



High Wycombe Society

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Newsletter No. 15 - December, 1972

1. GROUP ACTIVITIES

a. Planning

Area H.7. - Hazlemere. . As expected, the large scale development plans for this Area having been rejected by the Wycombe R.D.C., are going to Appeal. We have also noticed two additional applications in this Area - one for a new Stadium, Club premises and car parks for the Wycombe Wanderers Football Club, and another of about 4 acres, behind Terriers House, for residential development.

It is important that any information obtained by members or affiliated Societies about development plans in this Area be referred to the Planning Group's watchdog - Mrs. Kathleen Peatey (Telephone: High Wycombe 26820).

Area H.3. - Bellfield. The Wycombe Borough Council and General Housing have made joint applications to the Bucks County Council for residential development. This is an outline application at this stage to establish (i) the principal owner of the land, and (ii) that the land may be developed for residential purposes. The local Planning Officer (Mr. Holt) is keen to see that this development is done in such a manner that the visual effect will be pleasing, and that a properly balanced community is established. The plans include completing the Plantation Spur Road to cross the railway and meet the West Wycombe Road opposite Desborough Avenue.

Sands. The Society was represented at a Public Inquiry supporting the Bucks County Council in their refusal of an application by Choules Properties Ltd. to build 192 houses, roads and shops on 24 acres of land west of Lane End Road at Sands. The Society circulated a letter to local residents before the Inquiry, seeking their support in resisting this attempt to swallow yet another piece of the Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This met with a ready response and led to the raising of a petition, which was presented to the Inspector. Our thanks are due to Mrs. Peatey for presenting the Society's case, and that of the Chiltern Society, and to Mrs. Stokes for distributing our letter at short notice, having in the process to climb many flights of steep steps.

Green Belt Extension. The proposed extension to the Metropolitan Green Belt has been confirmed. This is good news, but we must take care to see that remaining "white" land, if developed, is put to sensible use, both in relation to the Structure Plan for the District, and the needs of the local community. Residents' Associations should be interested in the map now published. Copies may be obtained from the Area Planning Office, 35 Amersham Hill, High Wycombe. Cost: 75p

Saffron Platt. We regret we have been unsuccessful in the appeal against the demolition of the houses in Saffron Road and Station Road. We need support for new housing in this area. At all costs we must avoid this becoming an "Eastern Desert" .

The "Western Desert". Unfortunately we have not been able to produce new proposals for this area yet. In the New Year the Planning Group hopes to put forward its ideas to the Executive Committee, which, if approved, will be made public.

a. Traffic. The Traffic Group is in correspondence with the Authorities about the Transportation Study, and hopes to meet the Borough Surveyor shortly for a detailed discussion. The Council Gyrotory Scheme for the High Street was opposed by the Society and there are indications that there will be a Public Enquiry. The implications of the Bucks County Council Structure Plan for Traffic, and the bearing of traffic problems on the Plan are being studied. The Group has a large amount of work to do, and would welcome help.

b. Historic Works and Buildings.

Old Chequers. We have been informed by the Department of the Environment that a second Public Inquiry to decide the fate of this fine old building is to be held on Tuesday, 13th February, at the Wycombe R.D.C. Offices, Bellfield House, 80 Oxford Road. It will begin at 10.30 a.m. The covering letter and pamphlet sent with this Newsletter will give further details about our battle to save this building. We hope that as many members as possible will attend the Inquiry, even if only for part of the time. This would indicate our interest in trying to save this building, especially if those attending were able to say something in support of the Old Chequers.

In addition to our appeal, the Group has planned two fund-raising efforts as follows :

(i) Historical Talk and Walkabout.

On Friday, 16th March, in the Friends' Meeting House, 25 London Road, High Wycombe, Mr. Ewart Steevens will give a talk about the old town centre, beginning at 7.30 p.m. There will be many illustrations. This will be followed in April, on a Sunday, by a "walkabout" in the area concerned to look at the buildings and other features. Simple refreshments will be served before or after the walk at No. 13 London Road.

Inclusive Tickets: 75p

(ii) Musical Evening at Bassetsbury Manor.

