

Tourist Information Centre – under new management

As reported in the spring edition of BTC News, Aylesbury Vale District Council has now withdrawn funding for the town's much-used Tourist Information Centre in The Old Gaol. This is particularly unfortunate given the level of help provided by AVDC when the TIC was established. The Town Council have met with the staff and agreed with them that it will be "business as usual" under the new regime, which will continue its links with AVDC's Leisure & Culture Team, which looks after tourism in the Vale.

This means that advice about tourist and other facilities in our area (and beyond) will continue to be available. Theatre tickets and National Express trips can still be booked. Enquiries about local bus services will continue to be answered, and timetables will continue to be available. Local organisations can continue to advertise their events in the vestibule, and families and businesses seeking to move to the area can still obtain valuable information.

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BUCKINGHAM TOWN COUNCILLORS

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BUCKINGHAM SOUTH

| | |
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| Cllr Terry Bloomfield | 01280 815336 |
| Cllr Hedley Cadd | 01280 814223 |
| Cllr Mrs Geraldine Collins | 01280 823006 |
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Buckingham TownMatters

Autumn 2010

in this
issue

growth in
Buckingham

Band Jam

River Rinse

Chandos Park

Continental
Market

Christmas
Parade

Car Parking

Fireworks
Guys and
Bonfires



University of Buckingham

Buckingham's growth now uncertain...

In the spring edition of BTC News, we told you about the work we were doing in respect of Aylesbury Vale District Council's Local Development Framework Core Strategy.

This was going to be the district council's proposal for future growth in the Vale, including Buckingham, up to 2026. The district council's proposals were formally presented to the government-appointed Inspector over several weeks, and Town Councillors attended on several days to ensure that Buckingham-specific issues were fully represented.

Since then, the Inspector announced that he was unconvinced by some of the AVDC proposals, then the new coalition government scrapped the South East Plan which had imposed the extraordinarily high housing targets incorporated in the Core Strategy. The government has since followed this up by saying that they favoured a "bottom up" approach to planning, where the wishes of local communities are paramount. As a consequence, AVDC has asked the Secretary of State for permission to withdraw the Core Strategy – and it is expected that he will agree. So where does this leave Buckingham?

Firstly, planning consent has already been given for around 1,200 new homes in the town. Over 300 of these are either built, or are being constructed. Planning consent has been given to about 860 others, including the massive development south of the by-pass. The Core Strategy had implied increased housing numbers that the Town Council considered wildly excessive, and it was not clear whether all or some of these were included in the 1,200. We feared a possible increase over and above that figure, and with no guarantees for adequate infrastructure to support such growth.

Secondly, AVDC's only remaining long-term development plan is out of date, and does not include all currently agreed developments. So they will have to devise a new plan. What this will have to include is unclear as government guidance is still awaited. It is likely, however, to have two main features:

- town and parish councils being asked what development (if any) they want and evidence-based justification for these choices
- possible financial incentives to accept certain levels of development, and penalties (such as the loss of some local services) if there is no development.

Planning consent cannot be rescinded, so we will eventually have 1,200 new homes. The absence of a Core Strategy means that the Vale is open to developers to apply for planning permissions on an unstructured and ad-hoc basis. As such applications cannot be declined without good reason, new-builds could spread across the Vale in an uncontrolled manner and without regard to actual needs, and possibly without adequate supporting infrastructure.

The battle to secure planned and integrated growth to Buckingham looks set to continue.

Farewell BTC News!



Sandra Dickenson receiving her prize from the Mayor, Mike Smith.

Readers will recall that, in our spring edition, we announced a competition to come up with a permanent name for our new-look newsletter. As you can see from the front cover, a name has been chosen.

Mrs Sandra Dickenson of Portfield Way submitted the winning entry, and received a bag of Fair Trade goodies worth £20.00 from the Mayor. In the view of the judges, the new name "says what it's about" and contains a neat duality of meaning on the word "matters".

Annual Accounts

A gremlin crept into the accounts published in the summer edition of BTC News. We apologise for this, and show the corrected figures below:

