



High Wycombe Society

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1. Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment.

Although this massive Conference may not have been a turning point in the world's history, some important progress has been made and the decisions taken may lead to vital work in many fields. It was hoping for too much to expect all the nations involved to agree about all the major problems, but at least there is to be a widespread and continuing follow up.

The four reports on our own national problems submitted to Mr. Peter Walker may prove to be invaluable. The one published by the Lady Dartmouth Committee, entitled "How do you Want to Live?" has made a great impact already, and could well be a foundation for future legislation and work to improve the human habitat. It ought to be compulsory reading for all permanent local authority officials and elected representatives.

Clive Bray wrote a splendid letter on behalf of the Society and part of this has been included in the Report. The part selected is worth quoting

"One cannot zone a steel rolling mill in the middle of a domestic housing area, but it is wrong to be too clinical in separating the various activities of a community. It tends to create an evening and weekend man, a work man, a shopping man and a recreational man; whereas at one time a community of whole men provided the necessary contact for complete social identity".

2. Group Activities

The following is a summary of the work of Groups during the last three months

a. Planning

We are hoping to re-establish the Planning Group, drawing in members from the different parts of the town and including help from Residents' Associations. This is a vital role for the Society and it is essential that we not only maintain a close watch on Planning Registers, but also formulate our own point of view about the future of High Wycombe and District.

There is no doubt that many Resident's Associations are keeping a close watch on planning applications affecting their own neighbourhood. Their local knowledge often reveals that a planning application which seems fairly harmless on paper can in fact have a damaging effect on the local community.

It is hoped that Residents Associations needing support in combating such application will consult the Society.

We have been involved in the following recent planning applications:

Area H.7 - Hazlemere

This monster application is the largest ever made for this area. It involves the erection of some 2,000 houses (about 7,000 people), the whole scheme to be carried through by a consortium of building companies. This would take a great bite out of the Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, as the whole of the H.7 area is within the A.O.N.B. If such massive intrusions are allowed, it makes a mockery of all the efforts

to protect our beautiful countryside, and unless fought against they will soon reduce the A.O.N.B. to a derisory fragment.

Quite apart from the A.O.N.B., the proposed development of H.7 would have a disastrous effect on the town and on the Hazlemere area in particular. Increased traffic and population would place a great strain on services and amenities, which are already woefully inadequate.

The County has tried to mask the problem in the Wycombe Review by suggesting that H.7. could be an independent village, and should not be thought of as a further urban sprawl in the direction of Amersham! Of course it would be sprawl. How could such an enormous estate be termed a village, especially when the many community and other needs would have to be sought elsewhere?

In the "Strategy for the South East" planning document, High Wycombe was defined as a "no growth" area. Why then should H.7. and other massive increases be thrust upon us, when it was planned that they should go elsewhere?

Undoubtedly homes are needed to meet the needs of local people on the Council waiting list and others wishing to buy their own homes. The houses projected for H.7. are not meant to serve the needs of the locality. They are meant to house people from the Greater London Area able to afford the high price. The needs of the people of High Wycombe could surely be met if planning applications already approved were taken up, and if the central area of the town now lying semi-derelict could be used for compact housing development. To do this would also bring back life to our town centre and this is just what the Minister hopes local authorities will do.

We have opposed very strongly the application for H.7. and other organisations have done likewise. We hope that massive opposition will bring about a complete re-appraisal of housing needs in High Wycombe and District and refusal for Hazlemere to provide for the housing needs of Greater London.

Limmer Lane, Booker.

We opposed a planning application for housing developments at Limmer Lane, Booker, between the existing houses and the motorway. The idea of a motorway is to take traffic right away from towns - they are not to be thought of as convenient town boundaries. If the land between them and nearby residential development is to be "filled in" the whole principle of keeping through traffic away from towns is negated. The Rural District Council and Borough Council have refused the application, but no doubt the developers will appeal.

Deangarden Rise.

The long struggle to develop further stretches of Deangarden Rise, including the attractive rising ground to the south, seems to have ended in a compromise which satisfied everyone. The most recent plan to build 24 houses as an extension of the estate, with a cul-de-sac instead of a dangerous through road, seems a sensible solution. The attractive backcloth to the estate has been saved - we hope for a very long time to come.

