

# CHURCHGATE AREA ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER No 69

Spring 2021

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

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## Does Air Quality Matter?

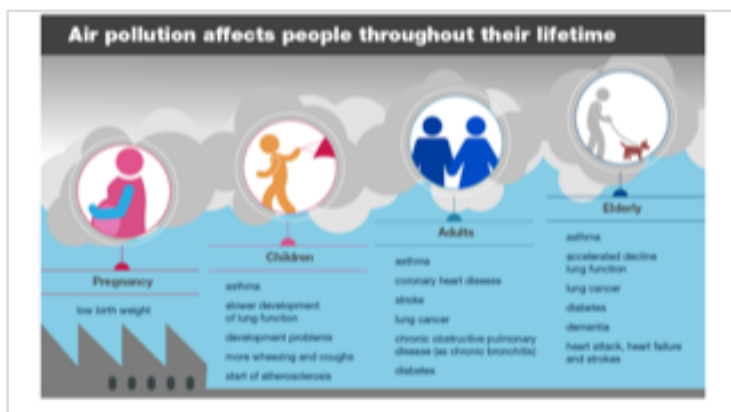
Why should we be interested in air quality? Because it affects our health. In recent years, our knowledge has increased about the effect of air pollution on health.

When the current Covid lockdown ends, hopefully by 21 June, we may be in for a shock. After the town returns to the “busyness” that we saw before Covid, the most noticeable change, apart from more people, could be an increase in pollution causing a reduction in air quality.

This article is based on the information contained in the HMG Policy Paper – Air Quality: Explaining Air Pollution – at a glance, dated 14 Jan 19. It then considers briefly what we could do. It also contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.

**What is air quality?** Air quality is the term used to describe how polluted is the air we breathe. When air quality is poor, pollutants in the air may be hazardous to people, particularly those with lung or heart conditions and children.

**What do we want?** Clean air is a basic requirement of a healthy environment for us all to live in, work, and bring up families. Consequently, we should all try to reduce or eliminate the pollutants that affect the air we breathe.



**What are the pollutants?** There are many pollutants but those that we, in the town, are most likely to meet, are wood burning, particulate matter and nitrogen oxides:

**Particulate matter** is everything in the air that isn't gas. This includes natural

sources like pollen but also includes human made sources like smoke and dust from vehicle exhausts, brakes and tyres. Particulates can get into the lungs and blood and be transported around the body, lodging in the heart, brain and other organs.

**Nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>2</sub>)** are a group of gases that are mainly created from burning fossil fuels. Road vehicles contribute about 80% of NO<sub>2</sub> pollution. It is the government's aim to reduce emissions of nitrogen oxides by 73% (from the 2005 baseline) by 2030. This is a challenge and there is an air quality plan for nitrogen dioxide, setting out how these limits will be met in the shortest possible time by phasing out the use of petrol and diesel and promoting electric vehicles.

**Wood and coal burning** releases harmful pollutants straight into the home as well as into the air outside. Domestic burning is the UK's largest source of particulate matter air pollution. Reducing how much you burn improves air quality for you and your neighbours. West Suffolk does not have a smoke control area.

### **How to reduce your exposure to air pollution**

There are small changes you can make today which will reduce your exposure to air pollution. These include:

- not using your car as often for short journeys - walk or cycle instead – the health benefits far outweigh the risks of roadside pollution and air quality inside a car can be worse than outside
- not idling - turning off your car engine when you park or are waiting in traffic
- opening your windows when you clean, do DIY, smoke or do other activities that release pollutants directly into your home
- using smokeless fuel or dry wood
- staying away from traffic if you're walking or cycling (like walking on the side of the pavement furthest from the road, using the quieter roads and keeping back when waiting to cross the road)

### **What could be done in the Town and Historic Core area?**

Improving Air Quality is one of the benefits of continued work in the following areas:

**Reducing traffic and car usage in the town centre.** The introduction of park and ride would reduce town centre traffic allowing imaginative use of the town centre. Cross town shortcuts could be removed, and pedestrianised areas and cycle lanes increased.