| SERVICE AREA | 2008/2009 | 2009/2010 | 2010/2011 |
|------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| INCOME | | | |
| Precept | 383,123 | 529,944 | 523,000 |
| Markets | 28,872 | 29,533 | 30,900 |
| Interest | 4,767 | 438 | 600 |
| Rental and Burial Income | 112,453 | 13,355 | 12,908 |
| Sponsorship | 302 | 11,253 | 9,694 |
| Devolved Services | 900 | 550 | 15,000 |
| Other | 5,269 | 302 | 795 |
| TOTAL INCOME | 535,686 | 585,375 | 592,897 |
| EXPENDITURE | | | |
| Finance & Administration | 175,941 | 205,646 | 258,183 |
| Grants | 9,978 | 29,894 | 31,999 |
| Grounds Maintenance | 137,769 | 176,280 | 174,555 |
| Annual Events | 27,463 | 34,873 | 41,280 |
| Market Expenses | 6,502 | 7,086 | 8,785 |
| Planning | 758 | 138 | 1,200 |
| Projects Costs | 61,327 | 7,018 | 23,000 |
| Contingencies | 1,193 | 12,868 | 20,000 |
| Aylesbury Vale Shortfall | 0 | 0 | 17,000 |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURE | 420,931 | 473,803 | 576,002 |
| Balance at start of the year | 142,521 | 257,276 | 368,848 |
| Income over expenditure | 114,755 | 111,572 | 16,895 |
| BALANCE YEAR END | 257,276 | 368,848 | 385,743 |

The Precept is the amount that the Town Council asks Aylesbury Vale District Council, the Council Tax Billing Authority, to collect on our behalf from the Council Tax payers of Buckingham. It is used to fund the services and activities of the Town Council.

The Town Council's Precept for 2010/11 was set at £523,000 which resulted in a Council Tax Bill of £121.46 per year at Valuation Band D (£2.34 per week per household). This was a reduction of 0.1% on the amount charged in 2009/10.

The Aylesbury Vale Shortfall is part-year funding for our Tourist Information Centre, and a contribution towards the Festival Fortnight, previously paid for by the district council but withdrawn by them from this year.

The Balance for 2010/11 includes £327,209 which has been earmarked for a specific project which may be spent in the current financial year.



Town Council Office Extension Cancelled

Plans to extend the existing office space, as well as providing a community room which could double as a Council Chamber, and additional public toilets have been halted after running into seemingly insurmountable problems. As reported in the summer BTC News, these problems concerned uncertainties over some rights of way, which were compounded by landowner delays in responding to correspondence. This is regrettable, particularly given the amount of time and money expended over the last few years.

Because the present office is cramped and unsuitable, thoughts are now turning to moving the office staff to more suitable purpose-built accommodation.

One possibility is the Buckingham Centre in Verney Close, where easy access by the public would still be possible. Other options are also being examined.

It is unlikely, however – particularly in the present economic climate – that the community room or public toilets will be realised in the near future.

Car Parking

It's not the Town Council's fault!

Nevertheless, you have complained to us in large numbers about the district council's changes to Cornwalls Meadow Car Park, and their introduction of charges at Western Avenue and the new Stratford Fields Car Parks as well as Cornwalls Meadow. All of your complaints have been passed on to them, and we have also raised them at meetings. As a result, a number of further changes are awaited, including new permanent signage, a vision mirror at a blind corner, and highlighting of the new kerbing.

You also raised problems caused by the much-increased on-street parking resulting from the introduction of car park charges. These will be fully addressed during an extensive study of parking and town centre access that the Town Council has commissioned, which is due to commence in November.

Band Jam a major hit!

The traditional curtain-call on the summer holidays, Band Jam, enjoyed another hugely successful day on Sunday 29 August. Live music in the town centre was again provided without charge. Headline band **Horseman Shakes and the Draymen**, supported by several other bands including **Dirty Youth, Progression** and **Baedecker**, demonstrate the amount of talent that abounds in our area. The Town Council received many accolades for this year's event, and are already beginning preparations for next year.



Main Pic:
The crowd goes wild...
Pictured, top to bottom:
Dirty Youth
Horseman Shakes
Lion Sex



River Rinse

During September and October, the Town Councillors and local volunteers, with the valuable assistance of Stowe Sub Aqua cleared that stretch of the Great Ouse between London Bridge and Fishers Field.

Two skip-loads of rubbish (much of it dumped there by people who appear to take little pride in their town and its environs) and a nearly-new bicycle were pulled from the river, making that stretch more visually appealing and improving the flow.

For further information on **Stowe Sub Aqua Club** contact **Roger Bray** on roger.bray@bt.com or 07802 765366



All the Fun of the Fair

The **456th Charter Fair** took place over two weekends in October, as usual, with Mayor Mike Smith opening proceedings on the first weekend, Saturday 16 October. The generosity of the Nichols Brothers was again demonstrated with less able youngsters receiving free fairground rides for the first hour.

Following the increase in on-street parking attributed to the imposition of charges in the town's car parks, the Town Council excluded Western Avenue from the diversion system this year. The effectiveness of this change will be reviewed over the winter – if you have any views about it, then please tell us.



Guys, Fireworks & Bonfire

The **Best Dressed Guy Competition** will take place on **Saturday 6 November** outside The Old Gaol at 1.00pm sharp. After judging, the Guys can be taken to Bourton Park, where they will be placed on the Town's bonfire.

