



# CHURCHGATE AREA ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER No 43 January 2013

[www.churchgateassoc.org.uk](http://www.churchgateassoc.org.uk)

The Association promotes the interests of all residents and businesses, not only in Churchgate Street, but also in the general area of all those streets that lead directly off it.

**Welcome!** New Really Useful Web-site - Judy is doing a brilliant job keeping our web-site up to date with information about CAA meetings and local happenings. There are links to specific St Edmundsbury Borough Council web pages for detailed information on the 2031 proposals. You can also find copies of the CAA Newsletters for the past year as well as the latest Newsletter – so no need to worry if the dog eats this one!

## CAA Traffic and Parking Meeting

Forty CAA members and other residents or business owners braved the snow and ice last Friday to attend an open meeting organised by the CAA on traffic and parking in the town centre and the grid.

Despite the conditions, everyone present listened with interest and many spoke up about their concerns and preferences for how to handle potentially greatly increased traffic and parking issues in the town centre and grid.

Motivated by the upcoming decisions on 6300 new homes for Bury (St Edmundsbury Vision 2031), the CAA have initiated a study on the traffic and parking issues that will arise from up to 11,000 new cars whose owners will want to shop, work and visit Bury's entertainments and dining.

Andrew Hinchley, CAA Chairman told the meeting that there was little time left to input views as St Edmundsbury state that a "Final Document" will be published in May and go to Ministers in October. Stephen Mills, the CAA's planning representative, stated that the Borough's proposals were remarkably light on the impact of the extra traffic from the 6300 new homes on the town centre and the grid - unless contingency plans were made now, then the chance would be lost to take up these options later. The CAA have engaged a Cambridge post-graduate student, Elle Ramel, to work on the traffic and planning study. Stephen Mills thanked Elle on behalf of all residents and businesses in the area, for all the hours she had put into the study. Elle introduced some potential solutions which all involved putting the pedestrian first and car second. The first option of closing the Buttermarket to traffic every day rather than just market days was generally well received. Some concerns were voiced if

restrictions on cars might make life difficult for the disabled and parents with children. Richard Summers, a grid resident and a professional town planner, pointed out that "Shared Space" is a new approach that he believed can work well when finding a balance between the needs of people and cars in an area such as the grid. He mentioned the benefit gained, given St Edmundsbury had already substantially restricted access to the town centre - Churchgate Street was now the only access and had specific traffic-slowing measures at the bottom of the street.

Andrew Speed, a grid business owner and Chairman of the town business group Bid4Bury, felt that there was plenty of time to address all these concerns in the coming years as the town expansion took shape, but the balance of views at the meeting was towards encouraging the Borough to be more pro-active in its planning.

Several residents felt that the historic core of the town would greatly benefit from removing car parking from Angel Hill and that closing Crown Street and Angel Hill to through traffic should be a long-term goal for the town. Elle Ramel emphasised the need to plan for adequate public transport. Park&Ride was raised as a potential way of reducing traffic to the centre. Andrew Hinchley said that he understood that this was felt by the Borough to be too expensive. Shuttle busses to and from all five of the new developments was proposed as another way to reduce traffic.

Overall the night was a very positive exchange of views in our neighbourhood. The CAA study will continue for another month and then the results presented to Borough Councillors and Officers on 21st February. The slides and questionnaire for the meeting are available on the CAA website.



# THE GUILDHALL PROJECT

*‘To re-introduce the public to a unique and historic building which, along with inspirational and varied collections and events with contemporary facilities, will celebrate our local and national heritage from the 13<sup>th</sup> century to the present day’*

There is evidence that influential townsmen used to meet at the Guildhall from as early as the second half of the thirteenth century. But in December 1966 the Bury St. Edmunds Borough Council met for the last time in the Guildhall. Thereafter the building, which is thought to be the oldest surviving civic building in England, fell into relative obscurity and dis-use. The Guildhall Project is about reversing that sad trend.

The Bury Chronicle relates that two Lords of the Realm came to the town in 1279 and gave final judgement in the Guildhall against some local miscreants. Over the following centuries the Guildhall served as a regular meeting place of the townsmen, was a refuge during the plague, an armoury, the Council Chamber, a library, a soup kitchen, a savings bank, and a place for auction sales, exhibitions, concerts, lectures, and drama. By the outbreak of the Second World War it was a Royal Observer Corps headquarters.

The Guildhall Feoffment, St Edmundsbury Borough and the Bury St Edmunds Heritage Trust have formed a joint venture aimed at returning the building to the public. The building structure would be interpreted imaginatively in order to be an attraction in itself. On the ground floor there would be flexible spaces and a community facility for educational and group activities. On the first floor the former Royal Observer Corps Operations Room would be presented in World War Two form. The site would be served with new catering and toilet facilities. Most of the cost will have to be found from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). The project team is raising enough funds to satisfy the HLF requirement for ‘matched funding’ and to finance a degree of preparatory work, and is now preparing a bid to the HLF which will be submitted in May. If the bid succeeds the development phase would start in September, and the project would be complete by mid-2016.

