

The Cookham Society



June 2018 Newsletter

Photograph by Mick Vogel Photography

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STOP PRESS

April Dene in Warners Hill

Following objections by the Society, the Parish and many local residents, the Borough has refused this application to build two new houses in the Green Belt. See p3 for further details.

Cookham Village Conservation Area

The Borough's consultation on the proposed revision and renaming of the current High Street Conservation Area for Cookham Village closes on the 15th July. The draft document gives a detailed description and commentary on the village and details of the consultation process can be found on the Borough website. The draft

document can be viewed on line and hard copies are available at Maidenhead and Cookham libraries. A drop-in session to review the proposals will be held between 4pm and 7pm on 5th July at Cookham Rise Methodist Church, in the Wesley Hall, Lower Road. Take this opportunity to meet with Borough Conservation staff and make your views known about what Stanley Spencer called "a village made in heaven". We live in a beautiful place, let's keep it that way.

THIS ISSUE:

- Special feature on Strand Water



WHAT WE DO

We are an active Society that places value on our lovely village and environment. We have a Planning Sub-committee, chaired by Dick Scarff, which meets once a month to review planning applications.

We take an open-minded approach to developments and very few are challenged.

More often, we suggest how proposals for development might be improved and can ask that conditions should be imposed on approvals to mitigate some of the less desirable aspects of plans.

BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN

This document is in the spotlight as the drive for new housing puts pressure on Green Belt Land. The Royal Borough's replacement for its Local Plan was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in January and the dates for the first part of its Examination in Public have now been announced (26th June to 3rd July).

This part of the inquiry will look at issues of principle rather than individual sites, in order to determine whether the plan as a whole has been properly prepared. The Society is not satisfied that the Council has dealt with the Green Belt in the correct manner and will be making representations to this effect.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The first meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Set-up Committee took place on Thursday 17th May. It was chaired by Parish Councillor Andrew Nye and attended by three members of the Cookham Society. Consideration was given to the structure and remit of the plan and Mr Nye will organize a second meeting.

STROLLING ALONG THE STRAND by Brian Clews

Local naturalist, Brian Clews, walks along Strand Water and reports on the rich wildlife along its overgrown banks.

The paddocks along Strande Lane and the stretch of the stream known as Strand Water are rampant with wildlife at this time of year. It's tempting for local walkers to stride along, simply enjoying the overall charm of the route, but a closer inspection will uncover a host of wildlife.

The pond is often rich in tadpoles here, partly because local resident, Barbara Brown, and her volunteers help hundreds of toads as they cross the road each year. They spawn generously and further protection is given to the young by the landowner, who has put in safety netting to save them from the ravenous fish in the pool.

The track between the pool and the mobile home site, often hosts a few luminous glow-worms, particularly on late June evenings. These creatures are not really worms at all, but a type of beetle. The flightless female mixes bioluminescent enzymes in her body, creating the eponymous glow she uses to attract a mate. After her 'Fifty-Shades' encounter, she switches off her light, lays her eggs and dies.

Beyond the stable complex, there is a mature reed bed where Reed Warblers occasionally nest. They are difficult to spot, but you will know they are there by their striking, metronomic, scratchy song. With

good fortune, the Cuckoo's call might be heard as it searches for potential host nests to lay its interloper eggs and the familiar "Little-bit-of-bread-and-cheese" of the Yellowhammer can be heard too. Much fainter will be the rasping noise of hornets scraping off small amounts of wood from timber surfaces to create their paper-like nest structures near the reeds each year. But do keep your distance!

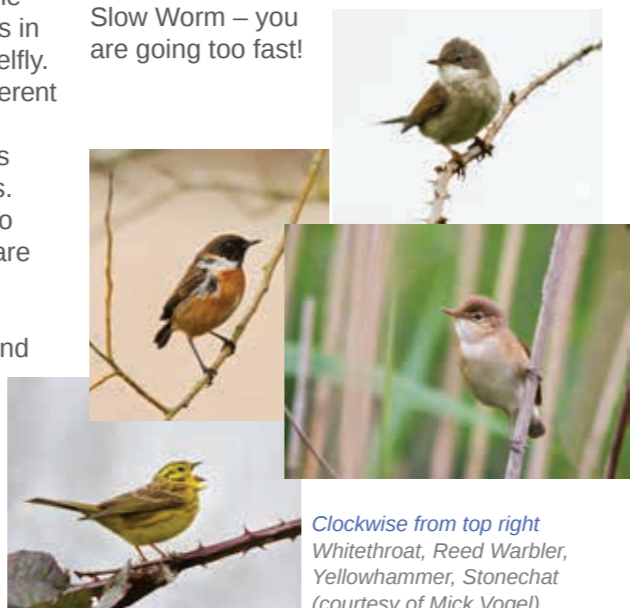
Where the stream connects with Whitebrook, dragonflies and damselflies swoop their stuff. One of the scarcer UK species resides in this location - the Variable Damselfly. It takes practice to identify the different species, but there are surveys planned for this season to assess local populations of these insects. They only live for a few weeks, so it is important that their habitats are protected.

