

# The Bury Society

The Newsletter of the Bury St. Edmunds Society  
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## NEWSLETTER ~ SPRING 2009

### Save Town's precious Green Vista

I doubt few would disagree that the view down Abbeygate Street encapsulates everything that makes the town of Bury St Edmunds so special.

One's eye is naturally drawn down over the top of the old abbey walls on to the vista of green fields of St Edmunds Hill with a glimpse of Moreton Hall.

This historic setting of the town has changed little over the many hundreds of years of looking at this view and it is indeed precious in retaining and enhancing the unique historic character of our lovely town.

Indeed, if you walk down Mount Road and look across the fields with the tower of the cathedral enhancing the skyline now it is equally impressive seeing the town nestling below. One can easily imagine how wonderful it must have been to the many pilgrims making their journey to the shrine of St Edmund on seeing the Abbey Church for the first time.

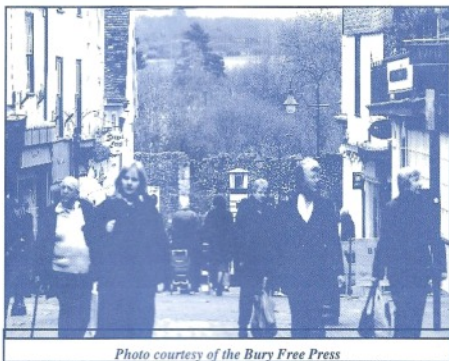


Photo courtesy of the Bury Free Press

We must be on our guard that this sacrosanct view is kept unspoilt.

The cultivated area of the Vinefields, relating back to monastic use, more commonly known as the Leg of Mutton field, has long been an open unspoilt natural setting above the water meadows; No Mans Meadow, a flood plain of 13 acres owned by the Guildhall Feoffment Trust is on long lease to the Council.

Dissected by the rivers Lark and Linnet this is an area of natural beauty with wildlife and tranquillity, which is much enjoyed and valued by the public, and is a very important aspect helping to retain the identity of the town. There are no plans to develop on this area of flood plain although it would be good to see it better maintained.

However, the Leg of Mutton field, a 14.54 hectare area of agricultural land belonging to the Savills/Macrae Estates, forms one part of the sites which have been identified for possible development as SS 37.89, and 128 in the St Edmundsbury Borough Council

'Site Allocations Issues and Options' document on which their Consultation was based last November for planning ahead over the next twenty years.

There have been numerous attempts in the past to develop the Leg of Mutton Field including the siting of warehouses, now happily situated behind Sainsburys and ideas for hotel and leisure complexes.

Your committee made a very full response to the consultation stressing that these areas should not be developed but enhanced for the convenience and enjoyment of residents thus retaining the 'locally distinctive character' and identity of the town with its rich heritage.

However, one must be realistic in acknowledging that with the enormous increasing pressure for house building and development there will be a real threat on land such as The Leg of Mutton Field. In an ideal world it would be good to know and have the assurance that the council and local planning authority would take measures to ever prevent this happening.

It is possible and perhaps sensible to take a more positive view to protecting an area by looking at the potential of creating an enhanced public open space with perhaps allowing a leisure amenity incorporating cycle routes and improved footpaths for the benefit of residents. With strategic planting and removal of overhead electricity wires it is possible to create a scheme that would maintain the attractive natural 'green lungs' for the town as well as improving the amenity use and quality of life

It is disappointing to note that that it appears there has been such a small response to the Local Development Framework Consultation. Important decisions are in the process of being made for over the next twenty years which will affect us all and our way of life in this part of Suffolk.

I understand that there will be a meeting of the Sustainable Development Panel on the 10th March to discuss further research and a revised core draft strategy on 24th March.. We await results of these meetings with great interest. SG

### Borough Offices sold for residential use

The fine 1930s building on Angel Hill has been sold for residential and office use, the society is informed. Members regret that it was not spot listed by English Heritage and not converted to display town treasures as the society hoped. However, there is relief that the attractive original Borough Offices will not be demolished to make way for new build as was once feared. The 1937 neo-Georgian property was designed by architect Basil Oliver who supported the arts and crafts movement. St Edmundsbury Borough Council put the offices on the market because of its move to the new Public Service Village at Western Way. SES