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in the town
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hospital
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Society Review

Website: www.burysociety.com

Spring 2026



Members of the Bury Society paid a visit to the British Sugar factory with the event also helping to raise money for St Nicholas Hospice.

See full story on Page 14.

Bid to become Town of Culture

The first-ever UK Town of Culture competition was launched by the government in January 2026 with the winning town set to deliver its programme in 2028.

The competition, which aims to mirror the success of the City of Culture programme, will select a winner by early 2027.

The Bury Society was asked if it would support the Town of Culture by entering this prestigious competition. We did, to quote: “if you ain’t in it, you can’t win it”.

Winning would enhance the town’s popularity as a place to live and work and of course to be a magnet for tourists to come to.

It goes without saying that the town fulfils many of the criteria as laid down for the application, history and heritage: the burial places of the first patron saint of England, St Edmund and Queen of France, Mary Tudor Brandon, as well as one of largest

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Returning record and archive service

Following the closure of the West Suffolk Archive Service, our new Charity, the West Suffolk Community Archive Charity, has been actively looking to redress this situation.

Many of us had given, sometimes valuable, material to our Archive in West Suffolk in the unwritten expectation that it would remain in West Suffolk where it would be both securely stored, but also, importantly, remain accessible to local people. So, our archives are now in The Hold, at Ipswich, safely stored and well-curated but they are not easily accessible to West Suffolk residents. This in particular applies to those living on the county boundary such as Haverhill, Newmarket and Mildenhall, making the cost and time taken to get there prohibitive for many. So where are we now?

We learnt that not all the material in the Raingate Street building had been taken to Ipswich, including newspapers, government statutes,

books and maps, paintings and much other material duplicating that in The Hold.

In fact, enough to kick start an important local history collection, which is what we intend to do.

We are very fortunate in that the local developer who is purchasing the Raingate Street archive building is very supportive of our charity, giving us free use to keep, catalogue, display and make available to everyone this remaining material for five years, pending redevelopment of the surrounding site.

Our vision is to build this as a start to having accessibility for everyone and disabled-friendly.

We aim for a building in West Suffolk, where archives can be securely stored and be accessible, but also most importantly, that they are now on show and to be seen by everyone as is the King Edward School Foundation Psalter now displayed in our Cathedral.

I am also very keen that we should

use this opportunity with volunteer and professional staff to teach conservation and other skills to the unemployed and those disabled or disadvantaged, along the lines of the Kings Trust.

This is very important as we want everyone in West Suffolk and visitors to be aware of and have access to see our local history.

We have held very promising preliminary talks with both West Suffolk Council and Greene King who share our aims (and perhaps to convert one of their soon-redundant buildings).

The charity is ideally set up to make a Heritage Lottery application as we have a very well qualified, experienced and devoted team of trustees.

We will be looking very much for volunteer support as soon as we have access to the Raingate Street building and as a charity we will endeavour to make sure that West Suffolk Archives remain where they belong, in West Suffolk.

Martin Lightfoot

Photos of the town for the Society's website

We would like to encourage those who live in, or regularly visit, the town to take more notice of the changes that are taking place.

These changes are of course inevitable as the natural processes have their seasonal effect, buildings rise and fall, businesses come and go, new features are added and the town gradually grows. Trees, plants and rivers are no small part of the natural changes we can see around us.

All these changes, whether good, bad or indifferent, depending on your viewpoint, can be highlighted by this new feature. At the same time it will help people be aware of what they have not noticed is changing.

A photograph can preserve that important moment in time that only you see. With many of us now carrying smart phones with excellent cameras, this task is accessible to all, rather than just the dedicated photographers.

You might wish to photograph a new building, new traffic control, new natural feature, new signage, new



Scaffolding around Moyses Hall Museum, an example of a photograph that could be included on the Society's website.

shop or something else. The photo can show good and/or bad points. Together we can show what a beautiful place we live, work in or visit. We will select those photographs sent to us to show a wide range. Please be careful not to include people who do not wish to be in a photograph. This is not designed to promote individuals, events or activ-

ities. We hope it will become popular and be a showcase for everything new in our streets and public spaces. Please email your photograph to me at media@bursociety.com Please add a note of its location, why you sent it and whether you wish your name to be included or not.

Alan Baxter

Call for sites to help meet the future growth needs of district

Developers and landowners are being asked to put forward sites to be considered for potential future growth in the district.

West Suffolk Council has issued the call for sites ahead of formally starting work on the preparation of the next local plan for the district.

The call for sites will run for a period of eight weeks up to May 20.

The council adopted the current West Suffolk Local Plan in July last year.

The adopted plan runs to the year 2041 and governs where new homes can be built.

It also sets aside land to support employment growth and policies to shape the housing that comes forward including to increase the number of affordable homes that are being built. The preparation of a new local plan for West Suffolk will ensure growth

will be plan led. With or without a local plan, new housing development will still take place.

Local plans serve to protect the countryside as well as against speculative and piecemeal development and ensure infrastructure funding is secured from developers for things such as community facilities, education, health, and transport including roads, footpaths and cycleways.

The call for sites will feed into the next West Suffolk local plan, currently due to cover the period up to 2045. The council is asking for land to be put forward for consideration for new housing, employment uses, mixed use sites, and for infrastructure and green infrastructure such as parks, allotments, area of biodiversity net gain, play areas and other open space. The eight-week call for

sites will close at 5pm, on Wednesday, May 20.

No decisions have been taken as to what land uses will be allocated.

Sites submitted during the call for sites will be assessed to ensure they are suitable, available and achievable for potential development.

These assessments will be used to inform the preparation of the local plan.

Frank Stennett, the cabinet member for Planning at West Suffolk Council, said: "We are at the very early stages at looking at the next local plan beyond our current one, to ensure we can meet the future local homes and business growth needs in West Suffolk.

"One of the first things we need to do is to understand the sites that are available for consideration, and whether they are suitable, available and can be delivered. That is why we are issuing this call for sites not just for land for new homes, but for employment, mixed use site and for infrastructure growth as well as land for parks and other open green space so that we can continue to deliver toward our ambition for a thriving West Suffolk."

Further details on the call for sites consultation can be found at West Suffolk Planning Policy Consultations

Shop build on target

The construction of a shop on Marham Park is progressing with the steel frame set to go up early this month.

