

HITCHAM & TAPLOW SOCIETY

Minutes of the 56th Annual General Meeting Held at the Village Centre on Friday 27 November 2015 at 8.00 p.m.

1. ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

President Eva Lipman welcomed members and guests to the meeting. Apologies were received from:

Lawrence, Viollet, Cope, Fenn, Leeson, Nutt and Handford

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE 2012 AGM

The minutes of the 55th AGM were approved.

3. PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Eva Lipman made the following opening remarks.

I would like to thank you all for coming to this our 56th AGM. It has been a year where a lot has happened and is about to happen to our small community.

During the year we were very sorry to hear that Maureen Dennis died. She was an erstwhile secretary of your society and subsequently could be seen selling tickets at the VGP on many an occasion.

Euan and Ginny Felton who had a very long association with Taplow moved to Poundbury. Euan worked tirelessly for Taplow both in his capacity on the Parish Council and as our planning expert as well as much else on your committee. We will really miss them. Your committee presented them with Sheila Horton prints to take with them to their new home to remind them of their time here.

We are extremely fortunate that we have such a dedicated team on your committee. I will mention just a few to whom we owe much thanks. First and foremost there is Karl who has worked tirelessly as your chairman in spite of his ill health and is prepared to continue to do so while we find a new chairman to replace him. He will be a hard act to follow. I cannot thank him enough.

Then there is Roger. Roger has done sterling work as your Secretary and dealt with planning issues and much else besides. We are very grateful. I don't know what we would have done without him. Nigel has almost single handedly dealt with the editorial side of our newsletters which is quite a task while Andrew Findley has expertly continued to do the page layouts and formatting etc. ready for printing. I am sure you will all agree that the newsletters are excellent and do our society proud. Thank you Nigel and Andrew.

I would also like to thank Peter Mole for being our Treasurer for a number of years. Thank you Peter. He has now stepped down but I am glad to say will continue to serve on your Committee.

Myra has taken over as Treasurer as well as being our Membership Secretary, which is a difficult role. I would like to thank her too.

We have Alistair Hill who is very capably running the very successful VGP, and Charlotte Greves, Charlie, who runs the great Easter Egg Hunt in her extensive garden.

As I said the whole committee has worked hard during this past year and we are grateful to them all.

Over the next few years we will be welcoming more members to our community. There will be those in the blocks of flats on the former SGT site near the station and the residents of a further 200 plus homes on the Skindles/Mill site. The first application by Barratts had been for approx 400 homes! You cannot fail to have noticed the work starting on both these developments. We must do our best to make them welcome and to incorporate them into the life of the village.

Taplow is a happy place to live which can be seen by the fact that many residents come and then put down roots and stay. Our Society aims to keep it that way. We therefore try to comment on various Local Authority Documents which affect us, as well as Planning Applications, gravel extraction etc. Our Village Green Party and Easter Egg Hunt are joyful occasions and help to bring people of all ages together as well as giving the opportunity for a local charity to raise money for their cause. As you will presently hear our finances are in good shape.

I will leave the day to day running of the Society to the Chairman's Report but I cannot conclude without once again giving our truly heartfelt thanks to Karl.

On your behalf I will present to him DVDs of two of his favourite operas as a small thank you for his enormous contribution to our Society.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

On behalf of the Society, I begin by expressing our continuing very special thank you to our indefatigable President for the major contributions she makes to all of the activities of the Society ... our social events ... our responses to planning applications ... our participation in both Local and National Government public consultations ... and in particular our membership in other organisations ... the Association of North Thames Amenity Societies (ANTAS), The Chiltern Society, and Civic Voice, the association of Civic Societies

Eva ... thank you.

Our signature events ... the Easter Egg Hunt and the Village Green Party are highlights of the Taplow year

On April the Fifth ... Barrie and Sheila Peroni again opened their splendid gardens for the, by now, traditional Easter Egg Hunt ... it is difficult to say who enjoys it more .. the children searching enthusiastically for the 50 hidden eggs ... or the watching parents , supported by coffee, cakes and a glass of something comforting.

A special thank you ... to Toby and Charlie Grieves for their splendid efficiency in carrying out the multiple tasks of before-the-day preparation ... with the help on the day of the family Peroni generations ... to bring a truly enjoyable Easter Holiday Monday morning.

The date for your next year diary is March 28th.

On June the Twentieth we held our Village Green Party ... in perfect weather ... not often happens.

Mike Sanderson and his band ... with the energetic caller Tom Brown ... kept dancing going until after dark ... and the raffle made a significant contribution to the church roof repair fund..

A special thank you ... to Alistair Hill and Miv Wayland Smith... for the seamless preparation and on the day administration . . . and to our too-numerous-to-name team of fire minders, spit turners, roast carvers, barbecue cooks, setters up on Saturday, takers down on Sunday ... to the ticket sellers ... to SGI at Taplow Court for supplying the logs and the barbecues... and most of all to you, our members for such a record turnout to make such an enjoyable success of the day.

The date for your next year diary is June 25th

Under the editorship of Nigel Smales our Newsletter continues to inform and entertain. We have had two very successful issue and of note is that we have been able to reduce our printing costs significantly by using the good offices of a member to move to a new printer. I thank Burbridge for the excellent service they have given us over the last few years.

Scrutiny of planning policy and applications continues to be our central activity.

Background concerns remain over the enforcement capabilities of the South Bucks District Council, requiring continuous vigilance for areas such as Marsh Lane.

We scrutinise all planning applications within Taplow and submit comments where we have concerns as to their impact or appropriateness.

Last year we made objections to the development of Silchester House and to a new house in Ellington Road ... both applications were rejected but both appealed ... the inspectors upheld the original rejection decisions.

