden House from Sutherland's statue (Andrew Findlay)

Editorial

There can only be one topic for an editorial comment this issue, and that has to be the new government proposals to 'simplify' the previous planning system. Well, in terms of the number of pages produced, 58 to replace the existing 1000+ pages, they have certainly met their target. However, rather a lot of critical information and general guidance about definitions and interpretations of planning policies has in the process been quietly dropped. Instead, a large number of motherhood level statements have replaced explicit guidance which will open the field to many a legal challenge, particularly in response to the 19-times-mentioned phrase 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. The Minister for Planning, Greg Clark MP, has authorised the following definition of sustainable, which is a pretty straight lift from the moribund Rio Conference of some years ago: 'Sustainable development means development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future

generations to meet their own needs.' Who can argue with that? But the minister then goes on to say, 'It is central to the economic, environmental and social success of the country and is the core principle underpinning planning.' The problem lies in putting these two sentences together since the subject of one is about future needs and the other is about present economic growth (where growth = success).

You have to wonder how, in a world of unlimited population growth and finite resources, these two views can be compatible. The developers could interpret sustainability to be simple adherence to the existing building regulation standards regarding heat insulation. If the government is naïve enough about economics to believe that building lots of houses represents success, then we have a problem, and little Taplow is in the direct path of the massed ranks of bulldozers waiting for the starter's gun.

Fred Russell

Cliveden and the Women's Institute

Nancy, Lady Astor, had a close connection with the Women's Institute. She was president of the Cliveden and Dropmore Institute for many years.

Early in 1922, the government proposed the disbanding of the Women's Police Force. This proposal was immediately taken up by the Women's Institute and its National Federation campaigned strongly against it. This continued through the 1920s and early 30s when the proposal was dropped. At the first County Rally held at Cliveden in 1933, Nancy declared she had raised the matter in Parliament for many years. At this rally she was accompanied by Mrs Sara Roosevelt (mother of the US President) and to make a point Nancy seized the umbrella belonging to Mrs Roosevelt during her speech to members saying that it was 'women of the world not men who would make England's Green and Pleasant Land'. 2,000 members were present at that meeting. Nancy's famous niece, Joyce Grenfell, also a WI member and who lived at Parrs Cottage, performed many of her sketches at Cliveden and Dropmore WI and at Taplow WI meetings before they came to national attention.

Just before World War Two, Nancy hosted the Triennial Conference of the Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW) at Cliveden. 300 delegates were present. The National Federation of Women's Institutes were founder members of the ACWW. A second rally was held at Cliveden in 1965 hosted by



Nancy Astor and Sara Roosevelt at the rally

Bronwen, Lady Astor, who was so impressed that she followed her mother-in-law and became a member of Taplow and Hitcham WI, the Cliveden Institute having closed, and she remained a member until leaving Cliveden.

The National Federation of Women's Institutes is still campaigning on issues of local, national and international concern – policing, labelling of food, domestic violence and education are but a few. Discussions are held with members of government, European parliament and United Nations agencies.

Muriel King

Website

Register on the Society website and have your say in our Forum:

www.taplowsociety.org.uk

The Committee

The Society is looking for members to join the Committee. Two long serving members will not be standing for election at the AGM. Jill Harden is finding her extensive business travelling restricts her involvement and Matt Travers has sold his Taplow residence to move to pastures new. The Society says thank you to Jill and Matt for their sterling contributions across the years to ensuring the success of our various activities. Members interested in serving on the Committee please contact either the Chairman or the Secretary.

Taplow Youth Choir – A Resounding Success

At the Royal Albert Hall on Sunday 28 August, the Taplow Youth Choir sang in a truly inspiring performance of Mendelssohn's Oratorio, *Elijah*, at the BBC Proms by the world-renowned Gabrielli Consort and Players under conductor Paul McCreesh, with five leading opera star soloists, four other youth choirs and the Wroclaw Philharmonic Choir. The supreme dedication of the conductor, the drilled precision of the orchestra, the total commitment of the soloists, and the power and magnificence of the choirs captured the rapt attention of the sell-out audience. In my 60 years of 'promming' it was an awesome and exhilarating evening.