The nine-month build is being carried out by Virtus L & P Commercial Ltd which began construction in January.

Oliver Cumberland from Virtus said: "We will be putting the ground floor steel frame of the building up from the first week of April. That will be followed by the concrete first floor and staircase. Bricklaying is due to begin on the 20 April."

A chance to embrace the diversity of the town

Continued from page 1.

abbeys in England with the birth of Magna Carta, the oldest purposely laid out Norman town in the country and so on.

Although Bury has a booming tourist industry perhaps the town isn't fully engaging with people living in all areas, on the estates around town, and we don't embrace the diversity of everyone living here now.

This is something that needs to be addressed.

Working tirelessly on behalf of the Bury Society since the end of January has been former Guildhall project fundraiser and adviser Sarah Williams who has put together some really interesting ideas for the application. A meeting of interested parties to discuss the application for the Town of Culture was convened at the Greene King Social Club on February 13, under the auspices of Bury St

Edmunds and Stowmarket MP Peter Prinsley.

A small steering group, including Mr Prinsley's constituency support manager, Tom Howard, Sarah, the Theatre Royal, Dan Clarke of Moyes Hall, myself representing the Bury Society, and importantly, Donna Higgins, Town Council Mayor as they are listed as the leader of the application. Since meeting on a weekly basis, the steering group has formulated an innovative 12-month schedule with various events relating to the town for the winner of Town of Culture in 2028.

A further meeting of a large number of interested parties on March 19 at the Guildhall put forward suggestions to extend more ideas and themes. Subsequent ideas have also been taken on board as the submission went in on March 31.

We wait and see!

Martyn Taylor

Busy time for winter work parties

Bury Water Meadows Group (BWMG) work parties take place throughout the year as we pursue our goals of preserving and enhancing the water meadows in accordance with management plans agreed with West Suffolk District Council. Winter work parties have their own joys and challenges.

Early mornings can be things of crystalline, icy beauty with clear blue skies, or we might be faced with leaden clouds and mud underfoot. Whilst there have been some occasions over the last very wet winter when we have had to call off the planned activity most of the time we shrug our shoulders and set to work. A staple of the winter work party is wood chip spreading.

As one of our charitable objects is to improve public access to the rivers and their surroundings you will often see BWMG volunteers pushing wheel barrows laden with wood chippings to lay on the paths that run through Ram Meadow and No Man's Meadows. The wood chips come courtesy of either the council or our friendly shepherd who pitches up with his chipper when we are coppicing willow. As the days lengthen after the winter solstice, hints of spring



Wood chip spreading along a path by the side of the River Lark.

start to appear, birds begin to build nests, flowers start to emerge and frogspawn is visible on the margins of ponds and ditches. Along with these positive signs something less welcome emerges: hemlock. This is an invasive species which looks similar to the benign cow parsley but can be differentiated by reddish colouration on its stems. As well as being toxic, to both humans (as Socrates discovered) and animals, it grows tall and crowds out

other plants. Sheep have been introduced to our meadows to help control nettle growth, they tend to avoid growing hemlock plants but could inadvertently ingest cut material. To address this BWMG volunteers have been carefully digging out the individual hemlock plants in the fenced area of Ram Meadow around the pond and removing them. Doing this over a number of years should reduce the incidence of hemlock allowing wildflowers to flourish, and in the meantime sheep may safely graze.

Meanwhile, behind the scenes over the winter a dedicated team of BWMG volunteers has begun working on the planning and organising of our showcase Bury Wildlife Festival held in the Abbey Gardens, this year taking place on Friday and Saturday, May 15 and 16.

There will also be an accompanying exhibition in the Cathedral cloisters entitled "Revealing our Living Landscape".

On the Friday of the Festival we welcome local school children to learn about the wildlife of the Abbey Gardens, whilst Saturday is a day for the general public to come and hear about what we and other local environmental groups do.

If you are in town over that weekend do come and say hello.

80 at Annual Winter Lunch

The Annual Winter Lunch on Saturday, January 31, was once again a great success enjoyed by almost 80 of our members.

Held at the Southgate Community Centre, this is one of the highlights of our social calendar.

After arrival drinks, we welcomed Lynn Whitehead, a registered tour guide and theatre professional, to give a fascinating talk on Bury St Edmunds, from the perspective of other people's words, from Jocelin of Brakelond through Charles Dickens to Nick Cave, with readings from novels, diaries, plays, poems and song lyrics. This was a fantastic alternative perspective on our town.

After the talk, we enjoyed a two-course lunch, followed by a raffle. The Bury Society is grateful to the Southgate Community Centre team

for hosting us, and to Roff Catering for the delicious meal.

As ever, the Winter Lunch is only possible thanks to the Trustees, advisors and volunteers, as well as our members, all helping make the event a success. We look forward to welcoming everyone back next year. Stay informed about all our events on our website: they are a great opportunity to meet other members and learn more about what is happening around the town.

When this issue reaches you, we will have just enjoyed our Spring Coffee Morning, so our next members' event will be the AGM, which will be held on Wednesday, June 10, at the Guildhall at 7pm. We look forward to seeing you there!

Samuel Saloway-Cooke

Richard Counihan

Team effort to install mural



Spring is most certainly in the air, and the tulips are flowering their socks off – even more so this year, following two huge donations in the autumn from Riverside Bulbs and Farmer Gracy.

Our army of volunteers are busy planting them in key locations around the town, so we'll continue to expand on this into next year too.

We attended the Anglia in Bloom Spring launch event in late March, and there has been a huge shift in what we are expected to present to the judges now.

Our annual portfolio now only needs to be a fraction of the size, our community projects need to take centre-stage, and weeds in "places they shouldn't be" will mark us down.

Who said Bury in Bloom was just hanging baskets and front garden judging?

That said, we are ramping things up with a focus on Eastgate Street and the town centre this year.

We were successful in a bid for just shy of £5,000 from Havebury Homes earlier this year, which has funded 10 railing troughs and three pyramid planters; of these, most will be installed in Eastgate Street.

A large-scale Floral Mural will be installed in late April along the large blank wall at Market

Thoroughfare – this is a big team effort between Bury in Bloom, Our Bury St Edmunds and The Subversiv Collective, utilising funding from central government and via West Suffolk Council. The design will feature the St Edmund's Rose and the flower of Suffolk, the Oxlip.

