

HIGH WYCOMBE SOCIETY

Newsletter No. 1 - May, 1969

In order to keep in close touch with all our members and affiliated Societies,, we have decided to publish a newsletter at regular intervals, outlining the activities of the Society and the various groups which we hope to establish. To create a vigorous, widely based Society will take some time, but with the help of all our members we should achieve this and play a very useful part in the life of the town. It is entirely up to us.

Your Executive Committee has met five times so far and has undertaken the following:

1. Registration of the Society

We have registered the Society with the Civic Trust and the Charity Commissioners have accepted the Society as a Charitable organisation. This will exempt us from Income Tax considerations.

We are affiliating to the Chiltern Society and the Council for the Preservation of Rural England (Penn Country Branch).

2. Conservation Areas

The Civic Amenities Act of 1967 introduced the new idea of Conservation Areas to protect whole areas of our ancient towns, and to ensure a high standard of replacements in the future. Suggested Conservation Areas were submitted for High Wycombe by the Chiltern Society and the Rye Protection Society acting together. It is understood that these will form the basis for the plans now being prepared at the County Planning Office. It is hoped that the Areas will be designated soon. The High Wycombe Society will carry on the good work begun by the other two Societies by continuing to keep a watchful eye on the areas involved, and by cooperating with all concerned in maintaining a high standard of design, care and maintenance.

3. Guildhall, High Wycombe

Since the decision by the County Planning authority to refuse the leasing of the Guildhall to Messrs. Mogfords, a number of organisations have approached the Borough Council about the re-decoration of this fine building, but so far no decision has been reached. Many feel that the work must be placed in the hands of experts, and that plans should be made available for discussion and comment. We will make our own representations to the Borough Council.

4. Three Tuns

This picturesque Public House in the High Street is threatened by demolition. It is a 17th/18th Century building, in good condition, and it fits in admirably with the surrounding buildings. The Prudential Insurance Company have submitted plans to develop a large site to the rear, and to gain access to the High Street by removing the Three Tuns, part of the fine Martin's Bank, and another building. Another supermarket would take their place, and other developments are planned in conjunction with the Borough Council. Quite apart from the threat to the buildings, the area is in the heart of the proposed Conservation Area, and the proposed developments would have a serious effect on its character. We have made representations to the Minister of Housing and Local Government, the Georgian Society, The County Planning Officer and the Borough Council.

5. Railway Closure. High Wycombe to Bourne End

After some discussion it was agreed that the proposal to close the High Wycombe to Bourne End Railway line was a matter for the Society. We have objected on the grounds of loss of public amenity, the need for which is likely to grow in the near future. We have also pointed out the difficulties which will face the people using the service if it is closed, especially school children. The Thames Valley Bus Company has admitted that it will be unable to provide additional vehicles and staff to cope with the increase in numbers. We have been informed by the Railway Authorities that a local inquiry will be held soon and that we will be given the opportunity to express all our objections.

6. Land near Tom Burt's Hill - proposed housing development

A proposal was submitted recently to develop 4 acres of land off Desborough Avenue and West End Street. The area is a most valuable public amenity for many people in the neighbourhood. The land used for allotments has been in continuous use for over 100 years, and the remaining land was part of an attractive extension of the very fine Tom Burt's hill. We were asked by the local residents, allotment holders, and by the Deeds Grove Residents\* Association to join with them in opposing the proposals. We made a vigorous protest to the Borough Council, and we have now heard that the application to build houses has been rejected. Of course the prospective developer has a right of appeal.

7. Land south of Cressex Road, High Wycombe

A proposal was made recently to develop 36| acres of land south of Cressex Road, for residential purposes. This was a large bite into the open agricultural land, and a departure from County policy to prevent High Wycombe swallowing the attractive countryside around, and which is so important for the townsfolk. We realise the need to build more houses, but felt that much more thought should be given to using the areas available within the town, rather than allow indiscriminate spread in all directions. This problem is not confined to the Cressex area. Unless a firm stand is taken by the County authority, there is a great danger of a continuous residential development from Amersham to the Thames, and from Beaconsfield to West Wycombe.

The County Planning Officer has informed us that our objections were placed before the County Planning Committee on 10th March, and we believe that further discussions are now taking place between the County and Borough Councils.

8. Formation of Groups

A start has been made in forming separate groups to deal with the different aspects of the work to be tackled. We know that some members are content just to give their moral support, but we hope to interest many of them in the work of the various groups. In this way the Society will make a much greater impact and its work will be much more successful.

Here are some preliminary details of the groups:-

Outdoor Activities Group

John Willson has agreed to form this Group, which will tackle the clearing of litter, especially in woodlands and other places of beauty. This sort of work will be combined with the clearance of footpaths and other outdoor activities. As a first task Mr. Willson has arranged to clear the litter and obstructions from the footpath in High Wycombe known as the Hollow Way. He is naturally anxious to make a success of the first venture and hopes that all those who are interested will meet him on Saturday 7th June at 10 a.m. The meeting place is where Hampden Road meets Hamilton Road. Further information about this kind of work can be obtained from Mr. Willson at 14 Gosling Grove, High Wycombe. Tel; H.W. 25966.

#### Historic Works and Buildings Group

Mike Jarrett has formed a small group to deal with this interesting work and he hopes to increase the number of members. Monthly meetings will be held. He is anxious to hear from anyone interested in our historic buildings, and monuments and in the improvement of the treasures and eyesores we have.

Mr. Jarrett's address is

296, Desborough Avenue,  
High Wycombe.  
Tell High Wycombe 23842

#### Publicity Group

A small group has been formed with Ted Kearney as the leader. His address is

37 Dean Close, Deeds Grove.

The group is working on a campaign to increase our membership and they are looking for help from all our members when the campaign material is ready.

#### Trees Group

Mr. C. Peters is anxious to begin a group to help with the care of individual trees and groups of trees within the Borough, and with the care of woodlands within the Borough and on the fringes. All those interested in this important work should write to him at

49, Wordsworth Road.

He is hoping to write to all those who declared an interest in this topic on their membership forms.

It is hoped to extend these groups and to form new ones for such things as Open Spaces and Public Amenities, Planning, Water Resources. At our General Meeting on Thursday 5th June, we hope that we can recruit additional active members for those groups already formed, and in addition obtain some new ideas for other groups.

This first Newsletter may give the impression that our thoughts are concerned mainly with opposing. It is important that we should be prepared to oppose or seek to modify projects which may be harmful, but we do realise that it is even more important that we should lend our support to the local authorities when they wish to carry out work which is clearly beneficial to the community. In addition we should have ideas of our own for the improvement of the town and the quality of life, and not be afraid to submit these for public discussion. This is where the various groups will be of great value, since they can devote their full energies to particular projects and be in a position to advise the Executive . . . Committee on courses of action. We can then be sure that the advice will be sound and the follow up action effective.