Gillian Dibden, founder and director of the Taplow Youth Choir, was thrilled for the choir to have the privilege of working with the Gabrielli Consort and she is hoping there will be another opportunity in the near future. In her early career, she had played, sang and conducted *Elijah*. Three hours long, it is demanding on vocal and physical stamina and the choir began rehearsals in September last year holding a weekend session in June with conductor Paul McCreesh. The Proms required a six-day commitment – rehearsals all day on Thursday, Friday, Saturday plus Sunday morning, the performance on Sunday evening, and recording the performance for a CD on Monday and Tuesday.

Gillian has high praise for the members of her choir – never absent or late for rehearsals with total commitment on each and every occasion and still reaching that extra high to give the public their very best at each performance.

The Taplow Youth Choir was formed in the autumn of 2006. The choir of over 60 members aged 15 to 18 performs a varied and challenging

repertoire spanning several centuries. It rehearses every other Saturday throughout the year in the Taplow Village Centre, preparing the many choral pieces which will feature in its ambitious concert schedule.



Each year the choir is invited to sing a Wednesday Choral Evensong at St George's Chapel in Windsor Castle and it is a regular visitor to the Windsor Festival. This year it gave a concert at the Royal Chapel of All Saints in Windsor Great Park and at next year's Spring Festival it will present *The Armed Man* by Karl Jenkins in St George's Chapel. Its overseas concert tours have include Amsterdam, Estonia and Barcelona.

In 2008 Taplow Youth Choir won the youth category in the BBC Radio 3 Choir of the Year Competition and it was the runner-up in the Tallinn International Choral Competition in 2009.

Our village is fortunate and proud to have the privilege of being the host to such an outstanding choir.

Karl Lawrence



The Cliveden Maze

A 'lost' maze in the magnificent grounds of Cliveden in Buckinghamshire, which disappeared over 80 years ago, has been re-created using more than 1,000 two-metre-high yew trees.

The 'fully grown' maze is based on one that was built for the first Lord Astor in 1894 but had all but disappeared. Lord Astor's designs for the maze were discovered in the archives in 2005. Apart from a few surviving yew trees that provided the exact location of the maze, little else was known about the original.

The new maze has been built as close as possible to the site of the original one. The new maze took two years to create, using over 1,000 metres of steel edging and 120 tonnes of gravel, to produce over 500 metres of path over one third of an acre, making it the same size as the world-famous Hampton Court maze.

Finding enough fully grown yew trees to complete the maze was the most challenging part, but once a supplier was found all 1,100 12-year-old trees were planted in 20 days in October and November last year. Yew trees create great mazes because they readily form dense hedges and are easily clipped into shape.

On arrival, each tree weighed approximately 60 kilograms, and four 40-foot articulated lorries were required to transport them.

The 'icing on the cake' was the installation of the maze's beautiful hand-forged wrought iron gates, created by Chris Collman from Burnham, who is known locally as The Wrought Iron Man. The gates have a strong Victorian influence and are inset with foliage and shield motifs.

The maze was officially opened on Friday 8 April 2011 by renowned gardener, broadcaster and writer Alan Titchmarsh. Lord Astor, whose great-grandfather was William Waldorf, the first Viscount Astor, was invited to be the first person to go into the new maze. Since it opened in April, nearly 100,000 people have tried to solve it – although as it is much harder than it looks, not everyone has made it to the centre!

Cliveden is open daily, 10am to 5.30pm until the end of October and 10am to 4pm until 23 December. For more information and admission prices call 01628 605069 or visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk/cliveden

Fred Russell



National Trust Photo

Taplow House – A Gardener's Perspective

[*The first part of the following article is an extract from Gardening Tours by J.C. Loudon 1831-1842. Ed*]