Planning permission and a full footpath closure were both granted, and work begins on April 16. We will also



An artist's impression of the Floral Mural which is to be installed in late April along the large blank wall at Market Thoroughfare – the design will feature the St Edmund's Rose and the flower of Suffolk, the Oxlip.

be making use of the closure to remove all the chewing gum on the footpath, in collaboration with the Arc and West Suffolk Council. Pride in My Street returns for 2026, with thanks to Greene King for continuing their sponsorship of this scheme that replaced Certificates of Merit.

Let's get even more streets involved this year – with the winning street bagging £1,000 of Our Bury St Edmunds Gift Cards. Our closer relationship with the Abbey Gardens means that once again, this year the displays throughout town will remain consistent with royal colours enhancing the area; purples, golds, reds, greens etc, and the team at Realise Futures are continuing to plant up the baskets.

Residents and businesses can order fully-maintained hanging baskets by emailing coordinator@buryinbloom.org.uk and completing an order form.

Finally, our themes this year are a Celebration of 100 Years of

Winnie The Pooh, the FIFA World Cup and, just because Bury St Edmunds is hosting it this year, a Celebration of Suffolk Day (June 21) – what's not to love about the beautiful county in which we live?

*Chris Wiley
Co-ordinator of Bury in Bloom*



Tulips in Eastgate Street.

‘From Toilets to Tombs’ - recent grants made from the Dr Rae fund

The trustees of the society are always mindful of the original conditions governing the Dr Rae Fund and the need to ensure any grants from the fund are either to support initiatives benefitting the town or its heritage in the long term.

These objectives have been clearly honoured with the recent promises of money from the society.

So far this year the single biggest grant, £10,000, has been awarded to the Trinity Methodist Church, in Brentgovel Street.

The church itself, originally built in the 19th Century is a prominent feature in the heart of the town.

By providing financial help towards the installation of a much needed accessible toilet on the ground floor, we are not only helping to preserve the building but also supporting the churches Bury Drop in charity.

The grant will additionally benefit the various community groups who also use the building.

The society were keen to support the Trinity Methodist Church because

church members had worked tirelessly in their own fundraising efforts, allowing for a more ambitious scale of improvements overall.

A more modest grant of £3,450 has been awarded to the Moyses Hall Museum. The museum has ambitious plans to make long-term changes to the displays, helping tell the nationally important story of St Edmund and the great Benedictine Abbey which dominated the town. The changes proposed are on the back of the exhibition “Edmund and the Great Heathen Army” which will run from June until October.

The Bury Society is funding the fabrication of a replica St Edmund’s tomb which will form the centrepiece of an agreed long-term display in the museum. The Theatre Royal’s set builder, Andy Stubbs, will be the builder and the tomb will, as with the original, contain relics of the saints and high-end altar pieces.

The superb St Robert reliquary from the V & A will be on loan for the duration of this summer’s exhibition.

It is also the museum’s ambition that the permanent exhibition will be used by the Suffolk schools to raise children’s awareness of Edmund as Suffolk’s patron saint, as well as the national and international importance of the abbey in the nation’s history. More recently, the trustees have pledged £3,000 in a bid to retrieve the Corder papers at auction and bring back to the town the handwritten testimony and other papers relating to William Corder, who was hung for the murder of Maria Marten in 1828 following a trial in the town’s assizes (Shirehall).

The trial named the “The Red Barn Murder” achieved national notoriety, shocking late Georgian society. If successful at auction, these papers will complement the book of the trial, bound in Corder’s skin, removed and tanned by local surgeon George Creed, and other similar grisly artefacts displayed for many years in Moyses Hall Museum.

Terry O’Donoghue

Young Traders Competition coming to town

West Suffolk is preparing to celebrate fresh talent and creativity as towns including Bury St Edmunds get ready to host the local heats of the Young Traders Competition. Now in its sixth year of hosting both the local heats and regional final, the competition continues to attract a mix of new local traders aged 16 to 30 who are thinking about starting their own business, developing a creative idea or earning additional income.

The local heats this year will be held during July with Bury hosting one on Wednesday, July 15, from 9am to 4pm. The highly commended and winners of the local heats will advance to the regional final in Bury, on Wednesday, July 29, from 9am to 4pm. Competitors will be battling for a place at the national



final in Stratford-upon-Avon over the August Bank Holiday weekend. The Young Trader Competition offers a supportive environment to showcase products, gain trading experience and connect with other traders and customers. Competitors will be assessed by a panel of local judges based on their products, customer service skills,

interactions with other traders, and professionalism. The competition is organised by the National Market Traders Federation (NMTF) as a nationwide initiative that supports young people in exploring market trading as a business opportunity. To take part in the competition, or for more information, contact markets@westsuffolk.gov.uk

Ground broken for new AME Centre

The construction of a new state-of-the-art Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering (AME) centre in Bury St Edmunds is underway.

The AME Centre, which, once complete, will deliver 17 self-contained, flexible workshop units, as well as meeting rooms and conference facilities, to support business growth, collaboration, and network-

ing for the wider AME sector.

On Wednesday, March 18, key project stakeholders and main building contractor, Pentaco, marked the start of the construction with a ground-breaking ceremony at the site on Suffolk Business Park, in Bury St Edmunds.

Indy Wijenayaka, the cabinet member for Growth at West Suffolk

Council, said: "I am thrilled that construction has begun on the AME Centre.

"This vital project is designed to power the future of our local economy by providing a space designed to support business growth in advanced manufacturing and engineering, creating opportunities for new employment and skills development, all in favour of our local communities.

"On a wider scale, this will provide larger companies with the support of supply chain businesses."

Christopher Leggett, area director Suffolk, Pentaco Construction Ltd, said: "We are delighted to be entrusted with this vital development for West Suffolk Council.

"Pentaco is committed to creating a positive local social value impact and deliver a high-quality, sustainable facility that meets the evolving needs of residents and businesses alike.

"As we begin works on-site, our focus is on safety, efficiency, and minimal disruption to our neighbours.

"We look forward to working closely with the council, our supply-chain partners and the wider stakeholders to make this vision become a reality for the people of West Suffolk."

According to 2022 data, Advanced Manufacturing is the largest of the growth sectors in the Suffolk Economy, with £1.9 billion gross value added in 2022.