The **Firework Display** will start at 7.00pm, followed by the lighting of the fire. Everyone is welcome, but please aim to arrive around 6.30pm and park either in Cornwalls Meadow (free at that time of night!) and walk to the display area via the Riverside Walk, or in the very small car park on the Bourton Road. As usual, refreshments will be available, and there will be a collection for local charities.



Last year's bonfire



The Sealed Knot

m BTC web site

Moving closer to Milton Keynes?

Perhaps not, but the MK Dons have embarked on a series of "Big Day" opportunities for neighbouring towns. The "**Buckingham Big Day**" is the first of a number of similar events being arranged by MK Dons, which bring a number of tangible benefits to the town.

Full details are still being worked out at the time of going to press, but the lead-up includes hosted events for the local business and trading communities, coaching sessions for local



youngsters, school & junior football club visits by players, an Open Forum with the club Chairman and a couple of players for "the older generation", a Chairman's reception at stadiumMK, their mascots Donny & Mooey will switch on our Christmas lights on 27 November, heavily-discounted match ticket prices, and an 8-page programme insert to promote Buckingham on "our" match day – **Saturday 4 December**, when MK Dons are at home to Plymouth Argyle.

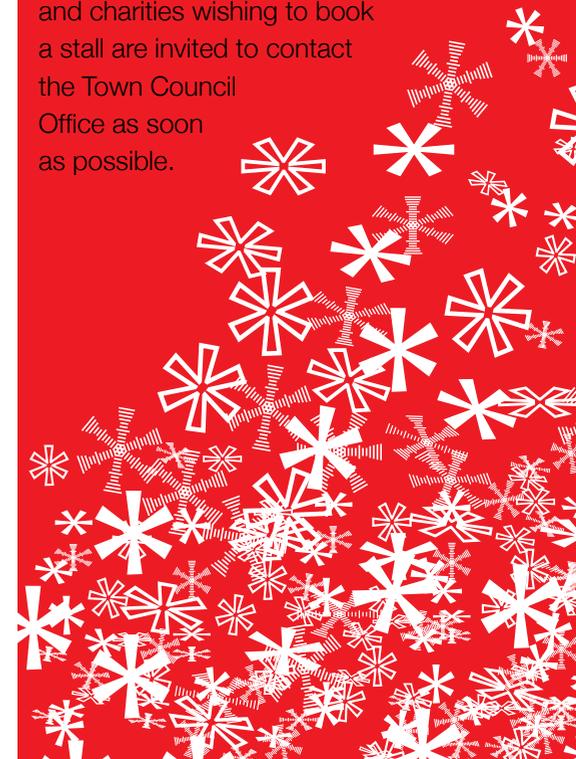
We think you will agree this is a great opportunity for Buckingham – so look out for further details in The Buckingham & Winslow Advertiser and on our website.

m BTC web site

Christmas Parade

On **11 December**, the 26th **Christmas Parade** will depart from Chandos Road on its usual route through the town centre. This year's theme will be Films and, with many new floats taking part, it is sure to be another hugely eye-catching event. Aylesbury Vale District Council has kindly offered to waive car parking charges on the day, in anticipation of the large numbers of out-of-town visitors that customarily attend, and the huge numbers that line the streets.

After the Parade, the Town Council's Community Fair will be taking place in the Community Centre. Local groups and charities wishing to book a stall are invited to contact the Town Council Office as soon as possible.



Chandos Park play facilities dedicated to former Councillors

The new children's play area in Chandos Park, which has already been enjoyed by many youngsters since it opened during the summer, has been dedicated to and named after **Councillor Pam Desorgher**, who tragically died at the end of last year. Pam's family attended a short formal "naming" ceremony in mid-October.

A few days later, the new **Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)**, installed at the same time as the play area refurbishment and seeing similar high usage levels, was formally dedicated to and named after Ken Liverseidge, who contributed so much to the town during his many years of service as a Town Councillor.



Continental Market comes to town

Saturday 27th November sees the arrival of **Italia In Piazza**, one of the leading Speciality Markets in the country. It's an authentic Italian Market supplying a whole range of traditional foodstuffs including:

- **Cheeses, cured meats, herbs and pasta**
- **Olives** from Sicily, Liguria and Napoli
- **Biscuits, cakes and pastries**
- **Extra Virgin Olive Oils and balsamic vinegars**
- **Torrone** (gluten free nougat cake) **and Cioccolata**
- **Hot foods: Arancini** (rice balls with various fillings) – a classic Sicilian speciality; **Calzone** (folded pizza); **Salsiccia Italiana** (fresh Italian pork sausages prepared on a griddle and served in a bread roll with onions)
- **Speciality Breads**, including Focaccia, Ciabatta and many more...

The market will be open all day, with the Christmas Lights switch-on at 6pm.