The house is situated half-way down the same high bank on which is placed Taplow Court, Park Place, Cliefden, Hedsor, and a number of other fine places, commencing at Richmond, and extending, on the same side of the river, to near Reading, where the banks become level on both sides. The house is here, very properly, entered from behind; and the view from the principal rooms commands the Thames and Windsor Castle. The grounds are not very extensive; but the lawn slopes most beautifully, and it is judiciously varied by choice trees and shrubs, and beds of flowers, the latter of the rarest and most beautiful kinds, assiduously and successfully cultivated, and kept in the most exquisite order by the gardener, Mr. Springall, who has been in that capacity here for thirty years, and has planted nearly every tree, and laid out every bed. The first view of the lawn front of the house, bosomed as it is in verandas covered with creepers and in banks of flowers, as seen from a dark walk near the lodge, through which strangers are introduced, operates like enchantment.. The first wing of the house is only one story high, and contains a suite of rooms, including a library, shaded by a skeleton veranda. By this term we mean a veranda that, instead of a close roof, has merely the wall plate, and a slight rafter from the top of each prop. These members are entirely covered with vegetation in great luxuriance, and chiefly by the Virginian creeper. The railing of a balcony in front of the dining-room is similarly covered, as is the veranda over it. The central part of the basement of the house may be described as embosomed in rockwork and flowers in pots and vases. On one end of the house is a Beurre d'Aremberg pear tree, 30 ft. high, covered with fruit. Turning round before the steps which descend from the drawing-room to the lawn, the latter is varied by beds of flowers which lose themselves among trees, shrubs, and glades in every direction, but so far below the eye, that, when looking at them, the distant scenery is not taken into the landscape.

Raising the eye, we catch the Thames and Windsor Castle between the tops of the trees. The walk proceeds in a winding direction till it reaches a straight walk shaded by elms, the simplicity of which contrasts finely with the variety and

intricacy of the other walks. Among the trees not planted by Mr. Springall, may be noticed a magnificent plane, 100 ft. high, with branches extending far on every side, and sweeping the ground; a tulip tree, 70 ft. high, and some noble elms. We were particularly struck with the vigorous growth of every description of plant introduced in the flower-beds; and we were informed by Mr. Springall of the cause; viz., that he takes out the soil every year to the depth of 2 ft. or 3 ft., and renews it entirely. He does not introduce a single bed, or even a single plant, however common may be the kind, without this precaution. On observing the flower-stems and remaining flowers of *Gladiolus byzantinus* very strong, Mr. Springall stated that he never puts dung in his compost for these plants, but only uses yellow loam with a little sand. The different dwarf blue-flowered lobelias, such as *L. unidentata*, *bellidifolia*, *erinoides*, &c., grow here so much larger than we have seen them any where else, that they appeared like distinct varieties. The same may be said of the different verbenas and of most of the other usual lawn plants. The masses of blossom shown by single pelargoniums were remarkably fine; some of them were 3 ft. in diameter at the base, and 6 ft. high, forming a complete cone of scarlet flowers. These plants continue in bloom all the summer, a particular variety being used for that purpose, which is obtained in the following ingenious manner:- It is well known to gardeners that variegated-leaved pelargoniums flower more freely, and for a greater length of time, than any of the varieties which are not variegated; but then these variegated plants never grow large, or produce strong wood and vigorous leaves. To obtain strong wood and luxuriant foliage, as well as a continuance of bloom all the season, Mr. Springall chose a cutting from a variegated plant which had run, or returned to its original green; and from this cutting he propagated the plants which he trains as cones. We may observe, that here, as at Dropmore, the walks were brimful of gravel, and the grass edgings clipped, and not pared, which, as we have often before said, is one of the greatest beauties in the details of walks, though we cannot get it attended to half so much as we could wish. Mr. Springall is enthusiastically devoted to his profession, and is in his garden, as he informed us, from four o'clock in the morning till it is dark at night. His master never interferes with his

management, and this will always be found to be the case, when the garden is so well conducted as it is here. Mr. Springall lives in a pretty thatched cottage by the road side, with an octagon front, and a veranda ornamented by creepers; he has also a very neat flower-garden in front. Opposite the entrance to Taplow House is another handsome cottage, with a beautiful flower-garden in front, evidently under the superintending care of Mr. Springall; so that the general impression, both on entering and leaving the place, is that of comfort, neatness, and fine flowers...