By 2050 that is due to more than double and contribute £4.7bn to Suffolk's economy.

Funding for the centre is coming from West Suffolk Council and Enterprise Zone funding, endorsed by Suffolk County Council and the Suffolk Business Board.

Copy deadline for next edition of the Review

The deadline for the next edition of the Bury Society Review is Monday, July 13.

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

Annual General Meeting

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

**Wednesday, June 10, 2026
at the Guildhall, Guildhall Street**

Refreshments will be served from 6.30pm.
The meeting will commence at 7pm.

All members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

AGENDA

1 Welcome and introduction by the chairman

2 Talk by Martyn Taylor. "Bury St Edmunds Through Time revisited". A look at how little Bury has changed over the past 100 years plus; comparing black and white images with now.

3 Annual General Meeting

- a Apologies for absence
- b Approval of Minutes of previous AGM (2025) and matters arising
- c Chairman's report
- d Planning Officer's report
- e Bury in Bloom report
- f Treasurer's report
- g Election/confirmation of officers posts
- h Election of trustees

4 Questions from the floor/open forum

Minutes of the Annual General

The Annual General Meeting of the Bury St Edmunds Society CIO held at 7pm on Thursday, June 26, 2025, at the Guildhall, Guildhall Street.

MINUTES

1 Welcome and introduction by the chairman.

The Society's chairman Martyn Taylor welcomed those present.

2 **Talk - Terry O'Donoghue**, vice-chair of the Society and a local town guide, gave a very well received, illustrated talk entitled "Bazaars to Bizarres", a talk on aspects of the Guildhall through its history.

3 AGM

a) **Apologies for absence** were received from John and Betty Saunders, Cathy Friel, Vivien Gainsborough-Foot, Robert Felgate and Richard Smith, Lady Kay Fisher, Elaine Adams, Judy and Alan Broadway, Jo Dean, Joseph Boyle, Roy and Ann Proctor, Stephen Moody, Gerald Travers, Russell Baxter, Shirley Casey and Christopher Spicer.

b) **Approval of the minutes** of the AGM held on June 13, 2024. These had been circulated previously in the Review and were approved with no matters arising.

c) **Chairman's report**

Martyn Taylor presented the chairman's report. He said: "Good evening ladies and gentlemen and welcome to the 2025 AGM of the Bury Society. I have decided, should I be re-elected to serve another term as chairman this year, I shall stand down at the 2026 AGM. I will have then completed 10 years since taking up office in 2016. The past year has seen some challenges which the Bury Society has weathered thanks to the executive committee. I am sure you are aware of their work tirelessly undertaken to provide events, recruiting membership, stewardship of Bury Society

funks, publishing the very interesting Review, keeping an eye on planning details etc. Regarding planning, the town faces challenging times ahead, we are being surrounded by large building projects on all sides including what we hope will be a new hospital. As for our events, a trip to Saffron Walden, coffee mornings and Winter lunch were still well supported. Sadly we had to say goodbye to Jess Rose Hughes from the committee due to her work commitments and also to some Bury Society members who have passed away. I would like to think that everything the Society was involved with over the past year was successful but sadly this is not the case. The loss of the Bury Records Office, aka Suffolk Archives, was a battle we could not win as its future had been pre-determined. Suffice to say the Rain-gate Street building has now been registered as a Community Asset, what will happen to this is still an unknown. The Bury Society has been collaborating with other organisations within the town in discussions with Greene King and will continue to do so as they prepare to vacate the town centre and move up to the Suffolk Business Park; interesting times ahead I'm sure you will agree. As of yet no firm decisions have been made as to what the future holds of which will be the largest brownfield site Bury has seen for a number of years. One of the major factors in determining what will be happening is that of the re-location of Greene King staff, many who will still work from home, but others will stay within the current Greene King town centre operations, others transferring to their new facility. Another important element of the Bury Society's care of the future and past is that of a generous grant of £10,000 to what is now known as the "Abbey of St Edmund, Reborn" project in their quest to seek far larger grants in wanting to create a Visitors' Centre and West Cloister. We have also loaned the same sum to the Guildhall to keep their concept as a heritage centre and a public venue

alive. We have also supported the Grow your Dough campaign for the MyWish charity (via Andrea at Elite catering). Thanks to a generous grant of support for Bury in Bloom by Bury Town Council, Chris Wiley can continue his hard work. This not only involved representing the town in Britain in Bloom but an innovative project called Pride In My Street, an interesting idea for the town replacing the certificates of Merit where Lynne Wright, its co-ordinator, has retired. Our thanks go out to her for her diligence and appreciation of her work in carrying out this. Unfortunately despite considerable efforts to find a replacement no-one would take on Lynne's role, certainly a hard act to follow. As in the past the Bury Society likes to promote good design or the restoration of existing structures. This year the Bury Town Trust, via its chairman Jonathan Lloyd, the Rod Rees Architectural award was given for the restoration of the South African War Memorial. As I have said so many times in the past the Bury Society would not be here without your support, the members. So tell your friends, even your relatives to consider joining the society. We need more members, especially younger ones, to carry on the work of the Bury Society onwards. Should anybody wish to become a Trustee of the society we currently have two vacancies, please contact the Bury Society secretary, Terry O'Donoghue. Unfortunately due to rising costs particularly postage and printing the subscription this year increases to £20 for individuals and £25 for two people living at the same address, this was unanimously agreed at the 2024 AGM. So without naming all of the executive committee individually I would like to thank them publicly for the sterling work they do."

d) **Planning officer's report**

Report presented by Ed Thuell.

Continued on next page.

Meeting held last year in June

Continued from previous page.

“In many respects it has been a quiet year in planning terms although there have been a few standout matters. Alongside this we have noticed some recurring themes which although often modest individually can have a cumulative effect. Each month as we review applications we are looking to comment in a proactive and constructive manner. We are specifically looking at applications that may have a direct impact on the public realm both physically and visually, including the conservation areas, and the many listed buildings we are lucky to be surrounded by. As well as this we are also keeping an eye out for any planning breaches that may have gone under the radar and any applications which may have impacts on residents and members. In the last 12 months:

§ We have seen the new brewery at Moreton Hall approved and we wait with great interest to see the outcome of the existing site.