The two major planning applications this year have been the extension for the Maidenhead Rowing Club and the redevelopment of the Mill Lane site.

The Maidenhead Rowing Club has been extremely successful and has grown significantly. An initial application to extend the club building was withdrawn when the Highways Authority raised queries. The application was resubmitted with extensive traffic data and revised parking schemes.

Although unhappy about the extension itself, the real concern was the gross impact of the club's overflow parking into River and Ellington Roads, creating traffic dangers and problems for residents.

Together with the Parish Council and EDRA, the Ellington Road and District Residents Association, we made detailed criticism of the submitted parking data ... a special thank you is due to Martin Maund, the Chairman of EDRA, for his tireless work in organising a comprehensive traffic survey to support that criticism.

Again the application was rejected.

The main proposal submitted by Berkeley Homes to develop the Mill Lane site was rejected and the critical gas holder application from National Grid was withdrawn. This led to a period of renewed consultations with Berkeley Homes ... the Society played a very active role in the consultations..

Berkeley's listened very carefully to comments made in a series of meetings ... these meetings were very constructive and led to many of the suggestions being accepted and incorporated in the revised plans.

The resultant total of 211 dwellings, with major modifications to the multi-storey blocks on the site of the Mill has led to a much improved site layout, including the construction of a roundabout on the A4 rather than the traffic lights originally required by Transport for Buckingham.

The application to complete building on the gas holder site is still not submitted but Berkeley's and the National Grid have committed to keeping to the proposals in the original application. The holder itself is scheduled for demolition in 2016.

As you probably all know, demolition has now started and the Society will continue to monitor the site as construction progresses.

Building has now commenced on the Station Garage site on Institute Road and plans are in place for further housing on the Burnham end of the road.

With earlier works, these two developments will mean the population of Taplow will grow by nearly 50% over the next few years from the last census, bringing stress to our traffic and infrastructure ... the Society will have to remain vigilant to help ameliorate these problems where possible.

Concerns are already arising over the extent of commuter parking at Taplow station, which can only increase with the advent of Crossrail

The Parish Council is proceeding to implement the various projects voted by the Annual Parish Meeting to use the Parish Legacy Fund.

The Sheila Horton mural in the Village Hall has now been photographed ... contributions have been made to the St Nicolas Church roof fund and to restoring the Old Priory Garden ... and we can all see the results of re-seeding the village green.

More than half of the £100,000 fund Funding remains ... the Parish Council will welcome further suggestions.

South Bucks District Council is required to produce a new Local Plan in 2016 ... the Society will study proposals and make suggestions..

Simultaneously, the Parish Council is reviewing the creation of a Neighbourhood Plan ... the Society will be involved,

We plan to improve our member communications during the year, with improvements to and more frequent updating of our website ... (www.taplowsociety.org.uk).

We have also been overhauling our email circulation list as the most effective communication channel and look to send out more regular information during the year, between editions of the magazine.

The AGM date for your next year diary is December 2nd.

In conclusion, thank you to all who have contributed to the activities of the Society this year ... our President ... Vice-Presidents ... Secretary ... Treasurer ... Executive Committee ... the Editor of the Newsletter ... SGI at Taplow Court for providing and serving refreshments this evening ... Taplow House Hotel for providing a meeting room for our monthly Committee meetings ... and to you all for continuing your support by renewing your annual membership.

(read by Roger Worthington in the absence of Karl Lawrence).

5. **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Myra Drinkwater highlighted some of the figures from the 2015 year.

6. **ELECTIONS**

All officers and committee members standing were elected following nominations, secondments and unanimous shows of hands from the floor.

President	Eva Lipman
Vice Presidents	Sir Bernard Trevallion, Fred Russell, Tony Hickman
Chairman	Karl Lawrence
Secretary	Roger Worthington
Treasurer	Myra Drinkwater
Executive Committee	

Charlie Greeves, Robert Harrap, Zoe Hatch, Alastair Hill, Peter Mole, Barrie Peroni, Nigel Smales, Louise Symons, Miv Wayland-Smith,

7. **MILL LANE**

A short Q&A session was held on the status of the Mill Lane development, which has now been approved and started.

It was noted that Berkeley Homes had published an initial price list for properties, ranging from £550,000 for a one bedroomed property to £1,300,000 for a 5 bedroomed house.

There was considerable discussion on the closure of Mill Lane, raised by Caroline Gillies. Nigel Smales filled in the background of the closure as dating from the preparation of the SPD under the influence of Barratt, who held the purchase option at that time but pulled out when it was clear they would not be able to build enough houses for their purposes. An audience poll gave 4 hands in favour of the closure, 4 abstentions and a large majority in favour of it being open. It was not clear what might be done. Berkeley Homes appear to be neutral on the matter. Options might be a petition or just possibly a legal challenge.

On another topic, Brenda Kennedy asked about the station railway bridge damage. Roger Worthington said that the section between platform 3 and the south car park would almost certainly go and retention of the remaining section is in doubt, as it is built of cast iron with uncertain repair costs. Transport for London, who take over the station in 2017 and who are funding the station renovations and new bridge with lifts, will find it difficult to justify financially, so great local pressure would be needed to preserve it.

8. **AOB**

No matters were raised.

9. **CONCLUSION OF THE MEETING**

The formal meeting concluded at 9 pm..

Following tea and cakes provided by Taplow Court, Nigel Smales gave a comprehensive and deeply researched talk on “The rise and fall of Skindles”, tracing the ownership and travails associated with the site and its immediate environment from earliest times. The talk was very well received and he was thanked from the floor for a fascinating presentation.

Meeting closed at 10:20

Roger Worthington
Secretary