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Society Review

Spring 2023

All change at the top as senior roles are filled



Abbeygate Street, one of the the main thoroughfares into the centre of Bury St Edmunds, which the Bury Society has helped to preserve over the years.

There's been a host of changes within the upper echelons of the Bury Society.

Some of the officials have taken on new roles while others have left their positions after years of dedicated service.

Chairman Martyn Taylor has paid

glowing tributes to those leaving the organisation saying they have been instrumental in ensuring the Society continues to function and help preserve the wellbeing for the past, present and future of the town. And he also thanked members for their aid in supporting a campaign to

fill the roles following an appeal in the Winter edition of the Review.

"Those retiring have been wonderful ambassadors and truly hard working voluntary members of the executive committee.

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Two architects set to take over as planning advisers for Society

Two local architects have recently been adopted as planning advisers to the Bury Society.

Peter Riddington and Ed Thuell will gradually take over from interim planning officer Richard Summers during the next few months.

They will work jointly in future and it is expected that Ed will stand as a Trustee at the AGM in June.

Peter is a semi-retired heritage architect with Donald Insall Associates based in London.

He led the reconstruction of Windsor Castle after the fire in 1992, the plans for the Palace of Westminster and the Conservation Management Plan for the Royal Hospital, Chelsea.

Peter is also a member of the Abbey of St Edmund Heritage Partnership. Ed is a partner of Whitworths, Chartered Architects and Surveyors, in Bury St Edmunds.

He has a keen interest in the conservation of historic buildings and he works on projects that include the careful integration of contemporary materials and designs into sensitive and historic settings whilst also preserving the integrity of the historic fabric.

Richard took over as interim planning officer shortly before the



Peter Riddington.

untimely death of Roderick Rees last year. He specialises in spatial planning and economic development and is a past president of the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI). He is now scaling back from his role as the coordinator of the Abbey of St Edmund Heritage Partnership.

Peter and Ed took part in a lively discussion at the March meeting of the board of trustees about the idea of a Bury St Edmunds “vernacular architecture”. They thought it might be better not to try to standardise architectural styles but to welcome a variety of styles to suit the particular needs and characteristics of different



Ed Thuell.

parts of the town. We were all reminded of Roderick Rees’s long and vigorous campaign against “badly detailed, faux 19th Century pastiche design”.

Peter and Ed will no doubt be alert to the challenges of architectural design and urban design as well as the wider planning issues that crop up amongst the great variety of planning applications that come to our attention.

Richard Summers

Changes on the board of trustees

Continued from page 1

“I cannot praise them enough for the time and effort they have given to the Society,” he said.

Standing down from their roles are secretary Tim Page, treasurer Doug Beardon and interim planning officer Richard Summers. And taking on these positions, subject to their confirmation at the annual general meeting in June, are Terry O’Donoghue as the new secretary; Dr Ben Booth, treasurer; Peter Riddington and Ed Thuell, planning officers; while Sam Saloway-Cooke, currently a trustee, moves to take over Terry’s events role. Tim became a trustee of the Society in 2011 and has served as

vice chair (2014/15), chairman (2015/16) and secretary from 2016 onwards.

Meanwhile, Doug has been a trustee and treasurer since 2016.

Tim said: “Obviously the big joint achievement (and I would stress that – there’s no way I could have driven this change without Doug) was the reform of the Society’s governance. “The transfer over to the CIO from an unincorporated association was the major part.

But we’ve also got the full suite of policies that our donors and other stakeholders would expect us to have.”

Russell Cook

Ice rink in town

Ice-skaters are set to be a Christmas fixture at a Bury St Edmunds shopping centre in December as plans are unveiled to bring a synthetic skating rink to the town.

Our Bury St Edmunds, which runs the Business Improvement District (BID) and the Arc Shopping Centre are working with partners to install the feature over the festive period. The synthetic ice rink, provided by Odin Events, will be one of the most advanced available giving the closest possible experience to real ice but without the environmental impact and high energy use of keeping the rink frozen.

The rink which will be able to cater for up to 25 skaters per session will be located in Charter Square and is expected to be in place from December 14 to January 3.

All aboard the Bury Bike Train

Since its launch in September last year, up to this Easter, the Bury Bike Train will have made 140 journeys to and from town centre primary schools, with over 500 “passengers”. In March the project topped the Green Community category in Suffolk’s Creating the Greenest County 2023 awards, being described by the judging panel as “an exciting and active new initiative, involving families, reducing traffic, and encouraging alternative transports.”

Run by the social enterprise EcoCarriers BSE, and supported by grants from Bury Town Council and Suffolk County Council, the Bike Train project provides cycle training, bike loans and protected group cycle rides to make it as easy as possible for families to leave the car at home and cycle to school instead.

The routes (*pictured below, right*) to and from the town centre are the “Southern”, from the Nowton estate, which runs every Monday; the “Great Western” from Ridley Road (Thursdays); and the “Great Northern” from Marham Park via the Howard estate (Fridays).

A fourth route - the “Great Eastern” - from Moreton Hall proved unpopular and has been suspended for the time being.

Trains run to a timetable along these routes, with families joining by bicycle along the way.

WhatsApp’s location-sharing function enables parents to see where the “train” is (and whether they have missed it). The routes have been chosen to make the most of cycling infrastructure where possible, and to minimise travelling on the busiest roads.

Most of the children who use the Bike Train at present are pupils at St Edmund’s School, in Westgate Street. The aim is eventually to provide Bike Trains for all primary schools in the town that want them, but St Edmund’s and Guildhall Feoffment were targeted initially because they suffer the worst air quality and traffic congestion at the school gate.

There are other Bike Trains elsewhere in the UK but Bury’s appears to be the only one that goes to and



The Bike Train on the road in Bury St Edmunds.

from school and runs at least three days a week. The norm seems to be once a month, on a Friday morning, so Bury is, as ever, punching above its weight. As well as impressing the Creating the Greenest County awards judges, the project has caught the attention of the University of Suffolk which is providing academic support this summer to help us assess the impact of our activities - not just in terms of changes in air quality, but also in behaviour change (ie are more families doing the school run by bike rather than car as a result of the Bike Train).

