



CHURCHGATE AREA ASSOCIATION

www.churchgateassoc.org.uk

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

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Chairman's Report for the Churchgate Area Association 2017-2018

The Annual General Meeting will be held on 19 October 2018 at the Unitarian Meeting House at 19.00 to which all residents and businesses are welcome

Peter Riddington, local resident and semi-retired architect with Donald Insall Associates, will give a brilliantly illustrated talk on the Restoration of Windsor Castle after the devastating fire.

CAA Committee Members First of all I should like to acknowledge my debt of gratitude to our CAA committee members who have carried out their rôles cheerfully, graciously and with vigour; sometimes grappling with difficult decisions but always deciding on what would be best for the Historic Grid. Thank you to all of you, my friends, for your support: we have had a happy time.

It has been a very successful year for the CAA as we now have over 300 members. We have a useful and powerful voice in the town.

Further details regarding the Alpha Parking Survey which took place in May 2016 I know that many of you went to the UMH to talk to Alpha Parking regarding their survey of parking in Zone D in May 2016. I was so fed up, after eighteen months of no further movement from St. Edmundsbury Borough Council or Suffolk County Council on the outcome of the Survey, that I started the ball rolling with emailing David Chenery, Safety and Speed Management Engineer at SCC in November 2017 and elicited our County Councillor, David Nettleton's, help in the matter.

It was as long ago as 14 October 2016 that David and I walked the entirety of the Medieval Grid to identify possible extra parking bays which we reported to SCC and still nothing has been carried out.

I was anxious that the Alpha Survey might be subsumed into the Town Centre Masterplan and forgotten.

Sadly, it was an uphill battle because, as so many officers have left the SCC and SEBC, no-one at either Council had heard of the Alpha Parking Survey.

At last, after **many** emails, I received the following email from David Chenery on 16 July 2018.

"By way of an update I can advise that we recently received an estimate from our in-house Professional Services (design) Team for £14,556 to carry out the design, consultation, and all matters related to progressing a Traffic Regulation Order. I have then liaised with SEBC (Darren Dixon) and SCC's Transport Policy team as to the funding arrangements – it's funded by the surpluses in the On Street Parking Account.

I'm now in a position to place an order to commence this work and then subsequently provide a timetable.

Once a designer is allocated to this scheme I suggest it would be beneficial for a start up briefing and to invite Darren Dixon from SEBC to attend.

regards

David Chenery

Safety and Speed Management Engineer"

I then contacted Darren Dixon, the Property Service Manager at West Suffolk, who wrote the following:

"We understand the frustration of the Residents Association and this is something we having been pushing the County Council to move on since the local area highways team was disbanded last year.

For clarity of understanding, the review was commissioned jointly by Suffolk County Council (SCC) and St Edmundsbury BC (as the enforcement agents for SCC). The outcomes of the review require SCC to amend the on-street traffic regulation order to allow the Borough Council to enforce the recommended changes.

To confirm, Suffolk County Council have been tasked to change the traffic regulation order to deliver:

- Converting the dual Pay and Display/Permit bays' on Churchgate Street between Whiting Street and Guildhall Street and south of Churchgate Street on Guildhall Street to Permit Only*
- The inclusion of Friars Lane in Zone D with parking controls that allows for permit and visitor parking*
- Changing the operational hours for Pay and Display and Permit Holders Only bays (Shared Use) to 8am to 8pm*
- Expand existing parking spaces enforceable by the Borough Council where safe to do so*

On this later point, the additional parking bays is matter for SCC as they are the highways authority and they would need to approve additional bays on the basis of health and safety assessment. We understand the list of possible extra bays was reviewed by Steve Boor at SCC, prior to his departure last year.

We are in the process of escalating this matter to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport for Suffolk County Council to reaffirm our concern in the delay to this project and seek clarification on the timeline for implementation.

Many thanks and best regards

Darren Dixon

Property Service Manager"

Please rest assured that your Churchgate Area Association Committee are not letting the matter rest and will be pushing on with working with the two Councils.

