



The
COOKHAM SOCIETY
Newsletter **June 2009**

Consultations

In April/May The Society was somewhat swamped by the number and complexity of consultations in which it became involved. The Committee decided that The Society needed to alert members to **The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)**, **The Local Development Framework Consultation (LDF)** and **The Greenbelt Analysis and The Waterways Consultation**. The Waterways Consultation timetable was slightly later and is covered separately, elsewhere in the newsletter.

Councillor Mrs Alison Knight (The Royal Borough's Lead Member for Planning), Councillor Richard Kellaway and Mr Ian Bellinger (Principal Planning Officer of the Royal Borough) kindly attended our planning meeting of April 27th to discuss the issues we felt these consultations raised. The key points and areas of the discussion are noted below.

Cllr Mrs Knight assured us that the land listed in **The SHLAA** had no greater chance of being built upon than land that was not listed. The society questioned the sense of the listings as it had noted that, for example, a lake had been put forward as a development site. It was explained that the process has been used to identify *potential* development land and once a landowner had put forward a site, the Borough could only exclude sites in a specified narrow band of categories (e.g. sites of special scientific interest or certain categories of floodplain). The SHLAA is a rolling document and will be conducted annually.

The **Local Development Framework** questionnaire regarding high, medium and low density was discussed. The Society maintains that different densities are appropriate to different areas. It asserted that any development in Maidenhead must be accompanied by improved transportation infrastructure and services. Reference was made to the Maidenhead Town Centre regeneration and its effects on Cookham. (The Society has participated in the Townscape Assessment and the PRoM workshops to support the regeneration of the town.)

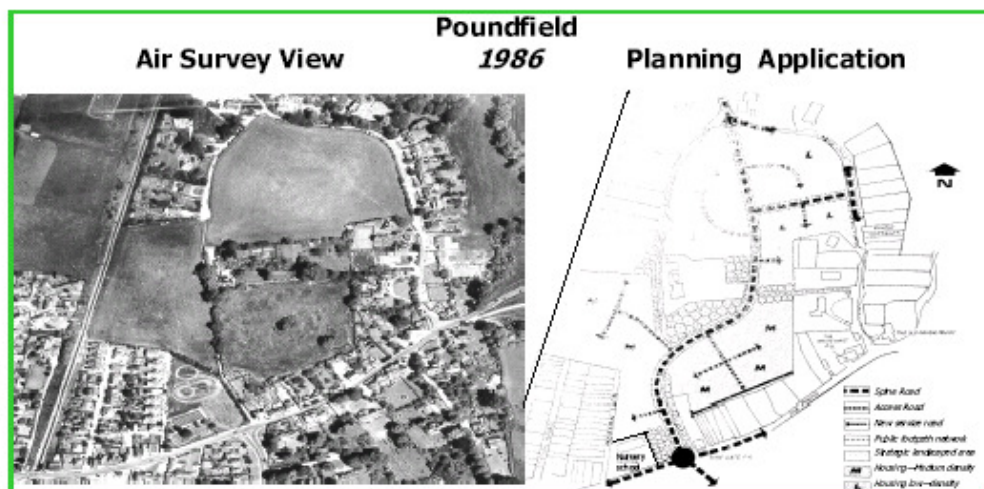
With regard to the **Greenbelt**, Cllr Knight pointed out that all political parties in The Borough have expressed their support in defence of existing Greenbelt and the analysis is currently examining whether further areas should be incorporated. **Cllr Knight stated that there would be *no net loss* to the Greenbelt.** The Society raised some issues it has with the Royal Borough regarding current development in Greenbelt land around Cookham, at the present time, with some agricultural land becoming accommodation land.

Cllr Knight further stated that the contents of the South East Plan, in conjunction with further legal advice would need to be analysed before a decision on **Poundfield's inclusion in Greenbelt** could be reached. With specific regard to Poundfield, The Society reaffirmed its historical mandate to oppose development there and our President presented a copy of the site's planning history to Cllr Knight. *(continued over)*

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY - 2009 (assumed)

Scout/ Village Fair on the Moor
Cookham Regatta
Cookham Dean Fête
Cookham Society Christmas Fayre

Saturday 20th June
Saturday 5th September
Saturday 19th September
Saturday 21st November



Cllr Knight further stated that the contents of the South East Plan, in conjunction with further legal advice would need to be analysed before a decision on **Poundfield's inclusion in Greenbelt** could be reached. With specific regard to Poundfield, The Society reaffirmed its historical mandate to oppose development there and our President presented a copy of the site's planning history to Cllr Knight. The Society raised the issue of the multitude of previous consultations and petitions in the last five years as we felt we were constantly asking members to respond to consultations on similar themes. Planning Officer, Ian Bellinger confirmed that the outcomes from all previous Greenbelt consultations are retained and compared.

The two hour meeting enabled us to pose many questions about aspects of these areas of planning strategy and ensure that the Society is in a strong position to monitor and protect Cookham's position. A letter summarising key points of the meeting has been sent to Cllr Knight for follow up. It was additionally suggested by Cllr Mrs Knight that the Society should become directly involved in the Planning Unit's Stakeholder Group. Our chairman has subsequently joined this group and will attend the first meeting shortly.