We have seen already the difference the Bike Train has made to some people. Whilst it’s true to say that the first passengers - the “early adopters” - were regularly cycling to school anyway, many others who join in now are cycling to school for the first time. The children love it; it is the parents that need persuasion usually. We welcome guests on the Bike Train and a Suffolk County Council officer who joined us one day told us it gave her the confidence to ride in her home town and she has cycled many happy miles since. We found that nearly half the children turning up for our Learn to Ride training sessions that support the Bike Train did not have a bike; nor did many of the parents. It can be expensive replacing a child’s bike every time the child grows out of it and our small stock of loan bikes was in great demand for these sessions. Thanks to locality funding from Councillors

Wakelam, Beckwith, Waterman and Rayner we have acquired more bikes (including donated machines) and garaging in Mill Road to store them.

For a one-off fee of £30 or your old bike anyone can join the library and have a refurbished bike to keep forever, or swap for a bigger/different one as required, and at no additional charge. This is already proving popular and keeping us busy with the spanners and inner tubes. A locality grant from Councillor Whittingham is supporting the roll-out of the Community Bike Train project for adults which started in March with two On Your Bike cycle training sessions designed to instill more confidence in riders who want to ride in town. Feedback has been encouraging. One participant said after the training: “I never thought after 20 years I could ride a bike again. I can now go on lots of family adventures and improve my health.” We hope the Bike Train will become a familiar (and welcome) sight in the town as we all try to reduce our detrimental impact on the environment. More details at ecocarriersbse.co.uk, hello@ecocarriersbse.co.uk or telephone 01284 413441.

Libby Ranzetta



A Crown on Crown Street in the Jewel of Suffolk's Crown



David Irvine, the retiring co-ordinator of Bury in Bloom, had been looking at ideas to mark the King's Coronation for the past four months and has been working on designs, calculating costs and funding as well as searching for locations. Bury in Bloom have now received the approvals required for a large floral structure in the town centre on the corner of Crown Street and Honey Hill on an existing flower bed outside 9 and 10 Crown Street.

Although standing down officially at the end of February 2023, David was keen to finish what he had begun and suggested to the committee that he should see the project through to completion as his "Swan Song" while incoming co-ordinator, Chris Wiley, had more than enough on his plate getting himself established and preparing for the 2023 Anglia in Bloom competition. With financial support from Bury St Edmunds Town Council, the moral support of the Bury Society, West Suffolk Council and critical, last minute input by



The location of the structure in Crown Street.

Morrish Structural Engineers, the "Coronation Crown" received its licence from Suffolk Highway in time to allow fabrication to begin on March 1 for installation by the Coronation on May 6. The 2.7 metre high semi-circular crown, weighing in at 750kgs, will be installed on a flower bed on Crown Street and will be fabricated in rolled steel and powder coated in gold. Specially designed brackets will hold 14 hanging baskets planted in various colours to represent the "Jewels of the Crown" with a bespoke trough planted in white to create the "ermine" band. The 15 sq metre flower bed will be close-planted in red to create the effect of a red cushion on which the crown will appear to sit, also edged in white. David said: "With an eight week fabrication and installation programme we needed all our ducks in a row by March 1 and there are a lot of people to see and hurdles to jump over in a hectic month of applications and approvals. We needed moral support as well as funding and licensing and finally structural engineer's calculations and it all

took weeks and weeks – we only just made our March 1 deadline. Fabrication by Viking Forge, of Bury St Edmunds, is well advanced and preparations are being made to get the floral elements ready. We plan to screen the flower beds as we prepare and dig the very strong foundations that were part of the highways licence requirement. Highways engineers were understandably concerned about stability and we were very grateful to Moorish Structural Engineers coming in at very short notice to help us out." David added: "I assure you it won't blow over and we've made it as vandal proof as possible for a temporary structure. We hope to find a permanent home for the Crown at the end of the summer. "A Crown on Crown Street in the Jewel of Suffolk's Crown" has a great ring to it and it should look spectacular. We hope it will become a visitor attraction in 2023."

For more information contact co-ordinator Chris Wiley on coordinator@buryinbloom.org.uk or David Irvine on Dirvine1201@gmail.com

David Irvine



The fabrication of the Crown set for Crown Street.

Chris excited about his new role

Chris Wiley (pictured right) has taken over the role of co-ordinator for Bury in Bloom from David Irvine and here he outlines his route to his latest challenge.

I developed my passion for gardening from my grandparents who bought me my first greenhouse at just 10 years of age, and with whom I later shared an allotment.

I was part of my schools Gardening Club, despite advice from my careers advisors not to make horticulture my main employment. But that just made my passion to work with plants grow even stronger, so I decided to gain work experience at both Woolpit Nurseries and the Abbey Gardens. I was then employed at Harveys Garden Plants, initially at weekends, and then full time while studying at Otley College.

After six years I moved onto Thompson & Morgan to co-ordinate new plant trials, before



setting up my own company to run independent trials. This brought me into contact with the late Peter Seabrook. At Chelsea Flower Show in 2022 I launched a new sweet pea in memory of Peter that was presented to the late Queen Elizabeth II and went on to win “Best New Plant of 2022” at BBC Gardeners’ World Live.

I then set up Sustainable Plant Store, focusing on selling sustainably grown plants and garden products online, which now works hand-in-hand with my intentions for the future of Bury in Bloom. I aim to replace existing planting styles with plants

that provide food and shelter for wildlife, and to minimise the use of annuals, which I refer to as “fast-fashion”. I also intend to swap damp-loving plants with drought-tolerant alternatives, that is generally just adapting to our changing climate whilst keeping our main focus in mind: a mass of colour throughout the summer months to impress the judges. Gardening doesn’t have to be difficult, costly or high-maintenance and I hope that the changes you begin to see around the town will help to inspire planting styles for others in their own gardens. Having been born and raised in Bury St Edmunds I have a special place in my heart for our wonderful town, so to now be able to oversee the floral displays is a real honour and a privilege.