**Park and ride.** Create park and ride sites and offer electric coaches or small vehicles to move people around the town. Towns of a similar size and history to Bury St Edmunds, such as Salisbury and Shrewsbury, operate successful park and ride schemes. This would also allow more parking for people living in the area. (currently in Zone D 4 permits are issued for every available parking space).

**Pedestrianisation.** A reduction in town centre traffic could lead to imaginative uses of our streets. This has been done successfully in Shrewsbury, but not yet in Salisbury and the challenges for businesses would need to be resolved.

**Speed limits.** The town historic core is a 20mph speed Zone. The police have no intention to enforce the limit. Consequently, other means, such as street furniture and chicanes, in addition to reducing traffic, are needed to encourage lower speeds. This would also reduce air pollution as vehicles produce more particulates with increasing speeds and braking.

**Promoting Anti-idling.** Turning off vehicle engines when stationary would reduce pollution. This should become a normal action, like wearing a seat belt. Idling cars can have a significant localised effect on air quality, especially around schools, care homes and train crossings. Local authorities can issue fixed penalty notices to drivers who leave their engines running and refuse to switch them off when asked to do so.

**Electric vehicles.** The government is looking to electric vehicles (EVs) to reduce pollution. This may happen but polluting petrol-powered vehicles will remain for many years. Exhaust pollutants will reduce with EVs but not brake and tyre particulates, so reducing car usage is still important.

*CF and GH*

## A Brilliant Effort

On a cold wet day just before Christmas Richard Smith from Whiting Street and Rachel Wood from Chevington gamely played Christmas carols on their violins all day in Angel Hill in aid of St. Nicholas Hospice. Angel Hill is very special at Christmas time with the decorated tree and Richard and Rachel's music drifted delightfully through the area and attracted quite a crowd of socially distanced on-lookers. They were joined by members of the Irving

Stage Company, led by Jeremy Warbrick, also of Whiting Street. They all made a goodly, cheerful sound which the Irving Stage Company hope to recreate this year (God willing) when they are on the stage of the Theatre Royal to perform Stephen Sondheim's hit musical 'Company' directed by Jeremy.

As rain increased the players continued to play under the shelter of the beautiful Abbey gatehouse; **but, was it worth it?**

**Certainly it was, as they raised nearly £900 for the hospice - a praiseworthy effort indeed.**

VGF



## Stephen Sondheim's *Company* coming to the Theatre Royal

The Irving Stage Company's production of Chicago was sadly cancelled last February - a big blow for all involved, having been in rehearsal for five months, and only a fortnight before the show was due to open.

Stephen Sondheim's Tony Award-winning musical comedy *Company* was initially scheduled as Irving's autumn show for 2020. "Luckily, we were able to get the performing rights extended into 2021", says director and Whiting Street resident Jeremy Warbrick, "so at Christmas-time, we pressed ahead and cast it!".

For the first time in Irving's history, there were no auditions for the fourteen roles; members were simply invited to express their interest in being part of the show. Jeremy, along with Musical Director Nicola Brazier, then cast the show based on their existing knowledge of the applicants' skills and vocal range.

"It was a fascinating experience." says Jeremy. "Having auditioned for shows myself in the

past, I was glad to release our members from the terrors of walking into the audition room! But actually that made it very challenging to put the right team together for this amazing but demanding show. I'm really thrilled with the amazing line-up we've created".

Rehearsals are being conducted over Zoom twice a week, with Nicola providing the performers with digital files of the piano accompaniments so they can sing-along from home.

According to Jeremy, "It's actually been a very refreshing way of doing things, enabling us to dive into the detail of each scene without driving over to Barrow to sit in a cold village hall!".

The Irving Committee is in discussion with the Theatre Royal to confirm the show-dates which will be sometime during this summer, 2021. "But don't worry" says Jeremy "I'll be making sure our Churchgate residents know all about it!"

