

OFFICERS' REPORTS FOR 2020

CHAIRMAN

Despite all the difficulties caused by Covid-19, the Society had a busy year although, regrettably, we were not able to meet any of our members at public events. I am pleased to report that prudent housekeeping and generous on-going annual contributions from people renewing their memberships, enabled us to report a financial surplus for the year. We are very grateful for your continued support. New technology has enabled us to carry on business almost as normal, with virtual meetings for our committee and its Planning and Environment Sub-committee which, because of changes at the Borough, has been required to meet on a fortnightly basis. I should like to take this opportunity to thank all my colleagues for their support during my Chairmanship.

Tom Denniford

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY AND TREASURER

The Membership Secretary and the Treasurer are grateful that the majority of our members are promptly renewing their subscriptions for the coming year, nearly all through generous standing orders. This has been a great help in reducing costs, boosting funds and has helped to reduce the workload of our small, volunteer committee.

Unfortunately, there are still a number of members who have not responded to our reminders. If you have forgotten to renew, why not send a cheque for whatever you can afford this year and we will send you a new subscription form, which will allow you to make all future payments automatically, by standing order.

We are now well on our way to fully automating our renewal processes, which, with a membership well in excess of 1000, has been a Herculean task. The committee is indebted to our members who have helped with this and we are also grateful to our software specialists for their expert assistance.

Ossie Wardell-Yerburgh

CHAIR OF PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Planning: We continued to monitor all planning applications in our area and meetings of the Planning and Environment committee were held over Zoom. The committee meets every two weeks to keep in step with the timescales set by the Borough for comment and for call-in to Panel. 2020 saw a total of 226 planning applications, which is a small increase on the previous year. We submitted objections to 29 applications and a further objection to one refused application, that subsequently went to appeal. Additionally, we have spoken at two remote Development Management Panels this year.

An especially unwelcome application was submitted for a large development of flats at the Old Station Yard. We have objected strongly to this and are awaiting a Panel hearing. Following last year's application for a new pavilion for the cricket club at Whyteladyes Lane, an application for a new football club pavilion has been submitted at a site in Long Lane. If these go ahead, our local sports clubs could enjoy improved facilities.

We continue to be disappointed by the Borough's lack of progress with the revised Conservation Area Appraisal for Cookham Village.

The Society has made initial policy suggestions to the now, live, Cookham Neighbourhood Plan process and expects to make further submissions in due course.

Environment: Following pressure from the Society the Borough has agreed to develop a Hydrological Management Plan for Battlemead Common.

We are pleased to report that the track and bridge just north of Strand Water that were reopened last year as a Permissive Path, have now been made into a Right of Way. This forms a small, but useful addition to our footpath network.

In spite of high river levels at Christmas, there was no significant flooding in Cookham, although the issue of manning the "flood hub" at holiday periods remains unresolved. The Society has been advised that although parts of the River Thames Scheme are to go ahead, the section immediately downstream from the Jubilee River is being omitted because of the lack of funding from RBWM.

We continue our involvement with the Marsh Meadow Management Committee, the Cookham Advisory Committee of the National Trust and we maintain our memberships of the Maidenhead and Marlow Passenger Association, the Heathrow Association for the Control of Aircraft Noise and the Open Space Society.

Dick Scarff

COMMUNICATION

The Cookham Society has always worked hard to represent the best interests of Cookham, reporting this back to residents via regular newsletters. We are currently publishing two a year, one in early spring and one in the summer.

The Society is presently rebuilding its website into a more modern format and we hope to go live in 2021. Our Facebook Group continues to attract a regular following of 439 and we urge followers to formalise their relationship with the Society and become fully paid-up members. The poster drum outside Cookham Station has been rejuvenated and the Society is accepting posters from non-profit-making and charitable organizations for display. Notices from local small businesses can also advertise on the drum for a small fee. For further details you can contact Barry Weare on

01628 528682.

Barry Weare

SECRETARY

The Society held 7 committee meetings in 2020 and one AGM.