To secure Bury in Bloom’s floral success is a job that I’m very excited to get stuck in to by working alongside an amazing team who make the magic happen with businesses, residents, schools, colleges, care homes – the list goes on.

Bio stocktake

Last May we held a BioBlitz in the Abbey Gardens as part of the Abbey 1000 celebrations - a kind of biological stocktake, where, with the help of the public, we sought and recorded as many plant and animal species in the Abbey precinct as possible. This year we repeat the BioBlitz in an event combined with the Abbey of St Edmund Heritage Partnership that will link natural history and heritage with human history and the environment. The event, called “Abbey Alive” takes place on Saturday, May 20, with a schools’ day on the 19th. There will be guided walks, with experts on hand to help with bug ID and talk about their favourite insect or plant, as well as entertainment and activities. With the Earth now losing biodiversity at rates not seen in the modern era due to the impact of human activity, we want to highlight the incredible complexity and diversity of species that still exist locally and encourage better stewardship of the environment so that we might slow the decline.

Libby Ranzetta
Bury Water Meadows Group



Saturday, May 20, 2023

A natural history and living history activity day in and around the Abbey Gardens in Bury St Edmunds

BioBlitz

West Suffolk Hive and Bury Water Meadows Group invite you to come and explore the past life and the wildlife at the Abbey of St Edmunds with a series of local active walks, talks, trails, entertainment and a BioBlitz survey with local environmental and historical organisations, experts and enthusiasts



10am to 4pm FREE ENTRY

Bury in Bloom Certificate of Merit Front Garden Judging 2023

Bury in Bloom is the only uk group to organise a front garden award scheme on this scale.

Britain in Bloom judges asked if residents have to enter - answer is NO as every garden or front of property within the borough boundary will be judged by the every increasing team of judges

NEXT QUESTION - HOW MANY GARDENS DOES THAT INVOLVE?

From 2023 including Marham Park and Large Grange on the Moreton Hall Estate, 20,000 gardens will be judged



RHS IN 2021/22 REVISED GUIDELINES TO ENCOURAGE MORE WILDLIFE FRIENDLY GARDENS

This has been reflected in the scoring system.

Judges will look at your garden from the pavement or end of your drive so it is important all elements of your garden are clearly visible from the pavement.

Judges are looking to award certificates to enthusiastic gardeners who have obviously put huge effort into their garden.

Gardeners are encouraged to use wildlife-friendly plants and minimise the use of plastic.

We are always looking to expand our team of judges.

No problem reaching your 100,000 steps on judging days.

If you would like more information or are interested in becoming a judge then please email Lynne certificates@buryinbloom.org.uk

For further details on front garden judges guidelines and points system visit buryinbloom.org.uk

Bury providing a world on a plate

It's official!

We have the UK's poshest Wetherspoons and Greggs. Can the town take on any more accolades? Now, it's easy to joke about such things but over the last few years the town has been making a name for itself nationally on the food stage to the extent that we are being featured regularly on national media and publications. Of course, we have all known for years that we are blessed with a huge range of choices to tempt the taste buds, but the word is filtering out and about time.

The Daily Telegraph and Good Food Guide have both recently highlighted the town as a "Top 20 UK Foodie Hotspot" and this confirms what we locals already know; you really can eat around the world in and around the town.

I remember growing up in the early 1970s when going out for a meal was reserved for birthdays and anniversaries and the choices were limited in town to the Angel, Suffolk, Everards or Regency Hotels dining rooms, the Wimpy Bar in Abbeygate Street, Peggotty's Carvery in Guildhall Street, The Beefeater on Angel Hill, our very own Patrick Chung's Canton House and a couple of local village pubs.

You dressed up to eat out and almost certainly the menu included such delights as egg mayonnaise, prawn cocktail, melon boat or an exotic orange or pineapple juice to start, followed by steak, then gateaux and an Irish coffee.

How things have changed!

Suffolk's foodie destination town now has over 80 eateries, with a fantastic mixture of independent and local businesses mixed with a good range of the national chains; a balance that very few other towns come close to matching.

As I have mentioned before, on the national stage, Bury is seen by local and national companies as on par with the likes of Winchester, Chichester, Guilford, Chester and Windsor etc; a town with a well-educated and settled population, an historic townscape with buildings that suit conversion to F&B (food

and beverage), disposable income and a range of food options that makes other companies see the potential of the town. Success breeds success.

We are currently seeing new openings and increased interest in the town by potential F&B operators, who are often looking to trial new formats or ideas. Recent additions include Lark, Damson & Wilde, Olive Grove, Crumbs, La, Cornish Bakery, Cook-ie Barista and a refreshed Bay Tree Café, to name only a few. When you stop to think of the amount of options available to both residents and visitors, it really is significant.

We are social animals and the physical contact with each other is a huge part of what makes us function whether it's a formal meal or casual coffee with friends, we all need that connection, that chat, that catch up.

The pandemic was naturally followed by a "fall out" in the sector, as it was the hardest hit of all. Sadly, some companies didn't make it through and we are still seeing the effects of that today. Some of the biggest names have folded or drastically reduced the number of outlets and the current cost of living hikes continue to effect the sector. We all see the increases on a weekly basis on the supermarket shelves and it's just the same for farmers and suppliers. Those businesses that fail then open new opportunities. Bury has for a long time been somewhat sheltered from the full effects of the huge changes in retail that have decimated, and continue to decimate local town centres. The move to online has seen the town lose some big names. Where the town has been able to benefit (unlike most competitors) is that there has been a fantastic F&B offer which continues to grow, evolve and take up the empty premises left by the falling retail demand. This is really noticeable in towns across the country; empty retail shops with no demand for either future retail or food use. Bury really does tick all the boxes and continues to attract both sectors, hence the low number of vacant units. But Suffolk's Food Capital doesn't just offer great food and drink options, with all budgets and tastes

catered for. What really sets us apart are the events and festivals.