§ After 2½ years we have eventually seen the refusal of the controversial proposals for Cornhill Walk Shopping Centre. Whilst it is clear the site needs to be rejuvenated this was pleasing after many years of members and our own concerns and objections over the proposals.

§ The now empty Goodfellows, on Parkway, has received approval to be demolished. We were particularly disappointed with this to see the loss of 12 affordable housing units to be replaced by nine open market dwellings.

§ We continue to monitor an application for the development of the former St James’ Middle School site. Our concerns here centre around the intrusion of new development and the impact on the Abbey Precincts.

§ Most recently we have objected to the proposed loss of the former water tower at the railway station, a listed structure which the owners

now seek to demolish. Throughout the year we have seen a number of themes developing in respects of the types of applications we find ourselves commenting on.

§ A number of applications in recent months have sought to dispose of original or traditional windows and detailing in favour of modern alternatives and stuck on glazing bars. Our view and that of most conservation and amenity organisations is that wherever possible traditional windows should be retained and repaired, especially in heritage settings. Without clear justification that a window is beyond serviceable repair it is hard to support its removal. The odd one here or there may appear inconsequential but over time the regular erosion of these details can markedly change the appearance of buildings and their townscape in a detrimental manner.

§ The increasing popularity of solar panels is encouraged but with listed buildings and conservation areas, the impact on heritage still takes precedent. A carefully placed array on a rear roof or in a discrete location is highly likely to be supported though.

§ Backland development; the

concept of new housing in in back gardens and other such spaces is an understandable approach. We have both supported and opposed these. The reality is it is very much judged on a case by case basis. The key considerations will always be impact on neighbours in respect of light and loss of amenity; the effect of extra traffic and the overall impact on the setting of the local conservation area. Maximising use of land is positive, over-development is not.

§ We are particularly disappointed by the lack of affordable housing seen with new applications. National policy does make this tricky but wherever possible we will push for its inclusion; to allow opportunities for all housing stock within the town centre and conservation areas.

§ Change of use, particularly from commercial to residential has been an increasingly regular theme, noticeably throughout the medieval gird. The principle of this is established through national permitted development rights but as we are dealing predominately with listed buildings extra consideration is always given and permission required. The challenge is the balance between ensuring

Continued on next page.

Changes to the society portfolios

After having been discussed in advance by the current trustees, Society members will have the opportunity to vote on proposed changes to a small number, but important officers’ roles for 2026/27.

As indicated by Martyn Taylor at last year’s AGM, he will be stepping down as chairman in June this year after 10 years in this challenging role. We are glad to announce that Martyn has agreed to remain as a trustee and Heritage Officer.

It is proposed that Terry O’Donoghue, current secretary and vice-chair will take on the chair’s role for 2026/27.

The secretary and vice-chair’s role

will be taken up by Sam Saloway-Cooke who has successfully served as the society’s events secretary for at least the last two years. Occupying the vacated events post will be long term adviser and trustee Stephen Moody who is reprising this role having previously served as events secretary before standing down in late 2018 to serve for a short time as the Bury in Bloom co-ordinator.

Hopefully, at the AGM, these changes will be ratified by the general membership in accordance with the society’s constitution.

Terry O’Donoghue

Continuation of the AGM Minutes

Continued from previous page.

buildings have a use and the loss of retail and commercial space, as it can lead to gradual or even rapid change of an area. A good blend of all building uses is probably the right answer but this will be a recurring theme that all town centres must balance. I want to give a quick word of thanks to Peter Riddington, who as a planning advisor to the Society brings a great wealth of experience and opinions and our work is certainly something of a team effort. We are always pleased when our opinions align with those of the local authority and members and happily more often than not they do. It is also encouraging to note that developers and applicants do approach us for comment and consultation on applications directly, asking for our support, which indicates that our opinion maybe does carry a little weight after all."

e) Bury in Bloom report

Robin Burnett, chair of Bury in Bloom, presented his report. He said: "Thirty years ago, the Royal Horticultural Society decided to create a national competition to improve the floral displays in the towns and villages of the UK. They divided the UK into 16 regional groups of which Anglia is one. Each of these groups is run by volunteers who inspect and score according to criteria set by the RHS. The Bury Society decided that our town should be entered in the Anglia regional competition. To make sure that the town was taken seriously, it created a subsidiary of the Society called Bury in Bloom which has entered the competition every year, with the exception of the pandemic years, since then. During that time Bury in Bloom has achieved the highest gold standard 14 times. Above the regional competition, the RHS runs a national competition, Britain in Bloom. They invite the regions to nominate towns or villages to go forward to the national finals. Those nominated towns and villages are inspected by national judges and, in addition to scoring

them, they name a winner in each of eight categories. Finally, at the end of the competition, an overall champion is named. Bath won that accolade last year, which made the front page of the Times newspaper. I am delighted and proud to say that this year Bury St Edmunds has been nominated to go forward to the National Finals in the large town category, competing against Causeway Coast in Ulster, Congleton in North West region, Grangemouth in Scotland, Mirfield in Yorkshire, Oswestry in Heart of England region, Thornbury in South West England and Workington in Cumbria. This means that we will be inspected on July 30 by the Anglia in Bloom judges and again on August 4 by the Britain in Bloom judges. We must be looking at our very best on both days. Both sets of judges will apply the marketing criteria set by the RHS which is 40 per cent for horticulture, 30pc for environment and 30pc for community involvement. To make sure that we score well in all three assessments requires a huge amount of work, endless goodwill and enthusiasm from our volunteers, wonderful support from West Suffolk Council and Bury Town Council and amazing support and generosity from our main sponsor Greene King and numerous other sponsors. Above all, we rely on our co-ordinator Chris Wiley. This is his second year and thanks to the Bury Town Council this year we have been able to employ him for four days a week with terrific results. I hope that all this generates enthusiasm and excitement in the people of Bury. Thank you to all who have made it possible."

f) Treasurer's report

The treasurer, Dr Ben Booth, commenced his report by thanking assistant treasurer, Sarah Nunn, for all her hard work. The treasurer then pointed out that hard copies of the latest accounts had been printed for members present and included the Statement of Financial Activities and current funds available to the society. The proposal

to approve the Bury Society Accounts for year ending March 31, 2025, was made by Dr Ben Booth, seconded by Patrick Chung and subsequently passed.

g) Election of trustees

Terry O'Donoghue explained that the Society holds its AGM to receive the annual accounts and trustees report and to elect the trustees. A third of the trustees must retire at each AGM together with any co-opted trustees. The trustees standing down this year were Patrick Chung, Russell Cook and Terry O'Donoghue. All of those standing down declared a willingness to continue serving as trustees. All trustees were then individually returned unanimously. The members present were also advised of the names of the "advisers" who serve on the executive committee; Sue Savage, Alan Baxter, Melanie Mills and Peter Riddington.