... And a neighbour's viewpoint

We first came to Taplow 43 years ago and lived next door to Mr Page. He had been an apprentice gardener at 14 and subsequently became head gardener to Mrs Skimmings who was the last owner of Taplow House when it was a private residence. Unfortunately she had no heirs because the sons of the house had died in the Great War, but Mr Page told us that she had planned to pull the two wings of the house down to make it smaller and more manageable but died before she could put this into effect. She had decreed in her will that Mr and Mrs Page should live in the stable block at a peppercorn rent for life. He used to garden in the old-fashioned way by raising all his bedding plants from seeds or cuttings in his greenhouses and planting them out twice a year. The vegetables in their plot marched productively in straight lines and ne'er a weed dared show its face. I learnt a great deal about plants from old Mr Page and also about the house and grounds as he had known them.

We live in one of the many old kitchen gardens which used to grow peaches on the south-facing wall, while the garden itself produced potatoes. The legacy of Mr Page's reign is wonderful topsoil. On our north-facing wall you can still see part of an old fireplace and various whitewashed sections, which were the bachelor gardeners' bothies. It could not have been either warm or comfortable for them. Our forecourt used to be the farmyard, the wing of our house the milking parlour, while the pigsties were along one side of our forecourt. Jersey cows used to graze on the part of the hill which is now Saxon Gardens and where the houses facing Berry Hill stand.

When we arrived on the scene Taplow House was a depressing old people's home in a very dilapidated state. Occasionally one of the old folk would 'escape' and be given a cup of coffee by another neighbour before being brought back again. The next owners of Taplow House were a pilot and his wife who tried to run it as a hotel. He was forever up ladders trying vainly to maintain the building, and literally stop the rot, but the project was too much for them, especially as the wife was prone to drink the meagre profits. They planted an orchard on what is now the front lawn, which the next owners dug up and put back to grass. The house then continued its career as a hotel passing from one owner to the next, each spending large sums of money upon it and then selling it on.

We have been delighted with the improvements to the old building which has shaken off its forlorn sad rundown air and is once more cared for and a place of comfort and luxury, so much so that we chose to hold our daughter's wedding there.

Eva Lipman



The Planning Crisis

We cannot divorce ourselves from the impact of a government edict that seriously impacts our small parish, just as much as it does the whole country it is supposed to represent. The draft National Planning Policy Framework appears to be regarded by the government as being an edict similar in power to EU Directives and is paying only lip service to the idea of Localism. This is one of the bedrock policies behind the idea of the 'Big Society', meaning the handing-back of power to the people by the reduction of Big Government. The government seems to be determined not to back down on the dangerously flawed content of this document, which effectively opens the door to unrestrained development; as it stands it is a developer's charter. The National Trust, the CPRE and many other organisations concerned with preserving our Green Belt, woodlands and open spaces are vehemently opposed to the wording that provides this open door, and appears to be a gravy train for the legal profession.

The very first words in the document are: 'The purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development.' This single statement sets the tone for the rest of the document. It reads as if the signatory, Greg Clark, intends to take over the entire economy of the UK, and as if he believes that our economic recovery depends absolutely upon the building of houses and office blocks. The word 'planning' needs the word 'local' in front of it to limit and define its true context. The word 'sustainable' is paying lip service to the Rio Conference's meaning of the term and echoing the government's green agenda mantra. It seems as if all that any developer has to do to meet the sustainable requirement is to include double-glazing and loft insulation in his plans – and recover the cost from the buyers of course.

However, down to basics, what exactly is being said in this document that is arousing such nationwide ire and dread? Let's try listing just a few:

1. Green Belt (page 38) contains some alarming comments, which suggest that Green Belt boundaries and availability for development are to be regarded as open to reinterpretation and special circumstances. One para (143) states, 'When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that

substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. "Very special circumstances" will not exist *unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.*' Just look at bit in italics! It is sections like this that so alarm amenity societies such as ours as well as the big boys in this area such as the National Trust. The Green Belt is up for grabs.

2. The phrase often quoted in the newspapers about this document is '*...a presumption in favour of sustainable development*'. This sentence immediately puts on the back foot all those who oppose an application. They are forced to argue against a 'done deal' unless they can prove an application does not meet the sustainable requirement. As pointed out above it's not hard for a developer to successfully argue that he has done his bit to save the planet. The word 'sustainable' is used no less than 88 times in the document's 58 pages.

