



# The Bracknell Forest Society

AN INDEPENDENT VOICE FOR BRACKNELL FOREST

Newsletter - Issue 46 – Winter 2023

## SOCIETY NEWS

We've had an encouraging start to 2023 with a good attendances at both our AGM and the first evening talk. We had to put out extra chairs for both events. Thank you for your support.

### **AGM**

We welcomed the Deputy Mayor of Bracknell Forest and the Bracknell Town Mayor to our AGM in early January. After brief AGM business (at which the same officers as last year were re-elected) we stopped for afternoon tea. With so many conversations going on around the room, it took a little time to get everyone sat down again for Andrew's talk on The Weather and Bracknell. After hearing about the history of the Met Office we learned about extreme weather events that Bracknell has experienced.



### **Lily Hill House and the People who Lived There**

We squeezed over 50 people into the Garden Room at South Hill Park for part one of three talks about Lily Hill House. This talk focused on the Vincent family who built (and rebuilt) Lily Hill House in the early 1800s and lived there through three generations until just into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The next talk, in October, will continue the story of the house until Bracknell Development Corporation bought it in 1955.



## Membership Renewal

Thank you to all of you who have renewed your membership for 2023. We ended last year with 95 members and 83 have so far renewed– can we achieve 100 members this year?

Subscriptions can either be paid at a meeting or details of how to pay are on our website: <https://tbfs.org.uk/join-tbfs>.

## PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

Please put the dates in your diary.

### Monday 6<sup>th</sup> March – 7.30pm

**A Virtual Pub Crawl Around Sandhurst and Crowthorne** A talk by Andrew Radgick. *In the Recital Room at South Hill Park.*



*Rose and Crown in Sandhurst*

### Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> April – 7.30pm

**Broadmoor** a talk by Boris Coster author of the recently published book 'Broadmoor Sinister' about some of the most notorious patients. *In the Recital Room at South Hill Park*

### May

**Visit to be arranged.**

### Monday 31<sup>st</sup> July to Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> August

**Week of Walks** The programme will be distributed to members in early July. As last year, spaces will be limited, booking will be required with priority for members.

For events see our website: [www.tbfs.org.uk](http://www.tbfs.org.uk) or find us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/tbfs)

For further information, please email: [tbfsinfo@gmail.com](mailto:tbfsinfo@gmail.com).

## **8<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> September**

**Heritage Open Days** - look out for listing of local events.

## **Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> October – 7.30pm**

**Lily Hill House and the People who Lived There – Part 2** A talk by Colin Bird. *In the Recital Room at South Hill Park.*

## **Late October (date to be confirmed) – evening.**

**Warfield Ghost Walk** An evening visit to haunted parts of Warfield hosted by Gill Cheetham and Andrew Radgick. Booking will be required.

## **Monday 6<sup>th</sup> November – 7.30pm**

**Public Art in Bracknell** A talk by Christine Smith. *In the Recital Room at South Hill Park.*

## **Monday 18<sup>th</sup> December - evening**

**Christmas Party and Quiz** – more details nearer the time

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## **PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

### **Bracknell Forest Local Plan**

The long running saga of the borough's Local Plan took a step forward in January when the Planning Inspectors' report on their examination of the plan was published.

The report requests the council to make a number of changes before another consultation is required on the modifications.

The annual requirement is now for 614 dwellings to be built each year during plan period – a total of 10,438 by 2037. The inspectors highlighted that the draft plan over provided for land to meet this requirement and required several proposed development sites to be removed. Three smaller sites (total 50 dwellings) are to be excluded: land opposite Popes Manor, Murrell Hill Lane, Binfield and two sites on Lower Church Road Sandhurst.

In addition, the inspectors found that there was not sufficient evidence of the required exceptional circumstances to modify the Green Belt Boundary at Jealott's Hill. Consequently, the proposal to build a Garden Village (1,350 dwellings during the plan period) should be deleted from the local plan.

If many of the recent planning proposals for new flats and conversions of offices to flats in the town centre go ahead, we suspect that the borough will more than meet the required number of new dwellings.

The timing of the next stages is not yet clear. However, it would be good get the plan completed as soon as possible to give certainty and avoid speculative planning applications on other land.

### **Warfield Neighbourhood Plan**

The Warfield Neighbourhood Plan Referendum, held on Thursday 17 November 2022, voted in favour of the plan. The Plan came into legal force as part of the

Development Plan for Warfield Parish, with immediate effect after approval at referendum.

### **Recent Planning Applications**

The Society continues to review new planning applications each week. Although the last three months have had fewer that we wanted to comment on.

Erection of 39 retirement living apartments. 90-94 Yorktown Road, Sandhurst. The developers of these asked the Society to participate in a pre-application consultation where we raised a concern about the adequacy of the number of parking spaces. The full application has increased the amount of parking. However, we did submit a representation that we remained concerned that the amount of parking space proposed will not be adequate to service the needs of both residents and visitors to the home, without having an adverse impact on highway safety.

Outline application, for the development of up to 45 dwellings. Land At Junction Of Forest Road and Wood Lane, Binfield. The Society did not object to this application. However, we did ask that the Applicant be required to approach Berkshire Archaeology prior to a decision being made. This is because we are aware of a previous archaeological study (the Oxford Study) that does not appear to have been taken into account by the Applicant.

Prior Notification for a two-storey roof extension to form 42 apartments. Lavenir, Opladen Way, Bracknell. This relates to the former offices, now flats diagonally opposite the Sports Centre on the roundabout. The applicants sought to take advantage of the limited planning process for adding up to two extra floors on the existing flats. The Planning Committee rejected the application (despite the officers' recommendation of approval) because its appearance did not respect the character of the original host building resulting in an unbalanced and overbearing appearance. The proposal was considered to be contrary to policies of the Bracknell Forest Local Plan and the Bracknell Town Neighbourhood Plan. After all the work on the local and neighbourhood plans, it is good to see the plans being used in planning decisions. The applicant's appeal has now been dismissed as they failed to submit all of the required documents on time.