Jeremy Warbrick

## 11 High Baxter Street

High Baxter Street was a part of the Norman layout of the town, created by Abbot Baldwin in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century. So the current No 11 is almost certainly not the first building on the site. It is likely that by the late medieval period the street was built up with buildings and probably

with their first floors cantilevering over the street.

By the late 15<sup>th</sup> C the current house was built apparently always with a first floor and probably two rooms on the ground floor. High Baxter Street would have been occupied by people who were reasonably well off and probably tradespeople or craftsmen, ideally located adjacent to the market square, but also likely to trade from their premises.

By the late 19<sup>th</sup> C the street buildings would have probably been either rebuilt or, as in the





case of No 11, heavily remodelled and extended to accommodate workshops and service buildings supporting the local population and businesses.

The house was considerably altered in the late 16<sup>th</sup>/early 17<sup>th</sup> Century when it was remodelled with the attic converted to habitable accommodation. It was further altered in the later 18<sup>th</sup>/ early 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

According to the Rate Books and Census Returns between 1841 and 1891 the house was occupied firstly by the Down family and then by the Weltons who seem to have all worked from the location as Cabinet Makers, Farriers and Blacksmiths. It is not known if their forge was on the site of the house, but this could explain why, until the later 20<sup>th</sup> C there was a passage from the front to the rear.

By the late 1960s High Baxter Street had been

of the house fitting it out with modern joinery and finishes.

In terms of the Town Centre Conservation Area and High Baxter Street in particular the building is of major significance. It is the last remnant of what had been an almost continuous terrace of buildings from the late middle ages onwards until mass clearance of the 1960s. This is the last historic building in the street and a reminder of the very mixed nature of buildings and their uses in the town centre from the very earliest days right up to modern times. That it survived the 1960's clearances is something of a miracle and that too makes it significant.

The building itself is a palimpsest. It is not an architectural statement of any significant quality but, rather, it is an extremely old structure which exhibits its history to those who are prepared to study it. It is clearly a very old building; it needs further interest to



largely demolished and the historic buildings all removed except No 11. 1970 was the year that the house was bought by the Suffolk Hotel, who used the house for staff accommodation. They undertook thoroughgoing 'modernisation'

discover its most special qualities. It has no particular historic interest, excepting of course tells a long and complicated historical story, but special interest it certainly has:

- It has a core and significant historical fabric and plan form dating from the late 15<sup>th</sup> Century.
- The building was changed significantly in the late 16<sup>th</sup> or early 17<sup>th</sup> Century when the attic was converted, and staircases and chimney stacks were added and much of this fabric survives.
- In the late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries there was further

remodelling and the first floor layout still survives from this period.

Work started to restore the house for residential use in the autumn of 2020 with Seamans as contactor and Whitworths as architects and despite Covid and other issues progress is being made. We had hoped to complete the external works by the end of February, and many will have seen these have been progressing, but the weather has rather been against us and, in addition, we have encountered challenges, but we have made interesting discoveries. One of the most remarkable findings has been the sheer quantity of 15<sup>th</sup> C fabric that survives. While the ground floor exterior is almost completely rebuilt the first-floor frameworks and wattle and daub is largely from the earliest days. This is, of course, all being retained. Otherwise, the house is being made as energy efficient as possible while its significance is better revealed.

One issue has been the north chimney which probably has its origins in the late 16<sup>th</sup>C, when major remodelling was carried out and the chimney built as a shared element between No 11 and the house to the north. The demolition of the house on the site of what is now the M+S car park saw the chimney left with a thick coating of cement render. Alas this coating hid a multitude of structural issues and has, therefore, had to be rebuilt reusing the salvaged bricks and Abbey Stone elements. As a result our costs have somewhat increased. We have been lucky to get loans from the Architectural Heritage fund, and indeed from our members too, which are funding the works. But if others would be interested in helping out with further loans, or indeed looking to move into a refurbished historic house, please do get in touch. :