4 Questions from the floor / open forum

Martyn Taylor invited questions from the floor and an update on the Records Office by Martin Lightfoot. Sarah Greene had been asked by Christopher Spicer to thank Martyn Taylor for all that he has done in promoting the history of Bury St Edmunds over many years.

There being no further business, the AGM closed at 8.25pm.

Roy Hudd statue

A statue of actor and comedian Roy Hudd is to be sited outside the Theatre Royal, in Bury St Edmunds. West Suffolk Council have agreed to the plans to put the memorial on land next to the playhouse and gave three years to begin to install it. Hudd, who lived near Stowmarket, was famous for hosting BBC Radio 2's "The News Huddlines" for 26 years and also starred in Coronation Street before he died in 2020. The statue was created by Sean Hedges-Quinn after a fundraising campaign.

Vision for new West Suffolk Hospital

The public consultation regarding the vision for the new hospital in Bury St Edmunds has just taken place and initial reactions to the general layout have been favourable.

The hospital, occupying the Hardwick Manor land means it remains at the centre of the community it serves.

Unlike the current hospital, where the internal layout was dictated by planners in Whitehall, there is a considerable amount of input from the people who will work on site as to how it should physically be laid out to suit the needs of the community and staff working in the hospital.

This is being undertaken by a Future System team with James Butcher as operations lead and includes Mark Manning, head of Nursing Future System Programme, who brings years of front-line nursing experience to the table.

A big plus is that being adjacent to the current hospital, some £120 million can be saved by re-purposing more modern buildings on the existing hospital site.

When originally choosing the Hardwick Manor over the other two leading possibilities, it came down to a mixture of cost savings and expensive physical barriers.

In particular, the Westley option by the A14 would have necessitated great expense strengthening the railway bridge straddling the main Bury to Cambridge railway line. The Rougham option had the immovable historic Second World War Rougham airfield control tower to physically work around.

In broad terms the new hospital will be set in a green landscape with minimal intrusion on the town's skyline.

The futures team know that infection control is all important, particularly with all hospitals being vulnerable to a variety of winter viruses which can close wards.

The experiences of the recent pandemic are also naturally seared on their minds.



An artist's impression of the new West Suffolk Hospital.

Therefore, even with an additional 64 beds planned for the new hospital, unlike the current open-bayed wards, each patient will have the benefit of their own room with ensuite facilities.

Such a model already in existence at the Dumfries and Galloway hospital, has proved that the average patient stay is shortened by two days.

This is in addition to greater personal dignity for the patient when at their lowest point, and of course the benefit of potentially not having to close whole wards during incidents of infections, etc.

One feature which will make a comeback is a Day Room attached to each ward to allow some social contact for both patients and visitors. The Outpatients services will also benefit from the building of a new hospital with non-critical outpatient care being housed in one of the more modern re-purposed existing hospital buildings, and only critical outpatient services (Cardiac, Colo-rectal etc.) occupying the main hospital building.

Such a move as well as ongoing plans to expand the Newmarket facilities, will hopefully speed up treatments and again reduce infection.

Regarding transport and access, the futures' team are working with local transport providers, and, for the motorist, ensuring adequate park-

ing on the site as a whole. It is also proposed that there will be an onsite shuttle bus service constantly providing links to the various clinics and buildings.

When will all this become a reality?

The hospital and the futures team' are ahead of the pack with certain specific planning applications already approved and the important Reserved Matters planning application on the point of submission.

There is great confidence that even if spades don't go into the ground until spring 2028, they will be in a position for the new building to be handed over in late 2032, for phased occupation to commence in early 2033.

The building of this hospital will be a role model for the others in the government pipeline.

Since the go-ahead was first given by the government and the Hardwick Manor site purchased, building costs have doubled.

In 1972, complaints were loud and numerous over the current hospital costing in excess of £4.5 million to build.

The new hospital at a build exceeding £1.3 billion, will make £4.5 million look like petty cash!

The Bury Society will continue to comment in constructive fashion on any residual planning applications, and indeed the project as a whole as events unfold.

Terry O'Donoghue

Mourners gather for Sue Savage

A host of mourners filed into St Edmundsbury Cathedral for the funeral of former Bury Society membership secretary Sue Savage. The Service of Thanksgiving, held on Friday, March 13, and conducted by the Cathedral Chaplain Rev Canon Mark Haworth, was a solemn occasion attended by her close family, friends and many Society members. Sue, who was aged 75, tragically collapsed while playing tennis back in February and was taken to Addenbrooke's Hospital, in Cambridge, where she later died. Her death sent shock waves through the Bury St Edmunds community. Following the service a committal was held at the West Suffolk Crematorium, in Risby, and the wake at The Athenaeum.

The Eulogy was conducted by her son-in-law Richard Ford and he said: "In life, expectations are placed upon us from birth.

By our parents. By society. By employers. By our peers. By our friends. By our children.

Most of us conform and choose the path of least resistance. But Sue did things differently. She was free-spirited. Independent. And strong.

Born Susan Ford, she moved away from her ancestral birthplace in the East Riding of Yorkshire, down south, to London.

Membership survey provides honest feedback along with appreciation

A big thank you to all of our members who completed our recent membership survey.

Your honest feedback will help us know which of our activities are most valued and where best to focus our energy and resources.

Most reassuringly for us, we were delighted to learn how appreciated our work is by our members.

Almost 90 per cent of respondents agreed that the Bury Society supported their immediate area and the vast majority confirmed that membership represented a very good value for money.



Sue Savage.

Defying expectations at the time of a local, northern girl and farm manager's daughter.

She did relationships differently. She was married and then divorced. It wasn't what you did in the 70s. She had Victoria as a single mother when nearing 40, bringing her up alone.

Quite unexpected for the 80s. She worked her way up to a senior position at Lloyds of London. A working-class woman, in the 90s, at a City institution. Unthinkable. She retired from full-time work in her 50s. It was unusual for a single woman to do so back then.