Overhead, Red Kites wheel around on warm air currents and call out in their strange, piercing whistle. Lower down, visiting Whitethroats, Blackcaps, Chiffchaffs and Sedge Warblers will be busy feeding youngsters or preparing for a second brood. They have to get a move on, as they don't have many weeks to reproduce before their return migration, leaving the habitat free

for gorgeous overwintering Stonechats.

Everywhere you look, there is a pageant of solitary buzzing bees, busy beetles and beguiling butterflies. Peering closely into hedges and vegetation reveals shiny Shieldbugs, spiders, day-flying moths, spectacularly-coloured, Mirid bugs and Scorpion Flies – the list is almost endless.

So enjoy your amble along the Strand and take in all that the Cookham countryside has to offer. And don't forget, if you are overtaking the Slow Worm – you are going too fast!



Clockwise from top right
Whitethroat, Reed Warbler,
Yellowhammer, Stonechat
(courtesy of Mick Vogel)

If you are a wildlife enthusiast why not grab your camera and submit a photo to the WildCookham and Cookham Festival sponsored competition. Winning entries will be displayed at the Cookham Festival and in the WildCookham 2020 calendar.

For further details contact:

Brian Clews: 01628 526091
brian.clews@btconnect.com.

Quiet Beauty Spots in Cookham

View from the car park, at the top of Long Lane, Cookham. Part of our series which features Cookham's less well-known beauty spots.



Picture by
Barry Weare

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Green Spaces

The phrase "Cookham is defined by its green spaces" features prominently in the Village Design Statement (VDS). Some of these green spaces, such as the National Trust Commons are open to public access, while others are on private land.

One of the most significant private spaces is Poundfield and the battles over it have featured prominently in our newsletters on many occasions. On a smaller scale, there are also large, private gardens where the open, green space contributes significantly to the overall character and ambiance of the village.

We recently reported that an application to build a new house in the garden of Ballards on Jobs Lane, had been refused both by the Borough and subsequently, by the Inspector, on appeal. We now have two further controversial applications to build additional houses in private gardens. One is to build two houses at April Dene on Warners Hill and the other is to build a further large house in the garden of Chestnuts in Berries Road. Both these sites are in Conservation Areas and April Dene is also in the Green Belt. The Society has objected strongly to both these applications. Many residents have also submitted their personal objections to these proposals. We would encourage all members to register their views with the Borough on any individual planning application as we believe that the number of objectors does matter and may well influence the final decision on an application.

Old Sewage Works

This four-acre site in the Green Belt between the Golf Course and Marsh Meadow has stood unused for over 25 years. The mechanical equipment was removed long ago, but the tanks and other concrete structures remain. These are partially underground and at their highest are only a few feet above ground level. There are no buildings on the site although in view of its previous use, the site is classified as Previously Developed Land (Brownfield). It can therefore be redeveloped in the Green Belt provided it does "not have greater

impact on the Green Belt than the existing development".

An application to build on this site was withdrawn late last year but was then resubmitted. The proposal was for a very large two-storey building which we considered totally inappropriate for the site. We objected strongly to the application and the Planning Officer recommended refusal. The March meeting of the Borough Development Panel deferred its decision, but the application was subsequently refused at the May meeting. We accept that some form of re-development is likely to happen here and would welcome the remediation of any contamination on the site. We will continue to advocate a low-profile, low-impact design. Since the closure of the sewage works, walkers have used the concrete access road as a footpath. If there is sufficient proof of its use by the public over at least 20 years, it is possible that the track might be claimed as a Right of Way. If you have used it as a footpath and would be prepared to submit details of your use, please get in touch and we will assess whether we have sufficient support to pursue a RoW claim. We are particularly keen to hear from people who might have used it soon after the sewage works was closed.



