

HITCHAM & TAPLOW SOCIETY

Minutes of the 53rd Annual General Meeting Held at the Village Centre on Friday 29 November 2012 at 8.00 p.m.

1. ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

35 members attended. Apologies were received from Ros and Fred Russell, Pamela Bentley, Brian Smith, Jessica and Dick and Gill Nutt.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE 2011 AGM

The minutes of the 52nd AGM were approved.

3. PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Eva Lipman made the following opening remarks.

“Once again it gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to this our 53rd AGM. I think it is pretty good that your society has survived this long in good heart as I am sure your Chairman and Treasurer will attest. I believe that we are still contributing to making Hitcham and Taplow a happy place to live. As you know we do not believe in preserving it in aspic because every community has to evolve but we would like to see it evolve in a way that enhances our sense of wellbeing.

As usual I will leave it to our Chairman, Karl to give you the day to day activities of your society in his report. I would like to give him our special thanks for being such a diligent and excellent chairman in spite of his ill health and for allowing his name to be put forward to stand again for the forthcoming year.

Unfortunately neither Ros nor Fred Russell is able to be with us this evening because they are both recovering from heavy colds. Fred, the editor of our newsletter, much to his long suffering wife Ros' relief, is about to put down his pen, or more accurately his keyboard. He took over from Leonard Miall in the Autumn of 1998 with newsletter 70 and it blossomed out into colour for the first time and has gone from strength to strength. It has been a great deal of very hard work, and I would like be able to convey your sincere gratitude to him. He has been helped by the editorial sub-committee and in particular in recent years ably assisted by Andrew Findlay who will be taking on more of the work. Thank you. Andrew.

I will leave the rest of the thanks to Karl. So over to you Karl for your Chairman's Report.”

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

"On behalf of the Society, I begin my report with our continuing very special thank you to our indefatigable President for the major contributions she makes to all of the activities of the Society - our social events, our relations with other organisations, our responses to planning applications and the production of our Newsletter -once more Eva, thank you.

Again this year we held our traditional events - the post-AGM talk, the Easter Egg Hunt and the Village Green Party.

Robert Trehearne-Jones's talk at our 2011 AGM was an exhilarating account of the history of rowing. He set the context of the Olympic Rowing events to be held at Dorney Lake, in the exhaustive and determined training schedule of Team GB and its Leander members, enhancing our enjoyment as being-there spectators and television-viewers in the coming Olympic Year.

Des O'Sullivan's fluent talk at our 2010 AGM has proved to be a significant influence in ensuring the protection of the biodiversity of Taplow Reach within the proposals for the development of the Mill Lane site

The intermittent rain did not dampen the spirits of the children competing at the Easter Egg Hunt, or the determination of the grown-ups searching for the hidden bottles of champagne, or the pleasure of the extended families enjoying the delicious lunch. Thank you to Neil and Gill Blundell, their team of helpers and our host, Taplow Hotel, for another truly enjoyable day. The auspicious date for your next year diary is April the First.

The weather, kinder this year, brought a record crowd of young and old to the Village Green Party and a record amount to the raffle for St Nicolas Church funds. Once again a special thank you is due to Euan for the complex arranging before and the hands-on supervising on the day and the too numerous- to-name, 28 strong team, comprising the fire minders, spit turners, roast carvers, barbecuers, setters up on Saturday, takers down on Sunday, and ticket sellers. The date for your next year diary is 22 June.

For our prime mission, the scrutiny of planning policy and applications, 2012 was a difficult year.

"Death of an Unique Shopping Village" the headline in our Autumn Newsletter tells its own story and the article gives comprehensive details of our failure to save the Bishop Centre. Still, no matter the vast amount of time it consumed, it was a battle worth the fighting. Now Land Securities have made an application to add another restaurant to the row of new buildings. The Society will be objecting to it.

The Society joined the vigorous opposition to the application for removal of the various restrictions regarding the use of the land and buildings at Cliveden Stud. The application was refused.

The Society objected to an application for a development on land owned by Station Garage on the Bishop Centre side of the railway line. The application was refused.

Numerous other applications have been scrutinised by your Committee during the course of the year.

The Society has made significant contributions to the structure and content of the Brief for the development of the Mill Lane Opportunity site. The Brief is now issued as a Supplementary Planning Document for a six weeks public consultation until 14 December.

All members of the Society with an email address received details of how to access the Document and its many appendices and attachments on the South Bucks District Council website. Advertisements in local newspapers and the Parish notice boards announced that printed copies are available to examine at the Taplow Parish Council office in the Village Centre and at Burnham Public Library.

The Society response to the consultation will welcome many of its proposals - the riverside walks : the bridge from Mill Lane to Boulders Lock Island : the extensive nature reserves embracing Taplow Reach : the closure of Mill Lane to through traffic to and from Berry Hill : the height restrictions and locations of new housing development.

The Society will go on to express disquiet about the proposal for a new access to Mill Lane to the east of the Volkswagen Garage between Maidenhead Bridge and the Berry Hill junction. This new access would entail the felling of many of the splendid trees along that section of the Bath Road, widening that section to four lanes and installing a set of traffic lights at that point.