Importantly, almost everyone said that they would recommend membership to family and friends, so we urge everyone to do so!

Our charity represents the voices of all our members and we are stronger with every new voice.

It has never been easier to join: just visit www.burysociety.com/join-us Lastly, as a sign of our appreciation, we entered all respondents into a prize-draw for a £25 M&S gift card and Shirley Casey was the winner – congratulations!

Samuel Saloway-Cooke

She upped sticks and moved to Bury in her 60s, to start again.

Leaving everything she knew, she created a network of friends, tennis partners, neighbours and fellow Bury Society members.

In her 70s, Sue became a mother all over again with the birth of Victoria's daughter Amelia whom she poured her heart, soul and energy into. Defying expectations of retirement.

And finally, Sue died differently. It wasn't what any of us expected. It was painful. It felt too soon.

And it knocked us all for six. But in passing, as in life, Sue did things differently.

Sue was a kind, calm, empathetic, intelligent, sociable woman who also knew how to have fun.

She cared for the sick and ran errands for the elderly.

She organised events and danced around in a sparkly dress if she wanted to.

She was at home in the City of London and equally at home in Bury. She was good with numbers and was a fabulous cook and entertainer.

As we celebrate Sue today, we all have personal memories and recollections.

I'll remember her for opening my eyes to London, for her love of Celine Dion, for hosting family Christmases at her home, for her penchant for Waitrose, for the spectacular wedding cake she made for us, for her wonderful hospitality, for providing sanctuary when you needed it, for her ability to turn her hand to anything – from upholstery and curtain-making to knitting and flower arranging. And for her fondness of Bury.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, I'll remember Sue for her absolute love and devotion to Victoria - and latterly - Amelia.

And to everyone who misses Sue, rest assured, I see her warmth, kindness and compassion live on every day through Victoria.

Could I please invite you all to share your personal memories with each other afterwards so we can collectively celebrate Sue today."

Heritage fund bid decision in June

The Bury St Edmunds Society has been closely involved with the Abbey of St Edmund Reborn project since its beginning. Our Society was among the first to be involved in the Abbey Heritage Partnership which began the process which has now resulted in an application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

A decision on whether that application has been successful will be provided by the end of June 2026. Project manager, James Mellish, summarises the application which was submitted at the end of February.

He writes: “A £9.8 million delivery phase application for the Abbey of St Edmund Reborn Project is a bold and transformative partnership led by St Edmundsbury Cathedral, West Suffolk Council and English Heritage.

“This once-in-a-generation initiative will reunify the 60-acre Abbey site, fragmented since the Dissolution of 1539, re-establishing it as a nationally significant cultural destination.

“Building on the momentum of the 2022 Abbey 1000 celebrations, the three-year delivery project positions the Abbey as a powerful place-maker for West Suffolk, driving long-term economic growth and cultural recognition.

“Urgent heritage action is required. Conditions surveys confirm an increase in structural defects across the ruins due to prolonged exposure, climate change and severe weather. Immediate conservation will stabilise the Abbey ruins bringing them into a sustainable condition for future generations.

“A new Visitor Centre will sensitively restore and adapt the 18th-century Anselm Building, and buildings facing the Angel Hill, complemented by a contemporary West Cloister as a connection between the Cathedral and Abbey Gardens. An improved 1.4km accessible circular route, including new ramps and a ruin viewing point will ensure an inclusive



The Abbey of St Edmund Reborn project team.

experience for all. Environmental ambition underpins the project, targeting an 18.5 per cent biodiversity net gain, supporting chalk stream habitats and working toward Net Zero through renewable energy solutions. Immersive stories of Edmund’s Town, and 47 co-ordinated activities, including heritage engagement, biodiversity

programmes, creative projects and volunteering placements re-animate the Abbey for diverse audiences. “Together, the partnership will deliver a new sustainable business and governance model creating a unified vision to secure the Abbey’s future as a place of heritage, learning and community.”

Alan Baxter

Historic Psalter now on display at the Cathedral

The Psalter was created in the late 15th Century for daily use in the Great Benedictine Abbey of St Edmund and after the reformation it passed through various owners, eventually James Cobb gave it to his grandson, James Hervey, who in 1706 gave it to the KEGS Foundation Trust.

The Psalter has spent its recent years securely locked away in the Bury Record Office.

The book was unseen, except on a few rare occasions for celebratory display and its existence was unknown except to a small number of historians and scholars.

The Trustees of the KEGS Foundation were considering its future when the announcement was made to remove all the town’s records to Ipswich.

A number of alternative suggestions were considered, including it being added to the Foundation’s

Collection of Ancient Books in Cambridge University Library. Eventually the Trustees decided its future home should be at St Edmundsbury Cathedral, subject to the cathedral having the correct conditions for its care and display. The cathedral were delighted to accept the gift.

Following some restoration the Psalter was presented to the Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich at a special Evensong on March 5 where music from the Psalter was included and sung by the cathedral choir.

The Cathedral stands just yards away from where the Great Abbey Monastic Church once stood and hopefully this beautiful book of Psalms and ancient text will be admired and enjoyed by many. The Psalter is currently on display in the Cathedral Treasury.

Alan Jary

Ghostly past and a bright future

The ghostly and macabre stories have been put to bed until our re-start at Halloween.

The message again this year was “book quickly” as by the beginning of March we had sold out with over 800 bookings and plenty of satisfied customers.

Our other special tours, advertised on our website, are on offer year-round and on July 4 we will be adding Stars and Stripes to commemorate 250 years since American Independence.

Our season of 11am daily tours run from April to October and give you insight to the Abbey and town. With nearly 1,500 bookings last year, these tours remain popular, attracting people from 20 different countries and all regions of England. The tours remain of interest to local people, their friends and families and are a good way of showcasing the beauty of Bury.

Our food and drink tours are a great example of this with over 100 people each paying £25 to enjoy tastings at local businesses.

Each tour highlights what good products are available in places which are sometimes off the beaten track and it is rewarding to hear, “I had never heard of them,” or “I had no idea that there was so much



A tour guide in Bury St Edmunds carrying out a training course in the town.

available behind this shop window” and to know that people are returning afterwards to make purchases.