The annual Food and Drink festival, Beer Festival, Christmas markets and of course the weekly provisions and monthly Makers and Farmers markets that attract thousands every year. The local economy benefits hugely from these events; the market in Bury is often quoted as the number one reason to choose the town to visit/shop/socialise by local USAF personnel. Although hit by many outside influences, the market remains key to the town's identity and soul. Along with amazing local produce, Greene King brewery and local Food Museum in Stowmarket, the town benefits from its new "Foodie" identity as many people now visit to enjoy the myriad of options available. Indeed, as a volunteer at the Tourist Info point, we are often informed that the F&B offer in the town was an important factor in choosing Bury as a base for a short stay, and of course, once visitors are here, they are blown away by the history, beauty and facilities that Bury offers.

I often hear from locals "not another coffee shop/café/bar" when plans are unveiled, but a walk around the town most days shows the venues busy with guests. On warmer days, there is nothing nicer than seeing the outdoor tables busy and the town absolutely buzzing.

Not only does our offer make the town buzz by day, but the huge array of restaurants/cafes and bars has introduced an evening culture to the town that was lacking before. Previously, anyone walking in the town centre after 5.30pm would be hard pressed to find anything open but now it's often difficult to find anywhere with space if you haven't pre booked. This also makes the town centre a safe and pleasant place to be in the evening. We are almost continental.

So whether it's a pint and sandwich in a local pub to a Michelin starred eatery, Bury provides the world on a plate.

I'll drink to that!

Stephen Moody

Minutes of the final AGM of the old Society and the new CIO

The last Annual General Meeting of the Bury St Edmunds Society (Charity Reference Number: 263230) and the first Annual General Meeting of the Bury St Edmunds Society CIO (Charity Reference Number: 1196640) held at 7pm, on Thursday, June 9, 2022, at the Unitarian Meeting House, in Churchgate Street.

MINUTES

1 Welcome and introduction by the chairman

The Society's chairman Martyn Taylor welcomed those present to the Society's first face-to-face AGM post-pandemic.

2 Talk by Martyn Taylor

"Fifty Glorious Years" - A look back over the Bury Society's achievements presented by Martyn Taylor.

3 AGM of the Bury St Edmunds Society (CRN: 263230)

a Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Betty Bain, Kerr Clement, Sarah Nunn, John and Betty Saunders, Richard and Eileen Page, Barbara and Brian Milner and Patrick Chung.

b Approval of the Minutes of the AGM held on May 27, 2021.

These had been circulated previously in the Review and were approved with no matters arising.

c Chairman's report

Martyn Taylor presented his report. He started by confirming the Society is now a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and thanked those involved in this work.

Martyn announced the death of David Dymond, the Society's first chairman and the serious illness

of Roderick Rees, the Society's longstanding planning officer. He thanked Richard Summers for stepping into the planning officer role on an interim basis.

Martyn highlighted the events held, despite the pandemic and thanked Terry O'Donoghue, Stephen Moody, Sue Savage and others for their efforts.

Russell Cook and his team were thanked for keeping the Society Review going throughout the lockdowns.

The Bury in Bloom co-ordinator David Irvine was thanked for his rainwater harvester initiative and sterling work in arranging sponsorship.

Martyn highlighted the commissioning of a wooden carving of the Abbey by Clint Rose.

Martyn thanked Kerr Clement who stood down as trustee and welcomed Jess Rose Hughes who was standing for election.

Martyn ended by reminding everyone about the change of bank account for members subscriptions.

d Planning Officer's report

The Society's interim planning officer Richard Summers highlighted some of the key planning applications the Society dealt with in last year.

He also flagged up the new West Suffolk Hospital and the new West Suffolk plan as areas of current interest for the Society.

e Treasurer's report

Doug Beardon presented his report to the meeting.

The financial statement for the year ended March 31, 2022, had been circulated with the agenda of the AGM.

Doug explained that, because the assets of the unincorporated association were transferred to the new Charitable Incorporated Organisa-

tion (CIO) on the last day of the financial year, the accounts presented look very different to previous years.

Doug highlighted that member subscriptions should now be paid to the Society's new bank account as the old one will be closed.

Looking forward Doug expressed cautious optimism for the future despite the dire economic and political environment.

Doug thanked the members for their continued support, together with our roundabout and other commercial sponsors.

Finally Doug confirmed that he will retire as treasurer and trustee at the end of the 2023 AGM.

4 AGM of the Bury St Edmunds Society CIO (CRN: 1196640)

a Election of trustees

Tim Page explained in accordance with the rules of the new CIO, a third of the trustees (that is, four) must retire at each AGM.

The trustees retiring at this AGM were Roderick Rees, Sue Savage, Kerr Clement and Tim Page.

Tim noted that Sue Savage plans to remain as membership secretary and attend trustees' meetings as an adviser.

The members then voted to re-elect Tim Page and elected Jess Rose Hughes and Stephen Moody as trustees.

Tim noted that, like Doug Beardon, he will retire as a trustee at the June 2023 AGM and the Society also needs a replacement planning officer to take over from Richard Summers.

5 Questions from the floor/open forum

Martyn Taylor invited questions from the floor.

There being none the meeting closed at 7.58 pm.

Funding bid from Lottery fund

The Abbey of St Edmund Heritage Partnership was pleased last year to assist the very successful Abbey 1000 Celebrations and the provision of the new heritage interpretation panels in the Abbey Ruins in collaboration with English Heritage.

It has recently prepared a new Visitor Guide leaflet to the Abbey (see separate article on page 13).

A major new initiative by the Heritage Partnership is the preparation of a substantial funding bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) for significant improvements to the Abbey area.

The project is being led by the Cathedral in collaboration with West Suffolk Council and English Heritage as part of the Heritage Partnership. It could include the restoration of the Abbey Gate, the Norman Tower and the ruins of the Abbey Church, a new Heritage Centre and more outdoor heritage interpretation.