3. Para 13 reveals the underlying confusion at the heart of the NPPF document. I quote: '*The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. A positive planning system is essential because, without growth, a sustainable future cannot be achieved. Planning must operate to encourage growth and not act as an impediment. Therefore, significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system.*'

Any professional economist reading that paragraph would not know whether to laugh or cry. The problem of sustainability is that looking after the long-term interests of our children while we continue to enjoy the fruits of constant economic growth is itself an unsustainable programme. Sustainability unfortunately in a world of booming population cannot happen without a halt to growth to conserve ever-scarcer resources. The planning system is not the tool to use for this purpose. The presence of such strange material in a document designed to replace and simplify the unwieldy central planning system we have at the moment suggests lack of understanding of the mechanisms driving our economy. In a free country it is market forces within an umbrella of political policies that lead to growth, not a local planning system.

4. Greg Clark announced to the press that there was not a village in the land that did not want to build more houses. I find this very difficult to believe. This document makes sure that they get more houses regardless of whether they want them or not. To enforce the point they encourage local planning authorities to use Local Development Orders (LDOs) which enable them *'to relax planning controls for particular areas or categories of development, where the impacts would be acceptable, and in particular where this would boost enterprise and growth.'* Who decides what is acceptable? The sentence also implies that the planners are in effect empowered to make decisions based on economic or commercial issues, a dangerous precedent. On the face of it, these LDOs override local opposition by people affected by the proposal. On that issue, whatever happened to the promised Third-party Appeal idea giving us the right to appeal against planning decisions?

The issue for us here in Taplow is how might this proposed planning system affect us?

There are a number of worst-case scenarios that immediately come to mind:

- Village and Riverside infilling even in a Conservation Area will be permitted
- The Hermitage may well be lost to a development of affordable homes
- The Bishops Centre development will go ahead regardless of local opinion
- The Mill Lane proposal for 300 houses might get approved in spite of the flood plain issue
- The so-called green lung separating us from Slough will be developed
- Intensive development of the Old Court Hotel site is possible.

Unfortunately this article could easily fill this entire newsletter but perhaps this brief version gives an idea of the problems ahead. I strongly recommend you read the original document for yourself. A copy can be found on our website at www.taplowsociety.org.uk or just type NPPF into your search engine.

Fred Russell

Mill Lane: What Now?

Progress towards agreement on the content of the Development Brief by the landowners / developers in conjunction with the South Bucks District Council (SBDC) is lagging behind the schedule reported in our last newsletter. A public exhibition was held at the Paper Mill site on 16 June – six weeks after the date on the original schedule. More than 200 residents of Taplow and Maidenhead attended. Publicity for the exhibition was flawed by the door-to-door delivery failing to deliver the announcement to many Taplow households.

The content of the exhibition boards was the responsibility of a steering group comprising representatives of Barratts, the developers, who have an option to buy the land now in the hands of administrators BDO, other landowners Taplow Investments and National Grid, and officers of SBDC. A working party comprising representatives of

Taplow Parish Council, Hitcham and Taplow Society, Ellington Road and District Residents Association, Barratts and SBDC reviewed the Boards and suggested various changes.

SBDC Core Policy 15 of the South Bucks District Council specifies Mill Lane as an 'opportunity site' 'in need of sensitive, comprehensive regeneration'. Integral to the Policy is the requirement that 'a Development Brief must be produced by the landowners / developers in conjunction with the Council' and it must be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document, prior to a planning application being submitted.

There are several outstanding issues to be resolved before the steering group reach agreement on a final draft of the development brief. Late October is the probable date for the next review by the working party.

Karl Lawrence

The Famous Skindles: Then and Now



An elegant of its age, Skindles became famous in the late Victorian and Edwardian era and its reputation was sealed with Royal approval by the patronage of King Edward VII and Queen Alexandria and a bevy of names from Debrett. [HTPS Newsletter 41]

Here it is seen at its turn-of-the-century heyday. High Society relaxing on the lawn enjoying a weekend from the city and the punts out from the boat-house ready for riotous trips up river to Boulton and beyond with a bonneted lady already strumming a music hall favourite on the piano perched on the long flat boat waiting at the river bank.



