

# Chairman's Report

HTS AGM 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023

*Roger Worthington*

The Presidents address has covered our regular events and the work that goes into them. I strongly support her thanks to so many people without whom we could not function.

## Transport and Footpaths

It is welcome that the Elizabeth Line now runs through to central London, though present reliability issues are a serious disappointment after such a long drawn out development and testing period. It has brought its own set of problems of course as anyone who has tried to use Approach Road recently will know. We have reported on our discussions with the line operators on how to improve the existing station parking but any solution to the road parking problems is dependent on the Unitary Authority delivering some combination of yellow lines and marked parking bays. There is as yet no sign of this being offered for consultation, never mind implementation, so solutions are distant. County still turn a deaf ear to any development of land around the station for parking although we have discussed this with them in the context of the emerging Local Plan.

Most concerning has been the continued absence of a replacement for the Jubilee River footbridge. We took an initiative to write to County with support from our Ward councillors and our MP Joy Morrissey to press for funding to be included in the 23/24 budget. We are pleased that this has been confirmed. However, interim reports suggest that it has not received the priority attention it deserves and we are not confident that it will actually complete in the financial year.

## Democracy

As we reported last year we proposed to the County Boundary Consultation that Taplow should be a single member ward with Dorney. This was duly considered but rejected on the grounds of population imbalance in future years.

## Development

The Mill Lane developments are approaching the final stage as the Berkeley Homes project is only awaiting the creation of the Residents management company and the Gage houses are nearing completion. The concerns we raised last year over mooring facilities with the development of the Old Boathouse site remain as the relevant application has languished with the Planners since last October and the marina identified in the original development of Mill Lane is a piece of fenced off hard standing.

The Amerden Lane kennels redevelopment to 16 houses similarly still lies with the planners.

Most recent concerns have been over the Cliveden Stud site. After ejection of all the equine businesses and a considerable number of unlawful site despoilings, applications are coming in for new house developments and conversion of equine building to residential. A test case was taken to the Planning Committee to argue that the whole site should be recognised as important enough to be the subject of a Supplementary Planning Document and all applications paused. However the Committee ignored this and is treating each application on its merits, approving the one that was the test case.

In combination with a number of other site application it is clear that the Taplow area is being targeted by opportunist developers using every quirk of the Planning regulations to convert agricultural and equine sites to housing – a real threat to our rather rural backdrop.

## **Heritage**

We are still short of the full sum required to restore the Celtic Cross on Taeppas Mound but hope to complete this by next year.

## **The Society**

So what of the Society itself? We still get along without a chairman but the new energies I referred to last year are bearing fruit. You will hear from Mike Turner the transformation he has carried out on our processes and Cat Howard has stepped forward as our Newsletter Editor so I think we are in good shape, despite immediate absences due to hospital bookings.