A recent expression of interest was positively received by the NLHF resulting in NLHF advisers now supporting work on a development stage funding application to be submitted in November.

Conservation of the historic fabric and new heritage interpretation including the Heritage Centre will be priorities to help attract a wide range of people to understand, enjoy and support our local heritage.

Large projects of this kind take several years to deliver.

If the bid is successful, work on the ground could go ahead in three to five years time, but with a programme of activities and events for visitors and particularly for school children starting much sooner. The Heritage Partnership has reached a new stage in its development from its launch in 2016 and will soon apply to become established as an independent charity in the form of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). This will give it the formal status it now needs and the ability to attract private sector sponsorship with the benefit of tax allowances.

Richard Summers



St Edmundsbury Cathedral and the Abbey ruins.

Annual General Meeting

The second Annual General Meeting of the Bury St Edmunds Society CIO (Charity Reference Number: 1196640) will be held on

Thursday, 8th June 2023 in the Guildhall, Guildhall Street

Refreshments will be served from 6.30pm and the meeting will commence at 7.00pm.

All members are welcome, and encouraged to attend.

AGENDA

1. Welcome and introduction by the Chairman
2. Talk by Steven Ruthven "Benjamin Greene & other notable characters within Greene King"
3. Annual General Meeting
 - a. Apologies for absence
 - b. Approval of the Minutes of the previous AGM (2022) and any matters arising.
 - c. Chairman's report
 - d. Planning Officer's report
 - e. Bury in Bloom report
 - f. Treasurer's report
 - g. Election of trustees
4. Questions from the floor / open forum

Extra 100 public electric vehicle charging points for West Suffolk

West Suffolk Council has signed a deal that will see around 100 new fast and rapid public charging electric vehicle (EV) points on council-owned land this year. Figures published in January 2023 by the Department for Transport data show that West Suffolk is already in the top 29 per cent of councils nationally for public charging points for EVs, both in total number of devices, and for devices per 100,000 population. Under the deal, ubitricity will install and maintain the public charging infrastructure.

Motorists will be able to pay the rates by card or by using the Shell Recharge app.

The sites will include town centres, leisure centres, country parks and car parks with a programme, to be rolled out this year, and shared in advance with local communities. Having declared environment and climate change emergencies, West Suffolk Council is working towards being carbon net zero by 2030.

It is also a key contributor to the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan. Partnerships are seen as key to this work and to developing the EV charging infrastructure yet further. Andy Drummond, cabinet member for Regulatory and Environment at West Suffolk Council, said: "This



Andy Drummond, John Griffiths and Tim Page, a resident who uses an electric vehicle, at an EV charging point in St Andrews car park.

sees a step change in availability of public charging points ahead of the change from fossil fuel vehicles in 2030. I welcome the collaboration with ubitricity and am delighted that the energy motorists are to be supplied is from the same company that buys the energy we generate from our council-owned solar farm, and at competitive rates.

"In December we published a position statement on EV charging point infrastructure and to see this being delivered so quickly shows the pace

we are working at to be carbon net zero by 2030." Toby Butler, UK managing director of ubitricity, said: "We are thrilled to be working on this project with West Suffolk. West Suffolk are a leading council when it comes to EV charge point infrastructure. By expanding their network, they are making the transition to EV much more accessible to their residents and putting real momentum behind decarbonising their roads. West Suffolk are setting an incredible standard for other councils to follow."

Longer lasting Christmas in the town

Christmas in Bury St Edmunds will be building on the successes of recent years with a longer series of festive events to support businesses and the local community.

This replaces the larger but shorter traditional Christmas Fayre which was stopped more than two years ago and mirrors decisions made in places such as Lincoln.

The town is set to host a series of events over a longer period of time this Christmas starting in mid-November and continuing well into

December. Work has started early in Bury St Edmunds to make sure festive events boost business and help communities and visitors to have a great Christmas time in the town.

More details of the events planned will emerge later in the year however the aim is to deliver entertaining, varied and safe events, with minimal disruption to residents as well as local businesses.

Crucially, the events will provide

an opportunity to showcase all that Bury St Edmunds has to offer to visitors and to encourage people to return.

The Christmas in Bury St Edmunds events will be delivered by a partnership of organisations including the Arc Shopping Centre, Our Bury St Edmunds BID, Bury St Edmunds Town Council, St Edmundsbury Cathedral and West Suffolk Council. Details will be released on the website www.christmasinburystedmunds.co.uk

Regeneration of the former post office site in town centre completed

A major regeneration scheme in the heart of Bury St Edmunds town centre, designed to maximise footfall and which had strong public support, has now been completed.

West Suffolk Council has confirmed completion of its redevelopment of 17-18 Cornhill (*pictured*).

The council bought the redundant site for £1.6m after the Post Office decided in 2017 to relocate its business next door.

It followed on from the town centre masterplan in 2017 which was shaped by 8,000 public comments and called for improvements to Market Thoroughfare and St Andrews Street South. The purchase also meant that the council could ensure the unlisted Victorian Cornhill front, an important part of the town's heritage, was kept and that the overall site would be redeveloped in line with the public's ambitions



17-18 Cornhill, in Bury St Edmunds.

shaped in the masterplan. Councilors from across all political divides backed a £6.72 million investment in the site in April 2018. Then in June 2018, a public exhibition showing concept drawings for how the building could be transformed, received overwhelming public support. Those

designs eventually led to a planning application which was approved in November 2019 and construction began in September 2020.

Throughout the project the council has sought input from the Bury Society, Bury St Edmunds Town Trust, Our Bury St Edmunds and the Arc Shopping Centre, as well as other key stakeholders, all with the view of delivering a cost-neutral scheme to benefit the town and its businesses. And the result is a redevelopment that brings a host of improvements to the site. They include putting the Victorian Cornhill front back into economic use while improving access and replacing windows to improve energy efficiency. The project has turned an "unattractive yard" area at the rear of the old Post Office into a new commercial front onto St Andrews Street South.