The Society will ask instead for consideration of the improvement of the present access point and the carrying out of a credible survey of present and future traffic patterns,

The Society's final and most important point will be the fixing of the number of new households. The independent Economic Survey which was commissioned by the District Council in 2010 recommends 110 homes. Depending on the access point decision, the traffic survey suggests 110 to 250 homes. The Society will express its preference for 110 and declare its firm position for no more than 150 households.

Each and every member of the Society is urged to respond to the consultation. It is the established policy of the District Council to recognise the number of individual responses to be a significant influence for it to consider amendments to the Document.

More and more internet browsers are visiting our website www.taplowsociety.org.uk. Delivering comprehensive information to members via our website is easier and faster than other methods and we urge

all who have access to the internet to make regular and frequent visits to check out what is new and to browse through the many and various sections.

A warm welcome to our new Membership Secretary, Pamela Viollet and a thank you to Gill Holloway who passed the baton when she moved away to distant parts.

All members with an email address are asked to let it be known to Pamela at pamelaviollet@btintnet.com. She will add it to our email group which allows communication by writing a message just once and sending it out at the same time to all members who are in that group. These addresses are fully protected from public gaze, are known only to the Membership Secretary, and the Chairman must approve the sending out of each communication.

The acquisition of the Old Priory Garden by Taplow Parish Council is now complete. The Taplow and Hitcham Recreation Ground Association will administer the garden and restoration has already started. The cost of the restoration and the on-going maintenance of the Garden will be dependent on cash contributions and volunteer workers. The Society has donated £500 and it will continue to support the fundraising efforts and to assist in the recruitment of volunteers.

Roger Andrews and Miv Wayland-Smith are the inspiration for the project and they are spearheading the restoration work. Miv is here and during the refreshment interval he will answer any questions you wish to ask and provide any more information you would like to have.

In conclusion, thank you to all who have contributed to the activities of the Society this year - Vice-Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer, Executive Committee and Membership Secretary, to SGI at Taplow Court for providing and serving tonight's refreshments, to Taplow House Hotel for providing a meeting room for our monthly Committee meetings, and a very special thank you to retiring Newsletter Editor, Fred Russell. Across his long serving years, he has transformed our Newsletter to be the exceptional, stand-out, informative, illustrated, full colour magazine it has become.

Thank you Fred."

5. TREASURER'S REPORT

Peter Mole distributed the unaudited profit and loss account for the year ended 30 September 2012. It had not been possible to reconcile the figures showing a surplus for the Village Green Party. Peter undertook to do further work on this and send the final accounts to members by e-mail.

6. SUBSCRIPTIONS

The meeting was reminded that the minimum annual membership subscription shall be increased to £7 per household (£6.50 per household for agreed block membership) and £50 per corporation, effective from the subscription year beginning 1 January 2013.

7. ELECTIONS

President

It was unanimously resolved to re-appoint Eva Lipman as President for the forthcoming year.

Vice Presidents

It was unanimously resolved to re-appoint Tony Hickman, Bernard Trevallion and Fred Russell as Vice Presidents for the forthcoming year.

Chairman

It was unanimously resolved to re-appoint Karl Lawrence as Chairman for the forthcoming year.

Vice Chairman

It was unanimously resolved to re-appoint Neil Blundell as Vice Chairman for the forthcoming year.

Treasurer

It was unanimously resolved to re-appoint Peter Mole as Treasurer for the forthcoming year.

Secretary

It was unanimously resolved to re-appoint Neil Blundell as Secretary for the forthcoming year.

Executive Committee

It was unanimously resolved to re-appoint the following as Committee members for the forthcoming year: Euan Felton, Heather Fenn, Alastair Hill, Barrie Peroni, Nigel Smales, Louise Symons, Jeremy Vanstone, Miv Wayland-Smith and Mike Yeadon.

Karl Lawrence explained that Pamela Violett had kindly agreed to become the membership secretary.

8. UPDATE ON OLD PRIORY GARDENS PROJECT

The Taplow & Hitcham Recreation Ground Association would carry out the maintenance and Karl reported that 20 bird boxes had been donated for installation in the garden.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A discussion took place about the Mill Lane proposals and the following points were made:

Individual responses to the proposals would be more effective than block responses.

The Committee's request for comments from members was not intended to replace individual responses which the Committee encouraged.

Many of the proposals appeared to be aspirational and not financially viable and there was concern about what the developers would actually deliver and whether the development would properly take account of conservation of the benefits of the local businesses currently occupying the site and the ecology of the area..

Closure of Mill Lane to stop rat running would force more traffic on the Bath Road and the rat running could be stopped by making Mill Lane one way. However, according to SBDC closure is favoured by the majority of residents and supported by the traffic report.

The proposed improvement of the Mill Lane junction with the A4 would increase traffic in Mill Lane.

The traffic statistics presented so far are not credible.

Although no developer has yet come forward with any detailed plans (so there is nothing specific to object to) the consultation document would have strength because a developer would be legally bound to follow its conclusions.

A vote of thanks was raised for the expertise and incredible hard work of Karl and Euan in driving the Society's response to the various consultations.

10. CONCLUSION OF THE MEETING

The meeting concluded at 8.55 pm.

After the meeting there was a talk by Colin Mantrip, Master Carver, at the Lillyfee Woodcarving Studio entitled "The Magic Art of Craftsmanship". It was an excellent and entertaining talk and many beautiful examples of his work were on display. All present very much enjoyed it and showed their appreciation.

.....
Karl Lawrence
Chairman