Below this surface respectability ran an undercurrent of the risqué with the Gaiety Girls and devoted husbands and fathers coming down from London for clandestine weekends. It flourished as the discreet destination of choice for 'playing away' through the Twenties and Thirties. Then came disaster in 1947 as the spring flood invaded the ballroom and a severe fire

caused extensive damage. After restoration it became a favourite hideaway for stage and screen celebrities and King Hussein of Jordan was a regular visitor.

Under new ownership in 1966 it attempted to appeal to a different clientèle with many new features including a casino known as Skindles Sporting Club. The venture was launched with a glittering Charity Ball but it failed and the hotel closed two years later.

A further change of ownership in the late Seventies brought a new lease of life through a £1,500,000 restoration, and in the Valbonne night club many famous 70s and 80s bands played to sell-out audiences.

The sands of time are blurring memories of times when Skindles Hotel hosted royalty and celebrities every day. Yet not every memory. Gertrude 'Gerry' Spring, a former barmaid at the hotel, celebrated her 100th birthday on August 4th this year and the *Windsor Express* reported her memories of 'a wonderful place to be', 'how gay it was and how beautifully dressed the ladies'.

It was an internationally known hotel. It was built in 1743 and originally called The Orkney Arms until William Skindle bought it in the mid-19th century.

Today, it stands boarded up, its future unknown.

Perhaps a new owner will preserve its historic facade to front a boutique hotel serving as the home base for tourists visiting the Thames Valley and incorporating a high quality destination restaurant!

Karl Lawrence

The Race to the Church

Friday 29th April 2011,
Taplow High Street. To your
vehicles! And remember
the manifesto:

- We laugh in the face of technology
- We deny the existence of engines, pedals and performance materials
- We embrace gravity at the expense of all other forms of propulsion
- We support the use of carts made from recycled, re-claimed and re-used parts
- The spirit of the event is to purchase as little as possible
- We celebrate the amateur and the optimistic, where the heroic arrival at the start-line is vastly superior to the time across the finish line

For more photos and the full
results, visit
www.racetothethechurch.co.uk



Photos by Andrew Findlay

Proposed Changes to Subscriptions

As indicated at last year's AGM, the Committee would like to propose an increase to the annual subscription from £5 per household to £7. This is to meet the additional costs of our newsletter and other activities of the Society and reflects the fact that subscriptions have not been raised since 2000.

It is also proposed to change the subscription year from 1 October to 1 January. By beginning the subscription year on 1 January, which is typically after the AGM, members will have the chance to consider any proposed changes to the subscription before it is due. This also helps with the administration of standing orders which need to be altered before changes to the subscription become effective.

In order to implement the change, members will be asked at this year's AGM to approve a three-month extension to the current subscription year so that it will end on 31 December 2011. No additional subscription will be required for the extended period. Subsequent subscription years will run from 1 January, beginning on 1 January 2012.

Any increase approved at the AGM to the subscription amount will take effect on 1 January 2013 and therefore members renewing their subscriptions this year will be unaffected.

Further details can be found in the AGM documents enclosed with this newsletter.

The Future of the Bishop Centre

Land Securities, the owners of the Bishop Centre, presented proposals for the redevelopment of the Centre at an exhibition on 8 and 9 July. Several articles and letters about the proposals have appeared in the *Maidenhead Advertiser*. The essence of the proposals is to demolish the existing 36 shops and to build a 30,000-sq-ft supermarket at the end of a long row of various sizes of shops, each with a mezzanine floor. Parking will be increased from 397 to 439 car spaces plus 96 cycle parking stands. Land Securities have planning permission in place for 95,000 square feet of retail space and for an additional access to the A4. These proposals indicate that it will be seeking an increase to 131,000 square feet.



Computer visualisation of new retail units

The South Bucks District Council Core Strategy supports the redevelopment of the Bishop Centre in a 'form and scale' based on 'localised need' and it 'must maintain a scale and role which does not impact adversely on other centres'.

