

Banbury Civic Society



November/December 2020

Dear Civic Society Member and Colleague/

We do hope that none of you have been seriously affected by the infections or social contact restrictions, although 'shielding' and grocery shopping on line has been very interesting.

This interim bulletin is to assure you that, and contrary to what you may have concluded, the Society is still functioning (Committee meetings by Zoom, communication between committee members by e-mail).

If any member would like to attend (and possibly participate in) the monthly Committee meeting (by Zoom , 4th Monday of the month) please get in touch with Alex Fisher:

alex_fisher45@icloud.com (nb alex underscore fisher) to receive joining instructions

We did very much miss meeting our stalwart supporters at the AGM in June - another casualty of this unwanted pandemic. On that point, it is not clear when circumstances will permit an AGM, but we will endeavour to achieve one by hook or by crook in 2021.

Whilst we have been unable to have any social events or outings for obvious reasons, we have been looking into possibilities for better times! As usual we welcome any suggestions from Members for possible events and Guest Speakers. I really would like to have speaker on where all our blue bin stuff goes??

Our finances are healthy and we have maintained our Membership! As you would have been told at the AGM our balances I will let you know we have over £2000 in the kitty!!

In the second quarter of the year the activities of the Society were somewhat subdued simply because commercial and development activity became very depressed, but from mid-summer onwards the list of weekly planning applications (as issued by Cherwell District Council) began to look like old times and our scrutiny of the content resumed to the former level.

Of course, we have not been able to address the Planning Committee so easily on issues that we consider important. This facility can be a mixed blessing, because Cherwell's procedural rules only allow 5 minutes to address the committee. Generally, this has been just enough time to put across the Society's view (not that much notice is taken of it!) but with large important applications, such as the one for Banbury 15 (the area between the Motorway and the A361 and north of Junction 11) the Society and a nearby Parish Council both wished to make points, but not always the same ones. In order not to 'tread on each others toes' but to make our respective views known, we agreed a common text for the address, which was given by that Parish Council Chairman. In the event, this worked well, but we are certain that a greater impact would have resulted had both our representatives been allowed enough time to make their own particular points.

Those of you who occasionally (or perhaps regularly) view the Cherwell DC's webcasts of Committee proceedings will have formed your own opinion of the usefulness of this mode of 'public involvement and accountability' given the Government's intent to require greater use of e-technology to 'speed-up' the planning process.

The Society has submitted a response to H.M.G.'s recent consultation titled the 'Future of Planning' and a copy can be made available to any member on request.

Another issue that has been exercising our minds is the proliferation of smallish, black on yellow direction signs to new development sites. These seem to be spreading like 'Topsy' and, given existing electronic navigator devices, are an unnecessary and unwanted addition to the amount of 'street clutter'. Perusal of past newsletters shows that the Society has been campaigning about this issue on and off for a number of years. We have been trying to get Cherwell DC to impose some limits on the number of these, but so far without success.

If you also feel the same way, please contact the Chief Executive and your local District Councillor and make your views known.

Fuller background notes on the various issues and projects which are of current interest to your committee can be found on the re-vamped website

banburycivicsociety@btck.co.uk

Finally may we remind you that your committee is composed of volunteers and also that there are vacancies. If any member wishes to take part in formulating and directing the Society's activities. PLEASE GET IN TOUCH.

The composition and contact details of the Executive Committee are shown on the website and members are encouraged to keep in touch by 'phone or e-mail for information, help and contributions. Please send your comments or queries to: Adrienne Rees Brown.

adrienne.brown@btopenworld.com

She has our database, so if you have any changes, please let her know.

May we wish you all a Very Happy and Safe Christmas. Rest assured, we will be in touch again

From us all at the Society!