Loudwater - Lammas Land.

A piece of land in Loudwater, known as Lammas land, and registered as a Common under the Commons Registration Act, is under threat for housing.

It forms an attractive barrier between various forms of development and has the added bonus of a riverside walk. We support the Loudwater Residents' Association in their struggle to keep this precious common land, and we hope the Rural District Council will refuse the application.

Traffic.

The traffic group had a full schedule of problems to deal with. It completed and submitted a list of questions for the Wycombe Area Transportation Study Stage II. It completed a study of the Council's Crendon Street High Street Corporation Street Castle Street Gyrotory System and lodged an objection with the Council and the Ministry. It

studied the Report of the A404 Action Group Report and came out with an unqualified support of its main contentions. This was a heavy programme, which left but little time for the consideration of other pressing business, such as pedestrian crossings, the Gordon Road "Improvement" Scheme (which means knocking down a fair number of houses, to allow still more traffic to reach and overload Gordon Road!) and the traffic implications of housing development in Hazlemere on a vast scale. These problems pose a formidable challenge to the group for future study and action.

Historic Works and Buildings.

Guildhall. The Guildhall is now being strengthened with additional pillars and supporting beams. With this additional support the building will be able to survive and carry on its important role as a centre for so many organisations. The third phase of the Guildhall restoration - the interior painting and furnishing - will follow the strengthening operation. This Grade 1 building deserves the most sensitive treatment with regard to decoration. If a high standard is reached we shall have a building of which we can all be proud.

Conservation Area. As a preliminary to further long term action for the improvement of the established Conservation Area, a photographic survey is being undertaken of the area stretching from Frogmoor to the Rye. This might well form the basis of an exhibition and discussion with the local and County authorities.

Saffron Platt. Houses in Saffron Road and Station Road are threatened by demolition. The Group think that every effort should be made to retain these mid-Victorian houses. They have a simple charm, and judging by what is happening elsewhere, they could be restored and provided with proper amenities. The area is ideal for housing, especially for older people and young couples of limited income wishing to set up homes. Why not make this a General Improvement Area? Many towns have already chosen such an area for all round improvement. Why not High Wycombe?

A Public Inquiry is to be held on 18th July at the Municipal Offices and the Society will be represented.

Water Group. Another volume of the River Survey has been produced dealing with the stretch between Kingsmead and the approaches to Wooburn Green. These documents are to be the blueprint for positive action in the future.

An oxygen survey of the Wye and Back Stream has been started. The Wye appears to be healthy over the stretch tested from the Rye to Loudwater, but the Back Stream is in a less happy condition.

We have cleared the river on two occasions recently, lifting out a considerable amount of rubbish from the stretches by Bowden Lane and between Rye Mill and Pann Mill. The Chiltern Venture Scouts were of enormous help with their wet suits and enthusiasm. The river yielded everything one could possibly wish for in life, from historic bedsteads to ladies underwear! The Borough Council workmen completed the task by taking away the rubbish to the Council dump.

Publicity and Social Activities Group.

We have joined these two into one Group; it is obvious that they ought to be married. The Group has plans for a number of events this year, the most immediate being:

(i) Instead of our usual Quarterly meeting, we are arranging a concert of 18th Century music, with Barbecue and wine, on Friday, 21st July, at Burleighfield House, Loudwater, beginning at 8 p.m. Full details are given in the letter sent with this Newsletter.

(ii) Canal Trip - Avon and Kennet Canal - July 22nd.

Those members who were fortunate to go on one of the "Linda" cruises along the Grand Union Canal over the past 3 years may like to know that there are a few seats left for the canal trip booked for Saturday, 22nd July. This trip is by an even older form of transport - a horse-drawn barge along the Avon and Kennet Canal between Newbury and Kintbury - a distance of seven miles. The horse and boat are very colourful and the

scenery delightful. Inclusive cost by coach is £1 per person. The coach will leave at 10 a.m. Those interested should telephone Derek Woods - H.W. 20284 or write to him at 19 Adelaide Road, High Wycombe.