The South East Plan

We have been notified by the Royal Borough that the South East Plan has been published. This replaces the old Berkshire Structure Plan and has long term implications for Maidenhead and Cookham. The plan sets out changes which will take place up to 2026. The document replaces and updates Regional Planning Guidance and bridges the gap between local and national planning policy especially for infrastructure projects which may cross local authority boundaries. The key topics are housing, transport, employment and the environment. The Society will be studying the document in relation to planning applications and planning policies. The full document may be viewed at <http://www.qos.gov.uk/qose/planning/regionalPlanning/815640/>

Peter Prior's Spencer's Farm Vision

Appreciating that, at this stage, Mr Prior's vision is little more than a statement of intent, we are opposed to the intensification and re-marketing of these proposals which were decisively rejected on Appeal in 1981. In the circumstances, members should be aware that the Society will continue to resist strongly any proposals that would compromise the Greenbelt between Maidenhead and Cookham, should these areas be put forward for development. In summary, it is felt by the Society that the merits of development in this location are no greater than they were when previously considered - some 30 years ago.

Maidenhead Waterways Framework – Consultation and Sustainability Appraisal

In May the Society responded to an invitation by the Royal Borough to comment on the above proposed Planning Framework. It should be noted that the Framework does not concern itself with the viability or need for the Waterway, rather it provides guidance to potential development plans alongside its proposed route. The Royal Borough documents can be viewed via the following web link:

http://www.rbwm.gov.uk/web/pp_maidenhead_waterways_framework.htm

The Maidenhead Waterways Restoration Group (MWRG) is a key organisation involved in the Waterways project and further information, including a short video presentation, is to be found on its own website at:

<http://www.maidenheadwaterways.org/>.

In its response to the Royal Borough, the Society highlighted key issues which the Framework needs to address in order to **reduce** the flood risk to Cookham and asked that a stronger commitment be given to constraining any ribbon development, along the waterways, to non Greenbelt areas.

We have asked for further clarification of the planned route for the complete waterway as it was stated that it would "*start at the River Thames near Cliveden Reach, running via White Brook, crossing Widbrook Common and Cookham Moor, up to the junction with Strand Water. The waterway would then run southwards via an enlarged Maidenhead Ditch....*". The web site of MWRG discusses phase 2 of the restoration project "needing to increase the flow of water from Bourne End Reach across Cookham Moor and down Strand Water to offset recent losses from pumping



Marlow to Maidenhead Passengers Association (MMPA)

At the MMPA AGM, we raised the issue of Network Rail's failure to carry out the promised Bourne End Viaduct refurbishment with Mark Hopwood (The Managing Director of FGW). Local landowners, the Environment Agency and The National Trust gave permission for the necessary access. However, according to Network Rail, it also needed temporary access to some common land for an access track and a works compound. It was claimed that the official process for advertising and consulting on this need was three months and there was insufficient time to arrange this before the end of the financial year. Network Rail claims it tried to expedite the process contacting the local planning authorities but was unsuccessful but now has no plans to resurrect the scheme.

The Cookham Society is recommending its communications with Network Rail via its newly appointed representative on the MMPA. The Society considers any lack of investment in the branch line to be unacceptable. We will keep our members posted.

AGM Report

On March 5th, the Society held its 42nd AGM at Moor Hall. As in previous years, the Chartered Institute of Marketing kindly allowed us to use this excellent facility for which we thank them. Around 60 people attended the meeting to hear the Chairman's report, and then information about the current Village Design Statement (VDS) initiative which the Society is supporting alongside the Parish Council. Committee member Fiona Hewer then gave an informative talk on climate change and how it may be affecting Cookham. After the official business, attendees enjoyed a glass of wine whilst having an opportunity to give feedback on views of Cookham.



The Royal British Legion POPPY APPEAL 2009

The Local Cookham, Cookham Dean and Pinkneys Green Branch is geared up ready for this year's appeal and would welcome any volunteers for a small donation of their time.

The 65th anniversary of D-Day reminds us all of the sacrifice of so many over the years and still continues for the benefit of all of us.

Our Branch would be most grateful for some help in 'manning' the collection tins outside Countrystore, Sainsburys or Waitrose for short spells. They have a number of volunteers but if they can get extra helpers it will make a big difference to the final total.

Collectors do not have to be Legion members.

Please contact Gerry Charles 01628 521682 for details.

Appeal for Minutes Secretary

We are sure that there is someone who receives the newsletter who would be willing to come along to our meetings and record our minutes! If you could spare the time to take the minutes at our committee meetings which take place every two months – the next one being in September - we would be very happy to hear from you.

Call Bill Spicer on 525258.

IMPORTANT –

If any part of your name and address as shown on your address label requires correction please let Bill Spicer know:- **01628-525258** or by **E-mail on bill@thespicers.co.uk**.

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