At its request, Land Securities met with representatives of the Hitcham and Taplow Society and the Ellington Road and District Residents Association on 5 September to discuss the proposals. Prior to the meeting a questionnaire was sent out to the members of the Society and the Association asking for answers to seven questions arising from the proposals. These were the seven questions :

- 1 Is there a need for another supermarket in our locality?
- 2 Which goods/services provided by the existing Bishop Centre shops will you miss?
- 3 Is there a major shop you would like to have a branch in the Bishop Centre?

- 4 Which types of independent shop would you like to see in a new Bishop Centre?
- 5 How will the proposed shopping centre impact on the local community and businesses?
- 6 Are you concerned at the increase in traffic there will be on the A4 and local roads?
- 7 Do you agree with Land Securities that 'the local area deserves a better shopping experience'?

In addition, members were invited to add any specific objections to the proposals, suggestions for enhancing the proposals or general comments they wished to make. A copy of the exhibition boards detailing the proposals, a report of the meeting with Land Securities and an analysis of the 48 answers is available on our website:

www.taplowsociety.org.uk

STOP PRESS **Planning Application** **submitted to South Bucks** **District Council**

Land Securities submitted a planning application for 'the demolition of existing retail and commercial buildings and comprehensive redevelopment to erect new commercial units' of the Bishop Centre on 29 September. The application comprises 50 documents containing several hundred pages of text, plans, maps and photographs. The subjects covered include assessments of the impact on local retailers, potential traffic volumes, noise generation, and environmental impact. The target date for a decision by the Council is 29 December. A copy of the executive summary of the documents is available on our website www.taplowsociety.org.uk. All of the documents are available on the South Bucks District Council website www.southbucks.gov.uk by following the trail from 'Environment and Planning' to 'Viewing Planning Applications'.



The Village Green Party

Many thanks for all those who helped with the Ox Roast. It went very well, much better than expectations, given what an awful day that Saturday was. Poured with rain a lot of the day and that put many off, so a reduced attendance, but come the evening the weather stabilised and was quite warm and only the odd spot of rain. Huge numbers of children up to teenage and many parents and the gang of stalwart oldies as well. In our tight circle of gazebos round the central area we had a lot of fun.

All I can say is that those who didn't come missed a great party.

Takings of course down – Peter Mole, our treasurer, tells me we took around £900 which means a loss of a few hundred pounds, but nothing terminal.

Once again I have to express my admiration for the caller, Tom Brown; he really does manage to get everybody on their feet, especially for the last couple of dances. Even teenagers – and think how they would normally react to the question 'Would you like to go Country Dancing?'

So, brilliant day and thank you Miv for organising the teams, please pass on my thanks to everyone who helped, thank you Peter for keeping an eye on the cash.

The raffle raised over £600 for the Church. Great result.

Euan Felton



Photos by Andrew Findlay

Regatta

Maidenhead Rowing Club Regatta was held on Saturday 13th August over the usual 500m upstream course with the finish just below Maidenhead railway bridge. Racing started at 9.00am and continued until 5.30pm with a total of 115 races at roughly 3-minute intervals. The promised rain was largely absent and racing conditions were generally good, disturbed only by cruiser wash.



The regatta added an international dimension this year due to the entry of several Russian student crews from St Petersburg University. The students have been training out of Maidenhead RC since before Henley Royal Regatta and dominated each of the three events they entered, with, in several cases their smaller boats racing each other in heats and finals.

Particularly welcome was a large contingent from Marlow RC whose boathouse suffered a major fire the previous week, racing in a combination of their own and borrowed boats. They were rewarded by winning the Victor

Ludorum for the most successful visiting club with 10 event wins. Maidenhead RC was the most successful club overall with 14 event wins.

The origins of Maidenhead Rowing Club are not clear, but records of Henley Royal Regatta indicate that there was an entry from 'The Star Club, Maidenhead' in 1840, and as the club's symbol is a green star, there may be some direct connection. The very first Rowing Almanack gives details of a regatta held in Maidenhead in 1860 and is known that the present club was in existence around the 1870s.



Photos by Paul Morgan
www.paulmorganphoto.co.uk

The club's ambitions now are to capitalize on the 2012 Olympic rowing regatta which is being held at nearby Dorney Lake. It is hoped that some current and former juniors will be competing in 2012 and the club hopes to host rowers or supporters from at least one competing nation.