*Peter Riddington*

## **Heating Listed Buildings in a Carbon Neutral World**

74% of District, County, Unitary & Metropolitan Councils in the United Kingdom have declared a 'Climate Emergency', committing them to reach Carbon Net Zero by 2030. That being the case, what is their plan to ensure their Listed Buildings can continue to be heated affordably to habitable levels as we approach Carbon Neutrality? To set this in context, Bath and North East Somerset & Council is one of the Authorities which has declared such a Climate Emergency. The figure for Listed Buildings in Bath is 'over 5000', according to the Council website. Most of those are Georgian and many are divided into flats, so the figure for Georgian homes in Bath needing to be heated in a green way is certainly a lot higher. Clearly, they cannot be ignored, especially as, together, they constitute most of the World Heritage Site which it is everyone's duty to preserve and which thousands of visitors come

to see every year. Other Local Authorities will have different numbers of Listed Buildings, but a solution has to be found for all of them.

Most homes in UK are heated by natural gas, which is largely Methane, and its exhaust has a high proportion of Carbon Dioxide. Around 15% of greenhouse gases in UK are attributable to home heating; so, what's to be done? Unfortunately, 'Greener' ways of heating a home are difficult or impossible in a historic house.

How do we solve this dilemma? Recognizing that conservation authorities have a problem here, an innovative and practical approach drawn from the technical media is to make gas-fired heating 'Greener' by addition of hydrogen. Apparently, up to 30% enrichment can be achieved without modification of existing gas boilers: not a perfect solution but better than at

present, because a higher proportion of the exhaust is water (and thus less carbon). The hydrogen can be generated in several ways, including 'reforming' of natural gas and capture of the carbon deposited.

### **Parking on pavements could become illegal in biggest rule change for drivers in years**

The Government is looking at plans that could lead to many changes. A Consultation has taken place that could lead to the "biggest shift" for drivers in a generation.

Discussions are in their final stages, amid split opinion about whether making pavement parking illegal would be welcome or not.



A summary of the evidence is expected by the end of February and any new rules or law changes could also be set out by then, with proposals possibly introduced by the end of 2021. The next few months could determine where millions of Britons are allowed to park, marking the biggest shift in parking patterns for a generation.

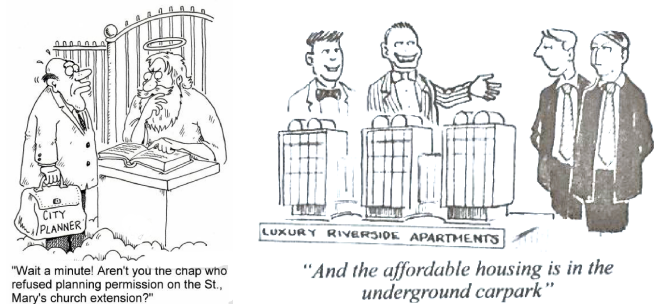
Thousands of drivers would face heavy charges for simply stopping their vehicles under such a plan.

The Department for Transport (DfT) proposals say one advantage of a nationwide ban would be in establishing a "general rule" that drivers could follow.

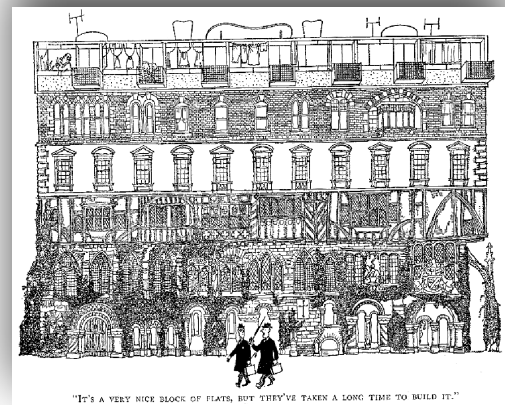
Under one possibility, traffic signs and bay markings would show drivers where pavement parking was still allowed and local authorities would be able to introduce some exemptions. However, the report warned the update would

be the "most significant and expensive change" to parking law in decades.