Whilst on the subject of canal trips, please make a diary note for Friday September 8th. At 8 p.m. on that day Miss Francis Moon, from the British Waterways Board, will be giving an illustrated talk on British Waterways. This is likely to be of great interest to all those people who cherish the retention of our waterways, and may wish to extend their knowledge of them. We would like to see a good attendance. Venue to be announced later.

Housing

The Shelter Group of High Wycombe, with the help of the High Wycombe Society, has carried out a pilot Housing Survey in the Saffron Platt area. Shelter has now decided to carry out a Survey covering the older properties in the town along the valley, and hope to visit about 600 homes. They will bear the brunt of this survey, but they would like us to help them again.

The results should be useful to the Society as well as Shelter. This main survey will be undertaken in September and we hope that some of our members will volunteer to help. The pilot survey indicated that it is not very arduous and any volunteers may do as little or as much as they please. If you would like to help please contact the Secretary.

Trees Group.

If we could find someone willing to start a Trees Group, perhaps in a small way, we feel sure it would grow with the support of other members of the Society. This work is something we ought to be tackling. It would be interesting and very worthwhile. Your Committee would be delighted if we could start such a group. Any volunteers should contact the Secretary.

Membership

We appeal to Members and Affiliated Societies who have not yet done so, to renew their membership for this year. It is not just the financial support we need, although that's important enough as we have no other regular income. The continuing support of all our Members and Affiliated Societies is vital if we are to play our part in the community and extend our activities. Mrs. Roe, our Membership Secretary, would be very pleased to receive your subscription, using the form attached to this Newsletter.

3. Proposed Council of Societies.

It has been proposed that the Society ought to form a Council of delegates from all Affiliated Societies which should meet once a quarter.

This Council could discuss the work of the Society, bring forward their own problems, exchange ideas, and help to form the kind of policy which we can all support.

We hope to arrange such a meeting early in September, and if it is a success to continue the arrangement every three months. It is hoped that each Affiliated Society will appoint a delegate to attend such a meeting. A letter about the first meeting will be sent nearer the time, with further details.

4. Reports from Affiliated Societies.

From time to time we receive interesting newsletters and other publicity materials sent out by Resident Associations and other organisations. It would be much appreciated if we could be sent any information of this nature as it helps a great deal to keep us in touch with what is happening in the town and surrounding area. If any organisation would like to give space to the High Wycombe Society we should be very pleased to provide summaries of the work we are trying to do. Perhaps extracts from our Newsletter may find a place in local newsletters and circulars.

5. Footpath Walk.

Ron Sims has arranged another cross country walk on Sunday, September 3rd, meeting at Pann Mill on the Rye at 10.30 a.m. This time the route will be across the Rye, up Keep Hill, under the GREAT NEW MOTORWAY, and through the Beechwoods to Little Marlow via Winchbottom Farm. We shall return by another route via the Crooked Billet and Flackwell Heath.

Anyone who would like to take part in this walk will be very welcome. Please bring a picnic lunch.

6. Keep Hill Nature Trail.

Some of our members may remember our efforts to persuade the Borough Council to provide an "open space with a difference" in the Funges Farm area. Although we were unsuccessful, the Borough Council did agree to organise instead a Nature trail through Keep Hill Woods. The Parks Manager with the co-operation of Berks, Bucks and Oxon Naturalists* Trust, has been preparing the trail for some time, and it is hoped that it will be ready in the near future. Printed guides will be provided at the Swimming Pool and at Bassetsbury Manor. They will be free of charge. We hope that many of our members will make use of them when they are available.

7. Miscellaneous.

Edwardian Postcards. A number of duplicates of pictures of Old Wycombe, Marlow, and of the surrounding area, are available at cost. Normally they cost between 3p and 10p depending on their condition. These cards are difficult to obtain and like stamp collecting might well form the basis for a collection.

Anyone interested should write to Derek Woods, 19 Adelaide Road, High Wycombe.

To: Mrs. E. Roe, 3, London Road, High Wycombe.

Herewith: _____ in payment of Individual, Family/Affiliated Society Membership for the year 1972/73.

Date: _____ Signature: _____

Address: _____

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