An evening of music is being arranged for Saturday, April 14th, at Bassetsbury Manor, beginning at 7.30 p.m. The programme will include a string quartet, pianoforte solos, and solo and duet singing. Wine, cheese and biscuits will be served. Coffee will be available.

Inclusive Tickets: 75p.

Tickets for both events will be available soon. Please apply to Chequers Appeal Treasurer:

Mr. J. Cottrell, 13 London Road, High Wycombe.
Telephone: High Wycombe 29680.

The Toll House, London Road. The somewhat intractable problem of this little building has been on the agenda of the Historic Works and Buildings Group now for several years. We felt that it was time some positive steps were taken, and that an appeal to the public for funds was the most practical solution.

Accordingly, as recently announced in the Bucks Free Press and the High Wycombe

Observer, a campaign has been opened. Some of the leading traders and others have already subscribed almost £300 towards the fund, and we are now approaching other business and professional people, as well as affiliated societies,

Our leaflet on the Toll House, which we will let speak for itself accompanies this Newsletter.

This building has a bijou charm of its own, and members of the Society may feel that a contribution - however small - to this fund will enable them to identify themselves with the restoration effort in a way not possible with a large-scale project.

On display in the Public Library is a panel advertising this campaign, with a list of firms and individuals contributing.

Conservation Area, High Wycombe.

This was mentioned at length in our last Newsletter. Since then we have submitted proposals to the Borough Council concerning the Conservation Area and the Frogmoor. These are being examined by the various Borough Council Committees and we await their decision.

c. Water Group

Exhibition in the Public Library. The Group, in partnership with the Exhibition Group, mounted an Exhibition about the River Wye in the Public Library from 25th November to 5th January. This aroused a lot of interest and we are indebted to the members of both Groups for the great deal of thought and hard work which they put into the display. We are also grateful to the Borough Librarian, Mr. Sparkes, for all his help and encouragement.

The Exhibition material may be of interest to other Societies, especially Residents' Associations. If anyone would like to display the Exhibition in their own locality please contact Mr. A. Smith, Old Mill Cottage, Bassetsbury Lane, High Wycombe. Telephone: High Wycombe 29301.

Tree Planting at William Bartlett & Son Ltd.

Some time ago, while cleaning the River at Desborough Recreation Ground, it occurred to members of this Group that trees and trailing plants might well be planted in the storage yard of the furniture factory of William Bartlett and Son, in order to improve even further the attractive area near to the river at the Eastern End of the Recreation Ground. An approach was made to Mr. William Bartlett. He was sympathetic and he agreed that we should investigate the matter further. As a result, Mr. Andrews, the Parks Manager, was asked for advice. Armed with this, a further discussion took place with Mr. Bartlett and he very generously offered £60 to cover the cost of 9 trees (silver maple and alder), and 300 ivy and Russian Vine plants. The trees and plants have now arrived and are in the care of Mr. Andrews. The Group, with the help of the Trees Group, hope to plant them soon. This three- cornered partnership has been most encouraging, and is a promising start to Tree Planting Year.

River Clearance. On Saturday, 21st October, the Group continued with and completed the clearance of rubbish from both streams of the River at Desborough Recreation Ground. The Borough Council staff took away a large amount of rubbish. The Group hopes to continue these clearance operations. The next one will probably be at Loudwater, helping the Loudwater Residents' Association.

Ecological Survey of the River Wye.

As a result of the last Newsletter, several volunteers have come forward to help us in this important survey. Also Anacon (Instruments) Ltd. of Bourne End have offered the loan of their specialised equipment for the determination of suspended solids present in the water.

The outline Test Programme for the survey was completed in early November and schools in the Wycombe Area were contacted to see whether they were interested in partaking in the exercise. We had a very good response from all those approached and they agreed to help in the survey, which would take place as a one-day exercise in Spring or Early Summer, 1973, at various selected points along the Wye from Mill End to the confluence with the Bank Stream at Loudwater.

The Schools that have offered help are:

The Army School of Education, Beaconsfield.
Branchwood Secondary, Downley/Mill End.
Hatters Lane Secondary.
High Wycombe College of Technology.
High Wycombe Girls' High School.
John Hampden School.
Lady Verney High School.
Pembroke School, Flackwell Heath.
Royal Grammar School.
Wellesbourne Secondary .
Wycombe Abbey.