Evidence of support will be critical to a successful bid, and the ‘Friends of the Guildhall’ is a growing organisation. If you are interested in joining please email us at [fundraising1@btinternet.com](mailto:fundraising1@btinternet.com)

Mike Jackson, Trustee, The Guildhall Project

## Bury in Bloom

**‘The Grid’ contributes! Last September Bury in Bloom gave out 68 Certificates of Achievement within the grid recognising particularly attractive frontages. It is good to have such lovely properties, floral decorations and shop windows in our area and to have the efforts of maintenance and decoration acknowledged in this way.**

## Law and Order

We attend the Safer Neighbourhoods community panel and liaise with police and council officers.

Please contact us if you wish to discuss any issue of parking, traffic, anti-social behaviour or crime – no matter how minor it may seem.

[Vivien Gainsborough-Foot]

## Licensing News

There has been very little action within the area with regard to Licensing issues. The only one of note is an application from The Queens Head for a "minor variation" to its current license. The application was concerning the removal of a doorman at the end of trading in the early morning. The CAA felt this was not appropriate and registered an objection. As yet we have not heard of the outcome.

Wetherspoons continues to do well within the town and seems to be a very responsible and well run venue.

If there are any issues concerning licensed premises please do contact us and we can investigate and bring them to the attention of the Council and the relevant councillors. Your opinions and voice do matter. If we raise issues as individuals we are often dismissed. If we raise objections as an association we stand a much better chance of being heard! [David Bonnet]



If Winter is here  
can Spring be far  
behind?

## Spring Social

- a date for your diary:

**Friday 19th April**

at the Unitarian Meeting House starting at 7pm.

*Drinks will be available and we will enjoy finger food/canapes by Hatters of Hatter Street*

**Speaker: Shaun Thompson, who is a local resident living in Whiting Street, will speak to us on 'The Making of Medieval Manuscripts' detailing the production of medieval manuscripts from the original lamb skin to the finished article. A really fascinating illustrated talk.**

Shaun is a bench-trained bookbinder with 25 years' experience of traditional English book-binding. His current position is as bindery supervisor with Cambridge University Library which involves the preservation and conservation of historic manuscripts and books where being able to harness the knowledge of ancient book production and modern construction techniques results in an overall more sympathetic conclusion. This results in documents that are able to remain in usable conditions for much longer.

### **A change to the Constitution**

At the Spring Social members will be asked to agree an amendment to the constitution whereby the CAA financial year will run from 1st October each year until the 30th September the next year to coincide with the membership year. (At present the financial year runs from 1st August - 31st July).

## The Water Meadows Group

Members of the CAA may well recall the concerns that were raised at the CAA open meeting regarding Bury St Edmunds Vision 2031 and specifically the proposed development concerning the "Leg of Mutton" site to the West of Rougham Hill. Vision Policy BV21 states that "15 Ha of land to the west of Rougham Hill is allocated for outdoor recreational use and associated facilities." Aspiration 11.5 of Vision 2031 states that this site "will be protected from inappropriate development in accordance with Policy BV27 (Conserving the setting and views from the historic core). However, the area has potential to cater for informal and formal outdoor recreation with an opportunity for limited associated buildings, which may include a hotel and indoor leisure/fitness at its eastern edge, adjacent to Rougham Hill."

This policy BV21 does, we feel, completely contradict paragraph 14.9 of the Vision which states "There are also significant views into the town including those across the water meadows of the Lark and Linnet. It is vital that the important townscape and landscape setting of Bury St Edmunds is maintained." How aspiration 11.5 complies with this conservation aim we fail to comprehend!

A group of local residents and other interested groups felt so strongly about this they have formed a group called The Water Meadows Group, whose stated aim is to ensure a green lung for Bury St Edmunds. This group is chaired by Andrew Hinchley of the CAA and includes, among others, representatives of the CAA, the Suffolk Preservation Society, the Bury Society, the Suffolk Wildlife Trust, the Southgate Area Association, the Abbey Gardens Friends and the Eastgate Ward Community Association.

The Water Meadows Group feels very strongly that no development should be allowed on the "Leg of Mutton" site. Rather this site and "No Man's Meadow" adjacent to it should be preserved as green open spaces for the benefit of the town. To that end the group has written to all the St Edmundsbury Councillors asking them to support the exclusion of Policy BV21 from the final version of Vision 2031. The group is also exploring options for the improvement of this area to make it a place that the residents of Bury can visit and enjoy, now and for the future.

If you would like more information about, or would like to support the Water Meadows Group, please contact: Andrew Hinchley, Chairman: [ahinchley@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:ahinchley@yahoo.co.uk) or Stephen Mills : [caa2011@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:caa2011@hotmail.co.uk)

### **Your Committee 2012**

**Vivien Gainsborough-Foot, Vice Chair.** 69 Whiting Street, 750887

**David Bonnett, Licensing.** Bethany, Bridewell Lane, 754457

**Robin Geach, Treasurer.** 71 Whiting Street, 750458

**Andrew Hinchley, Chairman.** 14 Bridewell Lane, 762552 [ahinchley@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:ahinchley@yahoo.co.uk)

**Steven Mills, Planning.** 39 Crown Street, 754366

**Cathy Friel, Minute Secretary.** 42 Crown Street, 755549

**Judy Broadway, Membership.** 25 Guildhall Street, 724034

**Isobel Ashton, Newsletter.** 6 College Lane, 754993 [isobel.ashton@btinternet.com](mailto:isobel.ashton@btinternet.com)