Illegal parking on double yellow lines. We were led to believe that Civil Enforcement of Parking carried out by the Borough Council would be in place by 2020, but our hard working Borough Councillor, Andrew Speed, gave me this quote, *“Civil Enforcement of Parking remains a priority for the Borough and Town Councils who would be pleased to assume control; and for the Police who would be pleased to lose the responsibility. However, unfortunately we are advised that the legislation which is required from central Government will take some years to arrive.”*

How many years is ‘some years?’

It was suggested that we could have a SID (a Speed Indicator Display flashing sign) in our area to slow the traffic speed but were told that there was nowhere on our roads that had a 100m clear sight line which is one of the criteria needed.

Vehicles driving through the Great Churchyard We are pleased to have arranged for the bollards by the Norman Tower to be locked by padlocks and the key kept by the Head Verger of the Cathedral: this has prevented motorists using the entry by the Tower as a rat run through to the ex-magistrates court.

Inconsiderate parking on pavements during school pick-up time I have an appointment to see Andrew Hammond, the new head of the Guildhall Feoffment School, regarding the inconsiderate parking of some parents at pick-up time. These parents park on the pavements forcing push-chairs onto the road; other parents arrive early at the school and inconsiderately leave their engines running with the resulting fumes seeping into nearby houses. This is intolerable for the occupants of the houses. The former chairman of the CAA, Andrew Hinchley, tells me that, when the plans for the new building at the Feoffment were being considered, Suffolk County Council and the school were legally responsible for producing a school run policy. I do not think this was ever finalised and I need to discuss this with Mr. Hammond.

I will also make an appointment to see the head of St. Edmunds School for the same reasons.

Pavements The Borough Council are in negotiation with the County Council to set up a ring-fenced Town Council budget to repair our pavements (which I am sure you all agree are in desperate need of attention). SCC is reluctant to hand over responsibility but the County Council do accept the need for the work to be carried out and it is hoped that this may happen by the Spring. Not good news, I know, after all these many months of waiting.

CCTV cameras The Borough Council are reluctant to expand the current network as several Town areas/wards are calling for better coverage. In order to assist with the final decision-making, a residents' survey will be issued shortly.

Changes to the policing of the town Suffolk Police have introduced 9 new rôles for Police Officers within the force to work with our local communities. This will be done through face to face meetings as well as by effectively using social media, such as Twitter and Facebook, to promote events and also the work being carried out by the local Safer Neighbourhood Team. The aim of this rôle is to increase the engagement that the police have in our local community.

PC Paul Fox will be covering the Bury St Edmunds area, including the Historic Grid. He has served as a Police Officer in this area for the last 28 years and therefore has a good knowledge of the policing area.

His new rôle is part of Vision 2025. The changes to the Police Service include the loss of PCSOs. They have been reduced from 13 to 3. The SNT will comprise 12 PCs, 3 PCSOs, an Engagement Officer and a Link Officer. The Town Council funded PCSO will be replaced. Probably there will be 2 PCSOs dealing with parking. The changes will happen from 29th October.

If you have any issues you would like to discuss with Paul please contact him on the following email address: ceoburystedmunds@suffolk.pnn.police.uk

The Guildhall We are delighted that The Guildhall has been successfully renovated and that its now beautiful Court Room and Ballroom are again open to the public. There is a new kitchen and café as well as the fascinating room that was set up in 1938 for use during WW2 and which became the Royal Observer Corps Centre, protecting Suffolk and relaying vital messages to RAF crews at local air bases. It is the only surviving ROC centre in the country and resonates with the buzz and tension of that dramatic era.

The Guildhall rooms are available for private hire and will complement the already existing attractions in the town. It is open to the general public on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 10am-4pm and on Sunday 11am-4pm.