In time, it is hoped that the redevelopment will encourage other landowners and developers to improve the street scene, resulting in a better connection between the Arc Shopping Centre and the historic town centre. The redevelopment helps maximise the potential footfall across the town centre by widening Market Thoroughfare by more than 50 per cent. The scheme delivers 12 new apartments (11 of which have been reserved) in line with the masterplan's aim for more town centre living and creates two new ground floor commercial units.

Tours remain excellent value

The Market Thoroughfare and the finished product of the former post office add to the character of old and new Bury.

Such developments keep Bury's tour guides on their toes in needing to be able to describe the "what" and "why", in this case indicating that postal requirements met from the old Victorian building with the splendid frontage are now in the next door building which itself holds a place in the town's history.

Above W H Smith's we have depictions of locally important people. Atop is King Cnut, famed not just for being unable to repel the tide but for founding our Abbey.

Beneath we see other worthies: Agricola who crushed Boudicca's uprising; St Edmund our patron; Edward I who held parliament in Bury; Edward VI founder of our local grammar school.

Visitors admire this as something from the 17th century until the guide points out that it dates from 1910

when it was Boots Chemists, in line with similar grand designs used by this company elsewhere including Derby, Newcastle and Winchester. Perhaps our modern Boots store does not occupy such visual interest. Bury Tour Guides are the only body accredited to undertake tours of the town which is why they are always striving to deliver new facts. 2022 proved exceptional: a record of 1,700+ on tours, people from 22 different countries, all ages, feedback highlighting quality, entertainment and value for money.

They came for various reasons including the ideal present for a loved one or firms making it a group gathering for teambuilding. It does not matter into which category you fall, the Guides will take you through the "what" and "why" and capture your interest. 2023 booking is through www.burystedmundstourguides.org

John Saunders

Sgt Arthur Walrond, an airman's tale from the Second World War

During the later half of the Second World War, the sudden influx of many thousands of USAAF personnel (known as the “Friendly invasion”), brought with it social pressures and, which is of more concern, also imported the “Jim Crow” laws that infected the American military at that time. Jim Crow, it is believed, is a fictional name from the 19th century; a title given to those laws and rules which made mixed marriages illegal in most US states. The military even frowned on black servicemen associating with white girls. As you can imagine this created tension in England which, certainly far from perfect, did not have such draconian rules.

There are many instances of fights between black and white US servicemen in Suffolk and even the forcing of some local public houses, most famously the Fox & Hounds, at Thurston, to introduce their own segregation policy, following an interracial fight, that resulted in a stabbing.



A wartime dance held in Bury St Edmunds.

For the United Kingdom armed forces, the needs of war helped, in part, to break down racial barriers. As the war progressed, more and more men and women of colour from the Empire and Commonwealth were integrating into army regiments

and aircrew for the RAF – again not perfect, as gaining a commission was a mighty hill to climb for many.

All of this is the backdrop to the sad story of Sergeant Arthur Walrond, a Barbadian air gunner, based locally. On June 29, 1943, at one of the nightly dances at the Corn Exchange in Bury, he was violently assaulted by a group of white American servicemen for daring to dance with a white girl. Arthur was not going to ignore this ugly act of discrimination and he lodged an official complaint, identifying the culprits. Sadly within 24 hours of the incident, Sergeant Arthur Waldron was killed in air operations over Germany. The story has a final twist. It is believed the girl who Arthur was dancing with, a Miss Palmer, tried to pursue the case, but whether it was considered too trivial, the need to maintain harmony with our American allies, or the spectre of prejudice by some within the RAF, the complaint had been sat on by Waldron's commanding officer.

After a further four months of prevarication, the military authorities stated that it was too late to bring charges before the court and justice was never served.

Terry O'Donoghue

Renovating the Sensory Gardens

The Abbey Gardens are fourth on the latest Visit Britain list of most-visited free attractions in the UK, with over 1.25 million visitors in 2021 (but lagging behind Brighton Pier, the Natural History Museum and the British Museum). We are indeed lucky to have this lovely place in the middle of our town for so many to enjoy. The Abbey Gardens Friends volunteer gardeners continue to work with West Suffolk Council's team - including new head gardener Tom Hagger and new Abbey Gardens manager Simon Hobson - to help with a wide variety of tasks. One project for this Spring is renovation of the Sensory Garden (*pictured*) created as a “Blind Garden” in 1990 and designed to provide interest for the visually impaired through scented plants and herbs. The pergola is to be repaired and repainted and