The DfT warns a national ban would also require a "significant implementation period" which could be "time-consuming". A national ban could also be difficult in sensitive areas such as historic towns and villages.



And finally...



### **It's how you tell 'em**

Those of us who have been fortunate enough to walk along Church Walks cannot have helped but chortle at the contents of the noticeboard outside Number 26. Recently Simon and Val have been posting jokes on their notice board where once there were fundraising announcements for the charities that they supported. As



Simon says  
 “There are quite a few elderly people living on their own and they get isolated. Our board hopefully gets them out in the fresh air and they can have a chuckle at the jokes.” Simon still wants more additions to the board and, in particular, would like any “knock, knock” jokes for children from Guildhall Feoffment Primary School to see.



Well, your CAA Committee would like to rise to this seasonal challenge:

Knock, knock  
 Who's there?  
 Scold  
 Scold who?  
 Scold outside, let me in

But not before Boris lets you, of course.

## **CHARITY TABLE IN CHURCH WALKS**

Most members of the CAA will at some point have walked through the ‘snicket’ or ‘ginnel’ which links College Street to Bridewell Lane known as Church Walks. Halfway through the Walks is a communal garden with an outstanding view of the Cathedral and a myriad of rooftops. Situated in the garden is a small table selling garden produce, jams, chutneys, marmalade etc. The sale of these supports local charities namely the Gatehouse Foodbank, Vineyard Storehouse, Women’s Refuge, Bury Drop In, St. Nicholas Hospice and the Samaritans etc. not forgetting the East Anglian Air Ambulance and Suffolk Accident Rescue Service. The charity table has been in operation

since 2017 and has raised over £8,000 during that time.

Raising money for charities in Church Walks began in 2001 with Valerie and Simon Harding setting up Church Walks Charities which over a period of 16 years made over £100,000. They sold mostly plants and local honey, together with fresh produce from Raingate allotments. In 2017 they decided they needed a well earned rest and closed the charity down. It seemed a shame not to continue selling produce from the allotments in order to help local charities, and consequently it was decided that we set up a small table for this purpose.



Permission to display a table in the communal garden was obtained and it has become a daily feature, weather permitting. To boost funds, especially when there is little produce from the allotments over the winter months, a local resident who has a



passion for jam, marmalade and chutney making, continually supplies the table with an abundance of products. An allotment holder also supplies jams and marmalade, packets of seeds and a good supply of young vegetable plants in spring and summer.

The table attracts plenty of attention and during school times when children are returning home with their parents, they are often seen running up to the table and shouting out what is for sale.

Funds for struggling charities especially at this time of the pandemic have been gratefully received with receipts and letters of thanks which are displayed in the notice board along Church Walks.

Sincere thanks to the allotment holders for their generous contributions of fresh produce, and to the ladies who make jam etc. and finally to all who buy from the table bringing help to those in need  
*Carol C. Marsh*

## Let's do it!

If you go down to the woods today, you're sure of a big surprise.....No, not a Teddy Bear's Picnic but litter, litter everywhere. In our many walks during Lockdown I am sure we have all seen bottles, cans, sandwich cartons and discarded masks spoiling our beautiful countryside.

I have been taking a litter picker with me and a plastic bag, and my kind friends who accompany me will vouch that we have picked up many bagfuls.

### So, Let's do it! Let's pick it up!

To obtain your litter picker and accoutrements go to:

[www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/lwyl/arrangelitterpick.cfm](http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/lwyl/arrangelitterpick.cfm)

Fill in the application form

Click on His Vis Jacket, Litter Picker, Approved waste sacks or Approved recycling sacks – or whichever piece of equipment you would like and the council will give them to you for nothing.



**It's a steal!**

VGf

## **YOUR COMMITTEE 2021/2022**

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**BACS:** Email your order and confirmation of BACS payment date to [treasurer@burysociety.com](mailto:treasurer@burysociety.com). Bank details: Barclays Bank, Account name: Bury Society Bury in Bloom, Sort Code: 20-16-12, Account No: 30226769.

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