The Guildhall is very short of helping hands to run the building and the management is actively seeking more volunteers. On a normal day they need at least 4 volunteers on site morning and afternoon (9:45am-1:15pm and 12:45pm-4:15pm) and Sundays (10:45am-1:15pm and 12:45pm-4:15pm). There needs to be one person to welcome on reception, a general steward on the ground floor who can also support reception and serve teas, an upstairs steward for the WWII room and Robing Room and someone who can oversee and interpret the gardens and Tudor Kitchen (where there are often practical craft activities on the go).

Nearly Festival The peace and quiet of some of our residents was shattered by the noise generated by the Nearly Festival held in the Abbey Gardens on 23/24 June this year. Cllr Jo Rayner, Cabinet Member of St. Edmundsbury Borough Council for Leisure and Culture, will attend our AGM to discuss the matter with attendees.

Licensing Cumulative Impact Policies were introduced as a tool for licensing authorities to limit the growth of licensed premises in a problem area. There has been a CIP in our area for over 3 years and it was due for renewal. The CAA Licensing Officer, Cathy Friel, spoke on our behalf at the Licensing Committee hearing last October and the Committee recommended the continuation of the CIP in the Churchgate Area and, at the same time, recommended it for adoption in the Town Centre.

We are delighted that award-winning Bury St Edmunds chef, Ben Hutton from Ben's restaurant in Churchgate Street, has taken over the former Queens Head pub, and reopened it. He said that he wanted to return it to its former glory: we wish him well.

Planning Although not in our area, we applied to Historic England to add the **Old Magistrates Court** to the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest so that the development is carried out sympathetically. On 18 September planners from Historic England sent us a Consultation Report which sets out the factual information upon which they will base their recommendation to the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. Follow the link below to download a copy of the consultation report.
<http://services.historicengland.org.uk/webfiles/GetFiles.aspx?av=FFE784F1-E962-4320-84FE-1E4D8708B241&cn=6A1A1E38-3779-4215-92CB-599ABD9B4412>

There were many concerns over the application to build a new house on the site of **27 College Street**. Christine Leveson, the Conservation Officer, has recommended refusal.

Greene Mews We have been pleased this year to extend our area to include the residents of Greene Mews, the new development behind the old Peatlings Wine Shop. I always like to 'bring people into the party' so was concerned that the residents of Greene Mews were a little bit out on a limb with no obvious residents' association to which to belong. I am pleased to say that the residents have reciprocated happily and are now part of our membership.

Abbeygate Cinema Jonathan, the cinema manager, tells us that the cinema has received permission to enlarge the premises into the Bingo Hall next door. This work is proceeding slowly as asbestos has had to be removed at great cost but, when completed, there will be two access points for booking tickets and reserving meals which will be a great improvement.

Litter This is of increasing concern to me and to many of us although we do try and pick up litter in the Grid whenever we see it. We are hoping to start a litter picking team with The Guildhall who are keen to join in.

As anyone who has walked through the Great Churchyard will know, there were always five litter bins in this area. The Borough Council took three bins away which resulted in unsightly litter being scattered throughout the churchyard. But, thanks to Alan Bond, an indefatigable member of the CAA committee, one more bin has been put back near the benches in the middle of the churchyard which we hope will result in a more pleasant space for everyone.

I have been in touch with Andrew Harvey who is in charge of Waste Management at West Suffolk Council regarding the removal of the bin outside St. Mary's which means that there are no bins in Crown Street. The Town Council gave West Suffolk £4000 for new bins across the town centre but, as the bins cost £930 each, this money did not go very far. I cannot see that there will be much improvement in the number of bins until the financial situation improves.

Socials There have been two very well attended Socials - one last October when the speaker was Rory O'Brien, a Front of House Manager at the Theatre Royal, who gave a talk on the history of the Theatre with many amusing stories; and in April when we were well entertained by Charlie Haylock with his Suffolk Stories. Our Socials are an important part of life in The Grid as it gives all our residents and businesses a chance to get to know each other.

I am very much looking forward to another happy year with the CAA.

Vivien Gainsborough Foot
October 2018