(Based on material from the Rowing Club's website, www.maidenheadrc.org.uk)



Taplow Diary

We have started a diary page on our website, www.taplowsociety.org.uk so that everyone can see what will be happening in the village.

Please help us to keep it up-to-date by sending information about events to the editor: editor@taplowsociety.org.uk

Please also inform the Parish Clerk because there will be a diary available in the Village Centre which will be open to inspection when the office there is open (1–3pm Mondays and Thursdays).

AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the Hitcham and Taplow Society will take place on Friday 2nd December at the Village Centre, High Street, Taplow, starting at 8 pm.

A detailed agenda is included with this edition of the Newsletter.

Taplow Land for Sale: A General Alert

There are two or three large fields (20–30 acres each) up for sale on the edge of the Taplow Village Conservation Area, and Green Belt. The triangular field bounded by Cliveden Road and Hill Farm Road had an advertising sign declaring 'commercial opportunity' and exhorting interested parties to contact the agents. Recently a Taplow resident saw a couple of men of 'travelling appearance' photographing the sign. Later the sign (of no commercial value!) was stolen. If it had been mere vandalism it would no doubt have just been left lying, but no, it has been removed, and one can only guess in order to reduce would-be purchaser interest and therefore price competition.

With Dale Farm very much in the news there is real concern that one or other of these fields may be purchased by a group of travellers and then invaded. Obviously purchase of the land cannot be blocked, but what can be done if the above scenario transpires?

SBDC are acutely aware of this land being for sale, and already have an Article 4 Order on this land, taking away Permitted Development Rights to erect fences which is all they can really do to ward off purchasers and to highlight the Green Belt status and restraints applicable to this land. Unfortunately SBDC cannot block sales or entry of every available open land but they are keeping a watch and would react as quickly as possible i.e. as they did re the Listed Building Alderbourne Cottage

recently re earth movements which was possible in anticipation of occupation.

Taplow may, or may not, be under siege... but all in Taplow should be alert and vigilant! This was brought to our attention by our district Councillor, George Sandy.

For those who might think this is an isolated incident take a look at these advertisements found on the web:

UK Land for Sale – Fantastic Investment

Land in the UK has always been one of the great financial opportunities available. Now, thanks to our unique set-up, we can offer excellent purchases for as little as £20,000. With possibilities at up to a five-fold return on your investment in as little as two years. Can you afford to miss out?

Buy UK Land Plots

Can you afford to miss out on buying from our great stock of fantastic UK investment land plots? No – our land for sale is second to none!

But this is only the tip of the iceberg. There are two plots of land, of 21 and 30 acres, for sale in Hunts Lane and yet further land off Boundary Road; all waiting for the starter's pistol once the National Planning Policy Framework has been signed off.

Fred Russell

The Hermitage

Elsewhere in this newsletter there is an article about the new draft National Planning Policy Framework, (NPPF) basically warning residents of Taplow that implementation of this latest government initiative is unlikely to leave us unscathed. Until recently the South Bucks District Council has been largely supportive of the stand, via Ellington Road and District Residents Association (EDRA), of the many proposals to demolish the Hermitage and replace it with a concentrated development of houses or apartment blocks. Over the past 30 years EDRA has fought off at least 25–30 separate applications to develop the site, and the fact that the Hermitage is still standing is a tribute to the combined local determination to save the building and to the firm support of SBDC. We cannot avoid the charge of self-interest, however, since clearly the destruction of the Hermitage would possibly include the demolition of No. 5 Ellington Gardens and a

concomitant massive loss of tree cover and a major loss of privacy and amenity. The Hermitage is surrounded by a ring of 30 individual houses and some 54 flats, a total of at least 84 households whose well-being will be immediately affected by loss of that grand old house.

The NPPF poses a serious threat to both the village and the riverside in that infilling is likely to be allowed in a conservation area and, although technically the development of the Hermitage site is backland infill, the general loosening of regulations and the presumption in favour of sustainable development may well encourage the developer who owns the Hermitage to stir, Kraken-like, and once more terrorise the natives. EDRA will, as always, be keeping a very close watch on the situation and will work in close collaboration with the Society.

Fred Russell



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Unless otherwise stated, the views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Society or its Committee.

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