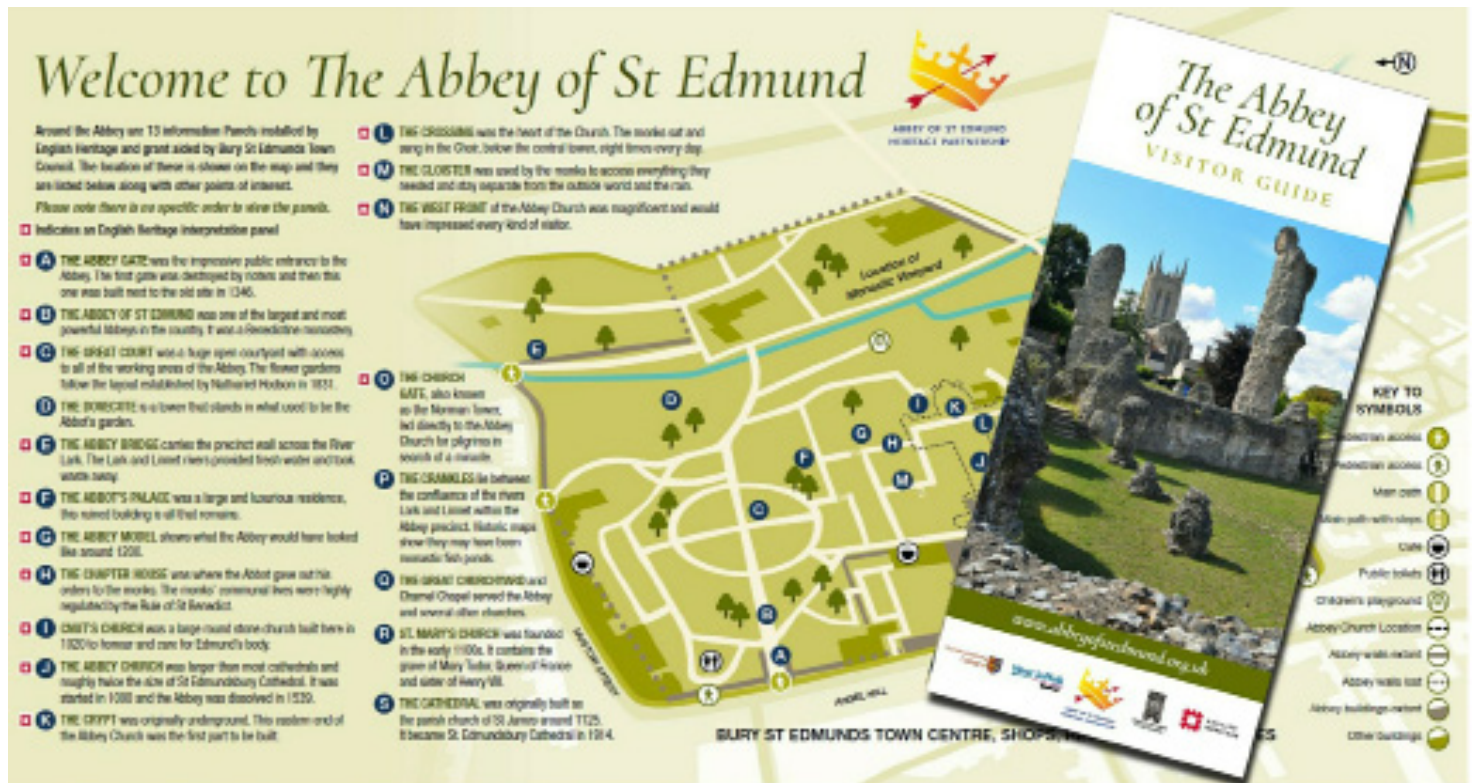
beds planted with scented flowers and shrubs, including daphne, honeysuckle and Chimonanthus (winter sweet) so this peaceful corner of the gardens can fulfil its original purpose again. To find out more about the Abbey Gardens Friends go to <http://www.abbeygardensfriends-burystedmunds.com>

Libby Ranzetta

Chairman

Abbey Gardens Friends

New guide leaflet issued for the Abbey of St Edmund



The Bury Society has stepped in to fund the first print run of a new leaflet called "The Abbey of St Edmund Visitor Guide".

The original plan was to apply for a grant from Bury St Edmunds Town Council but the looming elections would mean delays to that process when the leaflet is needed as soon as possible. It is planned to go back to the town council for funding of future print runs.

The Abbey Heritage Partnership Interpretation Working Group has been working on this leaflet after the new English Heritage panels were installed and the model relocated in June 2022. This leaflet will be available free to visitors and is an introduction rather than a detailed account. The proposed English Heritage guidebook will fulfil that role.

This four-fold leaflet has two very different sides which together help people understand the significance of this once great Abbey.

One side of the leaflet serves as an

attractive introduction and features a large image of the digital reconstruction of the Abbey by English Heritage. The other side has a map with a key and text which shows the locations of the parts of the whole Abbey complex and also where the new interpretation panels can be found.

The leaflet stresses that there is no set starting point for visitors or order in which the panels should be viewed. There is also a request for feedback on this leaflet so that any future versions can be improved.

Alan Baxter

New leisure centre is on track

The next step in delivering a new leisure centre in Bury St Edmunds, as well as a home to other public services, is on course.

Councillors confirmed an unchanged final budget for the Western Way scheme after concluding it is capable of meeting necessary tests before the final stage of tendering for the main construction contract goes ahead later this summer. The scheme will replace the current nearly 50-year-old leisure centre as part of phase one of the Western Way project. This will be part of a new community hub which will build on the success of

others in West Suffolk, such as the award-winning Mildenhall Hub. It will include in its first phase a small health and wellbeing centre, a pre-school and the West Suffolk branch of the Suffolk Archive.

In December 2022, the council agreed a reduced budget for the Western Way project to reflect a new phased approach. Alongside the other public services, the first phase will see a state-of-the-art fun pool and soft-play alongside an eight-lane main pool, a large learner pool and sports hall, studios and a new gym delivered.

Record breaking Winter Lunch

Saturday, February 18 witnessed the largest gathering ever for the annual Winter Lunch.

The MCE committee had decided to be more ambitious for 2023 and accepted 100 bookings for members and their guests.

Unfortunately, illness and other emergencies actually saw this milestone number reduced to 97 on the day. However, it was still the largest gathering in the society's history for our annual Winter Lunch, held at the Southgate Community Centre, and, as always, proved to be a thoroughly enjoyable day.

Our guest speaker, Charles Garland, without the aid of notes and only armed with a simple glass of water, kept us all captivated for 50 minutes with tales of his experiences working for the BBC, and in particular



People attending the Winter Lunch at the Southgate Community Centre.

the writers and cast of probably the most loved comedy series of the 1970s "Dad's Army".

In conversation with Charles before he spoke, I asked him how long he needed for his talk – the reply was:

Adrian Bell talk attracts 70 people

The Bury Society was proud to organise and sponsor a talk at the Guildhall on Saturday, March 11, on local writer and farmer Adrian Bell.

The talk was offered free-of-charge to support engagement with our local history and culture and was attended by more than 70 people, both Bury Society members and non-members.

Adrian Bell was living in, and writing about, the countryside

around Bury St Edmunds between 1920 and 1980. A strong believer in the benefits of mixed agriculture and organic farming, he wrote about his hands-on experience with the land in a series of books and his long running "A Countryman's Notebook" column in the East Anglian Daily Press.