All the Schools were invited to a meeting held on 28th November at Wycombe College. At this meeting the proposed outline Test Programme was discussed in detail and views from the Schools were given, so that a realistic final working plan could-**- be developed.

As can be seen above, the last phase of work has been concentrated on producing a working survey for the Schools, but anyone interested in this work as an individual or as a group is asked to contact John Peek, 11 Longland Way, High Wycombe. Telephone : High Wycombe 31564.

d. Trees Group.

Woodland Walks and Clearance. On Sunday, 22nd October, the Group met at the Environmental Centre at Micklefield School, where Mrs. Mary Hopkin, who is in charge of the Environmental Studies Centre there, gave a most interesting description of Kingswood. She very kindly provided coffee and copies of her fascinating handbooks about the wood. Afterwards the Group had a pleasant walk in the wood. As a result of this, arrangements have been made with the Wycombe R.D.C. for a clearance of large items dumped in the wood. This will start at 10.30 a.m. on Saturday, January 20th and may last about 2 hours. Any volunteers would be very welcome. They should meet at Micklefield School, which is at the end of Micklefield Road.

Further woodland walks are planned for Hampden Woods, Hughenden Woods, High Barbers Wood, and Deangarden Wood.

Wycombe Festival. It is probable that the Society will stage an exhibition in the Guildhall as part of the Wycombe Festival. It seems appropriate that the theme of trees should be chosen, although other Groups may make their own contributions. It is hoped that Schools and Residents' Associations will be able to take part with material about trees and woodlands.

Tree Planting. At our recent Quarterly Meeting of affiliated Societies there was overwhelming support for a proposal by Hughenden Park Residents' Association that a fund should be started to provide a tree for planting in Frogmoor. We look forward to marking Tree Planting Year with a tree planted in this desolate spot. The Group Hon. Secretary will investigate this further.

Tree Preservation. A fine beech tree in Coates Lane, Downley, has been saved from felling. It is hoped that a Tree Preservation Order will be placed on the tree. A footpath planned for New Road will mean the destruction of a lovely hedge there. The Group is seeking the co-operation of the Borough Engineer's Department in an endeavour to have the hedge replaced.

2. Quarterly Meeting of Affiliated Societies.

The 2nd Meeting was held on 15th December at the Friends' Meeting House, and representatives from 22 Local Societies attended. Mrs. Barbara Rippington, Hon. Secretary of the Trees Group, gave a talk about Tree Planting Year and her talk was followed by a lively discussion about trees and woodlands in the locality. A pamphlet outlining various activities which could be carried out in Tree Planting Year was distributed. We hope that affiliated Societies will endeavour to carry out some or all of the projects listed.

Serious discussion took place on the topics of housing for people with limited incomes, the future growth of the town, and the future of the "Western Desert" - three closely inter-related problems. There was deep concern about the urgent need to provide homes for people with limited means. It was felt that homes before factories should be Wycombe's theme song, with far more emphasis on the restoration of older housing and provision of high density housing in desert and central areas, instead of gobbling up more of our nearby countryside and attractive open spaces .

Copies of the Minutes will be distributed to all affiliated Societies and to members of the Borough Council.

3. Annual General Meeting. Please make a note in your diaries. Our Annual General Meeting will be held on Friday, 27th April, 1973. Full details will be published in our next Newsletter.

4. Refuse Disposal. The Society has always been very keen on keeping our local woodlands and streams clear of litter. Much of the rubbish found in them is deliberately dumped by members of the public, many of whom may be unaware of the facilities which the local Borough Council has provided for the disposal of unwanted articles.

Bulk containers are available at the Booker Tip site, even when it is closed where members of the public can dump unwanted material. In addition a special collection service is operated in the area at no charge. Residents merely have to write in or telephone the Borough Engineer's office to obtain this service.

Please give these services the widest publicity and help to keep our town and countryside tidy.

5. Conclusion. A Happy New Year to all our members and affiliated Societies. We look forward to your continued support in the year 1973. There is much to be done.