This initiative typifies our desire to work in partnership with others. We have been running a training course for new guides.

Those who attain the white badge, accredited by the Institute of Tourist Guiding, will be proficient at guiding visitors in the Cathedral.

Those who opt to continue their

training and achieve green badge status will be able to undertake guided tours of the Abbey and town. We look forward to having additional colleagues who will uphold the reputation that we have and which is evident on TripAdvisor reviews.

Finally, we wish to add to the tributes to Sue Savage - she was a lovely person who worked closely with the guides.

John Saunders

Tour of factory helps to support local hospice

On a mild winter evening in late January, Bury St Edmunds Society members enjoyed a unique behind-the-scenes tour of the British Sugar factory while also supporting a great cause.

The Bury Society organised a tour for a large number of our members to mark 100 years of the factory here in the town.

As part of this, we collaborated with British Sugar to help support their fundraising campaign for St Nicholas Hospice. Everyone attending the tour offered a small donation, which the Society matched from its own funds. In total, thanks to the generosity of our members, we were able

to raise £600 for the charity, which will go towards their work providing expert and compassionate care around the region.

The British Sugar factory started operations in Bury St Edmunds in 1925 and has been turning sugar beet grown throughout East Anglia into sugar ever since.

Our tour allowed us to see all stages of the sugar manufacturing process, from raw sugar beet being weighed on delivery, through the creation of the various “co-products” like electricity and agricultural lime, to the pure white sugar we see sold in bags in the supermarket. Along the way, we were able to learn about the his-

tory of the site, from seeing parts of the original factory wall to the latest technological developments, like the Anaerobic Digester, constructed in 2016, which generates carbon-neutral electricity for the National Grid.

There were a number of surprises along the way: Did you know the site had its own fire station, in case of emergencies? Or that sugar beet is grown, on average, less than 30 miles from one of the British Sugar factories in the east of England?

It was a fascinating way to spend a winter’s evening and a unique opportunity to explore a local landmark.

Samuel Saloway-Cooke

Plaque for iconic plague stone unveiled in town



Local residents along with Martyn Taylor and Melanie Lesser with staff and students from Easter Education Group at the official unveiling of a plague stone plaque.

Eastern Education Group has created a lasting tribute to an iconic piece of the history of Bury St Edmunds. Staff were approached by Melanie Lesser to see if they could create a plaque for a plague stone situated on Out Risbygate Street.

(The Plague Stone according to legend was put in place when smallpox was raging in Bury in 1677. The top of the stone was filled with vinegar so that people going home from the town market could wash their coins in it, to stop the spread of infection). As a result of these discussions, Colin Shaw (Group Sixth Form principal) and Shane Langthorne (Group deputy principal) organised for a new plaque to be placed by the stone so that passers by knew exactly what the stone was for and why.

The new plaque was then unveiled in front of residents, students and staff.

And Martyn Taylor, the chairman of the Bury Society, was on hand to chat to learners studying at West Suffolk College to explain the background.

Martyn said: "The stone is one of the original markers for the boundary of Bury St Edmunds.

"There were four boundary markers, and this is one of them and it was called The Haycross.

"The stone used to reside outside

Chalk Road and now it is by West Suffolk College.

"I'm passionate about keeping history alive."

Melanie said: "There was a plaque that was at the stone before, but it was not legible and it was also inaccurate - so Martyn rewrote the wording - and the college did the rest. We were delighted when the college said they would do this with their students as it is a very important part of Bury St Edmund's history.

"It's a brilliant piece of information for everyone to read. The college is doing really well and it was lovely to be involved in this project."

Shane Langthorne from the college said: "We were approached and we are very keen to promote heritage in the area. "Therefore, we are incredibly proud to support the making and creation of this plaque so that others can see the importance of this landmark. In my opinion, history needs to be celebrated."

Gemma Davinson, 21, from Bury St Edmunds is on a Level 3 Animal Studies course and said: "I think it's really interesting and it's good to promote the town's history to students."

John Nice

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Bury Baroque at the Athenaeum

Period instrument ensemble Bury Baroque (*pictured right*) will be performing at The Athenaeum, in Bury St Edmunds, on Sunday, May 10.

Consisting of players drawn from across East Anglia, the group's first concert last year, entitled "A Box of Delights", was a huge success, filling the venue to capacity.

"We were thrilled by the enthusiastic response from our audience," said Rosy Payne, co-founder of the ensemble. "We never dreamt people would be queuing round the block waiting for the doors to open."

This year, the ensemble will present "Five at Night or Another Box of Delights", led by professional baroque violinist Rachel Stroud.

The programme will include music by Telemann, Muffat, Locke and Handel and Rachel will play "La Stravaganza no 1", a violin concerto by Vivaldi.

"The Athenaeum's elegant interior provided a splendid setting for our music," said Rosy. "And we are very much looking forward to performing there again."

The group receives major sponsorship from the Rougham Estate Trust, who were quick to recognise the group's potential. Players receive expert tuition in historical performance practice from their leader on their study days, exploring a wide variety of musical techniques and stylistic characteristics.

The instruments they play on replicate those that 17th century players would have used, or are originals and the string players use gut strings and bows that are copies of those used in early music.

Tickets are now on sale via Ticket Source. Follow the link from Bury Baroque's website www.burybaroque.net/events where you will find more information about the concert and the group.

"I'd recommend booking in advance," says Rosy. "Judging from the response last year, it will be a hot ticket."

Rosy Payne



Programme of upcoming events

Saturday, April 11: Spring Coffee Morning, at the United Reformed Church, on Whiting Street, 10.30am to 12 noon.

Saturday, May 9: Talk by Peter Riddington, architectural consultant, on the architecture of Medieval Suffolk Churches, at the Unitarian Meeting House, 2pm to 3pm.
See website to book and for further details.

Wednesday, June 10: (Please note the new date). The Annual General Meeting of the Society with a talk by outgoing Bury Society chairman Martyn Taylor entitled "Bury St Edmunds Through Time – Revisited", at the Guildhall, 6.30pm to 8.30pm.

Thursday, June 18: Full-day excursion to historic Hadleigh and tour of Benton End Gardens.
Tickets available online; see details enclosed.

Keep an eye on the events webpage (burysociety.com/events) for more information and to book.

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 contact the membership secretary Stephen Recaldin at members@burysociety.com

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