The talk, given by author Richard Hawking and entitled "A Countryman's East Anglia", examined how Bell's farming principles had stemmed from his love of the Suffolk countryside.

"I greatly valued the opportunity The Bury Society gave me to speak about Adrian Bell's writing," Richard explained. "Bell is very much part of the town's cultural heritage, so it was an honour to discuss his work here, at the beautiful Guildhall."

We were also delighted that Adrian Bell's son, former BBC correspondent and independent MP Martin Bell, introduced the talk.

You can find more photos of the talk on the Events Gallery page of our website www.burysociety.com/events-gallery

Sam Saloway-Cooke

"Last week, I gave 90 minutes."

We agreed that after 45 minutes I would give him a five minute "winding up" signal. This was needed as Charles could have kept our attention for 90 minutes quite easily. Andrea and her team at Elite Catering also rose to the challenge of greater numbers and provided her usual high standard menu, even taking in her stride a number of diverse allergy requests.

In the background Stephen Moody provided an efficient bar service and Marion O'Donoghue and Sandy Taylor were an effective double act in organising the raffle on the day. Other members of the MCE committee and one or two society members provided willing help before and after the event.

The day also marked the release of the first copies of the Bury Society 50 year scrapbook.

Delayed by over 12 months due to the logistical problems posed by the Covid pandemic, this 48-page colour booklet, 10 months in production, was distributed to the members present at the lunch.

Within this edition of the Review are details of other forthcoming events being organised for our members and their guests during the course of 2023.

Perhaps this will be a year when we will be able to spend less time second-guessing the impact of Covid on our social plans.

Terry O'Donoghue



Richard Hawking with Martin Bell and Bury Society chairman Martyn Taylor.

Daylight robbery from the Window Tax



Clopton's Asylum could be considered a victim of the window tax but in this case the 'bricked up' windows are about symmetry.

In 1696 William III introduced a new tax for the country, the Window Tax.

It was to be based on the numbers of windows on your property, the bigger your house, the more windows you had, the more you paid.

Obviously, it was looked upon as a tax on the wealthy, but the poor would also suffer with ailments from lack of air if they lived in windowless homes. As time went by tenements with multiple occupancy had a problem, who paid for the windows on stairs and landings?

One way to avoid paying the tax was to have your window bricked up hoping to open it up in some time in

the future. However, not all "blind windows", as they were called, were victims, as in some cases it was part of the symmetry of the building to give it a balanced look.

This was the case in Clopton's Asylum, in the Great Churchyard, a high-class retirement home for six members of St Marys and St James parishes finished in 1744.

The onerous Window Tax was looked upon as daylight robbery, a phrase that has entered the English language meaning "being extremely overcharged for something".

This tax was repealed by Parliament in 1851.

Martyn Taylor

Thank you to Review distributors

Without our team of 15 or so volunteers distributing copies of the Review around the town three times a year the Bury St Edmunds Society would be faced with an additional postal bill of over £1,000 a year from our funds. We really do appreciate the time and energy given and hope you enjoy being part of the valuable communication chain. Distribution of the Review is a vital lifeline in keeping the membership together.

If you do a daily dog walk, cycle ride or need encouragement to

get out for a walk locally why not combine it with slotting a few copies of the Review through letter boxes? There is the added bonus of compounding your knowledge of the layout of the town and being first to get the booking form for up and coming trips.

More distributors are particularly needed on the Moreton Hall estate, Eastgate Street and Cotton Lane areas but if you fancy a small job in your street or anywhere else in the town please get in touch with me, Sue Savage on either members@burysociety.com or 01284 719243.

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Hopes for full calendar of events

This year we should be able to provide a full calendar of events without restriction.

By the time that this Review has been published we will have already had our Winter Lunch which kicks off our social year and also a Bury Society sponsored talk at the Guildhall on the writings of Adrian Bell.

This year we aim to provide a mix of events and excursions which from experience have always proved popular with our membership.

In April (Saturday 15th) we have a coffee morning at the United Reformed Church, in Whiting Street, followed a month later (Thursday, May 18) with our first full day excursion of the year to Jordans Mill and Wrest Park, in Bedfordshire.

This day will start with a visit to Jordans Mill where we have organised for a room to be made available for our group as a base for rest and refreshments with the option of a guided tour of the mill or a gentle stroll through the gardens of this historic venue. In the afternoon we will travel on to Wrest Park, an English Heritage site with a rich history and magnificent grounds.

June (Thursday 8th) will be the month of our AGM at the Guildhall. We would urge as many members as possible to attend, as this year we will have a number of new faces occupying important roles within the society.

We have been fortunate in recruiting Steve Ruthen, a former Greene King employee and brewery guide, as our guest speaker.

Steve will focus his talk on the Greene family, and in particular, the impact of Benjamin Greene on the town.

Regarding the summer months we have made an approach to the Horse Racing Museum, at Newmarket,



Jordans Mill (above) and Wrest Park (below) which are both to be visited in May.



regarding a visit to this fascinating venue and also a possible town walk. Whatever is decided please make a note in your diaries for Tuesday, July 11. This will be a half day event. In early autumn (Thursday, September 7) we will have another full day

outing either to St Albans where we will have guided tours of this famous town and its cathedral/abbey; or, if our discussions do not bear fruit, an organised visit to a London attraction.

Terry O'Donoghue

Copy deadline for next edition of the Review

The deadline for the next edition of the Bury Society Review is Monday, July 24.

You can email copy to the editor at russell.cook461@btinternet.com

Don't miss the opportunity to add your weight to the Bury Society team. Apply for membership now.

Either use the website: theburysociety.org.uk to download a membership form from the Home Page by clicking the "Join Us" panel or telephone the membership secretary Sue Savage on 01284 719243.

Contributions to the Review are welcomed and used accordingly but they do not necessarily reflect that of the Bury Society.