The Old Sewage Works, picture by
Barry Weare

The Branch Line

Many of our members know that the Society has been pushing for improved daytime train services

on the Branch Line. Our view was backed up by unanimous support for Cllr Richard Kellaway's Motion at the December Council Meeting, which called for service improvements. In order to allow three carriage trains to operate straight through from Maidenhead, some engineering works at Bourne End are required, but this work is moving forward very slowly. We do not want to see an improved timetable delayed by incomplete engineering works. We would suggest that an acceptable temporary measure might be to introduce the half hourly service as soon as possible and accept that passengers would have to change trains at Bourne End until engineering works were completed.

The Waiting Room

Dry rot was found in the Cookham station ticket office and waiting room last May. They were closed for safety reasons and a temporary ticket office installed. No provision was made for a shelter for passengers in spite of the freezing winter. In January, the Society raised the loss of the waiting room with GWR and The Department of Transport and requested the provision of a temporary waiting room immediately. A portable building could have been provided within days but instead, travellers had to wait until late April for cover. Work is now underway to renovate the waiting room, but this has dragged on far too long. Current fare levels are very high and passenger care should be taken much more seriously.



Cookham Station

THE DESIGN AWARD 2018

There were three buildings nominated for the The Cookham Society Design Award for 2018.

They were all houses, one in Cookham and two in the Dean. The Award Assessment Panel was advised by the Society's architectural consultant, Professor Robert Adam. The award was won by Orchardfields, in Cookham Dean. The house is owned by Mr and Mrs Spray, and the architects were Heighway Associates, of Marlow. The Award plaque was presented by Mr Pablo Dubois, the co-ordinator of the award and he said: "The Award is for the extension and renovation of a 1920s Tudor style, half-timbered

house in an open location in Cookham Dean. This is a large extension, but it fits in well with the existing building, maintaining a low-key approach. The exposed timber features, door and window frames are all consistent with the original design. Seamless continuity with a sometimes unfashionable early-twentieth-century style is unusual and the result is an attractive building which integrates well with the unique green setting and rural character of Cookham Dean."



Pablo Dubois presents the Award Plaque to Jenny Spray, co-owner of Orchardfields

NATIONAL TRUST TICKETS

The Society has joined Civic Voice, which is the national charity for the civic movement in England. They offer a reservoir of expertise and support for civic organizations. As part of the benefits of membership, each household belonging to the Cookham Society qualifies annually for one, single entry ticket to any of a wide selection of National Trust properties, handy if you have a visitor staying and they don't have a NT card. There are a number of exclusions, which include Cliveden. Please refer to the back of the ticket for further details. To obtain your one, please contact Liz Peters on 07957 136065 or by email on mail@lizpeters.plus.com and she will arrange for your ticket to be left at Cookham Hardware for you to collect. Please give at least 10 days notice.

GDPR

As you may know, the new General Data Protection Regulation came into force on 25th May. The Society has responded to the changes and has sent out an email to all members with up-to-date email addresses and a letter to all members without.

If you are a member and have missed yours, log onto the website to see the Society's audit and policy review together with our safety procedures.

For further information contact the Society's Data Protection Officer and Membership Secretary, Ossie Wardell Yerburgh on 528041.

MEMBERSHIP AND PAYMENTS UPDATE

In order to simplify our administrative procedures we are trying to move towards a system of membership payments by Standing Order only. This means you don't have to fill in a form every year and we don't have to chase you to do it!

If you get a reminder from us, please consider switching to SO. Our bank details are as follows:

Bank: NatWest

Bank Account: The Cookham Society

Account Number: 64226026

Sort code: 60 13 35

NEW COMMITTEE

We were sad to see three members retire at the AGM, David Ashwanden, long-time Chair of the Planning Committee, Evert Groeneweg as Chair and Nick Singeisen, our Treasurer, but delighted to welcome some new members to the committee. Our previous Chairman, Tom Denniford has returned as Chair and we welcome his 50 years of experience in the planning field. Our new Treasurer is Mark Chapman, a businessman from Cookham Village and three new members have joined the committee. They are Mike Springate who spent his career in civil aviation and lives in Cookham Dean; Fiona Butler, a former primary school teacher from Cookham Dean and Maria Woods, a former senior Girl Guider and long-time Cookham Rise resident.

Cookham Society : Committee Members

President..... John Bowley
Vice-president..... Vacant
Chairman..... Tom Denniford
Vice-chair..... Lysette Penston
Treasurer..... Mark Chapman
Secretary..... Lysette Penston
Membership sec..... Ossie Wardell Yerburgh

Committee members: Fiona Butler, Pablo Dubois, John Kitching, Liz Peters, Dick Scarff, Mike Springate, Barry Weare, Maria Woods.