*Lavenir building when it was offices.*



Application to demolish existing dwelling and provide a later living residential development of 42 one and two bed dwellings. Floringham Lodge Old Bracknell Lane East. The Society was consulted before the planning application was submitted. We decided that the existing house had no significant historic value and that this would be a suitable location older residents with relatively easy access to town centre facilities as well as the train and bus stations.

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## **NEWS FROM BRACKNELL'S PAST**

### **200 YEARS AGO**

A house in Bracknell being offered for sale was described as being "in the best part of Berkshire. A residence planned for the entire accommodation of a respectable family, with corresponding offices of every description." Its proximity to Windsor and Ascot was highlighted, as well as "a fine lake not at all dissimilar to Virginia Water. The neighbourhood is proverbial for being social and respectable, and the parks of Lords Limerick (South Hill Park) and Downshire (Easthampstead Park) surround this delightful property."

### **175 YEARS AGO**

An inquest was held on the body of James Slark, carrier, who resided at Bracknell, aged 50 years. The deceased had been to Reading for a load of malt, and on returning about the middle of the previous day was seen near the above place lying the road and the horses and cart short distance from him; he was insensible and bleeding from the mouth, nose, and ears, one of the wheels of the cart having passed over his head; he was immediately placed in a cart for the purpose of being taken the Royal Berkshire Hospital, but died in a few minutes. There is no doubt deceased was riding on the shafts as he was seen in that position shortly before the accident and nearly asleep. He left Reading quite sober and was considered a steady person. Verdict, Accidentally killed.

### **150 YEARS AGO**



*Bullbrook School, seen from Bay Road, c. 1908. (Vin Miles, Bygone Bracknell Facebook Group)*

Bracknell Musical Association gave their first concert at the large school room at Bullbrook "to a crowded and

appreciative audience. The association had only sprung into existence a few weeks ago .... its musical talent was soon developed, and its first concert, which was loudly applauded, bore testimony to the careful and complete training it had received."

### **125 YEARS AGO**

Four teenage lads – Albert Keen, Richard Keen, William Harwood, and Ernest Belcher – were summonsed "for committing wilful damage to the fence of the sewage works" the previous month. Belcher's father apologised for not attending court as "he had a little child lying dead," but promised to keep his son away from "bad company" in the future.

### **100 YEARS AGO**

Extract from the Easthampstead Rural District Council minutes: "An application was received from the committee of the British Legion for permission to erect a Memorial at the junction of the Binfield and Wokingham roads, and this was agreed to, provided no interference to the Council's sewers and appliances results."



*Bracknell's war memorial in its original position (erected 1924)*

### **75 YEARS AGO**

Bracknell Youth Hostel opened in the former hotel and home of Dr Fielden, at the top of the High Street. It had a capacity for forty visitors, with fifteen accommodated on the first night, including a Norwegian from Oslo. It was soon providing lodgings for overseas visitors who had arrived in Britain for the Olympic Games being held in London that year.



*Bracknell Youth Hostel*

## 50 YEARS AGO

Bracknell's bandstand opened after months of delays and arguments over its siting. There were objections from local shopkeepers about the noise it would generate (which would have been less than from passing traffic before the High Street was pedestrianised). There was no official launch of the new facility, just a Salvation Army band playing music.



## 25 YEARS AGO

The film 'Titanic' was showing at The Odeon Cinema at The Point. Just as the ship was about to hit the iceberg on the screen, the fire alarm went off and the premises evacuated. After combing the building, the Fire Brigade announced it was a false alarm, and the film resumed.

*Andrew Radgick (History Officer)*

## OTHER NEWS

### Windmill Meadows



Windmill Meadows in Warfield is a new SANG (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace) promoted by the Thames Basin Heaths Partnership of local councils, land managers and nature conservation bodies conserving the heathland of the Thames Basin Heaths

Special Protection Area across Surrey, Hampshire and Berkshire. It joins many other SANGs within Bracknell Forest to provide alternative places to walk (especially for those with dogs) to avoid increased disturbance of the fragile heathlands with their reptiles and ground nesting birds.

The meadows are off Malt Hill (nearest postcode: RG42 6BL - What3words: filed.gold.hotel). There is a free gravel car park and mown paths leading around two large fields with views across the countryside. When wet, the area can be muddy and boggy.



The stream alongside the meadows is The Cut - just 'The Cut' not the Cut River or anything. It used to join the Thames at Twyford but, due to flooding, a straight canal was 'Cut' to join the Thames at Bray.

The two Windmill Meadows are so vast that, from the far end, Warfield Church appears as a small triangle in the distance to the left of the white house. There is a lovely walk from the Windmill Meadows car park which it is hoped will be included in the Society's July Week of Walks.

This area will eventually be part of an incredibly large green open space linking these meadows and Frost Folly to other green fields stretching all the way to Moss End Farm and the Maidenhead Road.

The Thames Basin Heaths Partnership was helpful in writing this article and they requested that their website be included to show other areas they manage [www.tbhpartnership.org.uk](http://www.tbhpartnership.org.uk). Windmill Meadows is soon to be handed over to the Bracknell Forest's Parks and Countryside team who will manage the site in the future.

*Lynda Lunn*

## Annual Membership Subscriptions

Membership is for the calendar year with renewals due in January each year. It can be renewed at a meeting or by contacting:

10 Shaftesbury Close, Harmans Water, RG12 9PX  
or [tbfsinfo@gmail.com](mailto:tbfsinfo@gmail.com).