



CHURCHGATE AREA ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER No 70

AUTUMN 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.churchgateas-soc.org.uk

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EDITOR: Nick Law. For future articles, comments, etc. please contact nicklaw1@hotmail.com

The AGM will be held on Thursday 28 October 2021 at 19.00 in the Unitarian Meeting House

We have, living in the Grid, a very talented young man, Shaun Thompson, who is Conservation and Collection Care Manager for Cambridge University Library. Shaun has research interests in early book structures, materials and the historic techniques used to produce them.

After the main business of the AGM, Shaun will give us a fascinating presentation and video on the Conservation and Rebinding of a 10th Century Manuscript from Salisbury Cathedral Library



Wine and Canapés will be served after the meeting

If you have anything that you particularly wish to discuss at the AGM please email Vivien on vgf.masongill@gmail.com or telephone **01284 750887** so that we can include your observations

Plans to hold a Street Party during the summer in 2022

The Churchgate Area Association is planning to hold a Street Party in Whiting Street South during the summer of 2022 for all those living in the Grid to celebrate the 70th Anniversary of the Queen's reign and the end of Lockdown.

This is just an exploratory few lines to gauge people's reactions to the idea. Please could you let me know if you would be happy to attend such a gathering next year by emailing me on: vgf.masongill@gmail.com.
Vivien Gainsborough Foot

Membership Reminder: now £5 per person

Our membership year will start again on 1st October and we hope all our present members will want to renew. If you would like to pay on or before the AGM on 28th October it would be very much appreciated. Membership is only £5 per person for a year and entitles you to attend our very popular social evening in April and the AGM, both with interesting speakers and free refreshments. It is very good value. And the more members we have the more power the CAA can exert when making representations on behalf of residents and businesses to, for example, the local councils.

If you already pay by standing order there is no need to change anything, so long as you have already amended your standing order to £5 from the earlier subscription fee of £3

You may pay by direct bank transfer (ask me for bank details), cash or cheque (payable to Churchgate Area Association) to the Membership Secretary, Judy Broadway, 68 Whiting Street, IP33 1NR. If you prefer to set up a new standing order I have forms available, just telephone 01284 724034 or email caainfo@btinternet.com

Many thanks in advance.

JB

Meet Bury St Edmunds Community Engagement Officer Lee Andrews-Pearce



We met with Lee earlier this year shortly after his appointment and he kindly agreed to respond to our questions:

Q: How would you summarise your role of Community Engagement Officer?

A: I am a link between the police and the community, whether that be for crime prevention, supporting the watch schemes, i.e. Neighbourhood Watch & Community Speed Watch and developing good community relations by working with various groups

within the community. This could be Youth Groups such as Scouts, Guides and Army Cadets etc to promote policing and good citizenship or hard-to-reach groups in our community such as attending the Coffee Caravan or Meet up Mondays to reach the older community, attending places of worship to meet people of faith in the community or going along to community groups focussing on LGBT+ or BAME.

Q: What skills & knowledge do you need in your role?

A: A genuine passion for engagement, a good level of adaptable communication skills, listening whilst also being able to put my point across.

Q: What Area do you cover?

A: The Bury St Edmunds Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) area consists of 53 parishes and 9 town wards. Along with the main town of Bury St Edmunds the area covers a mixture of urban and rural communities all situated within the catchment of West Suffolk Council. The area borders Forest Heath District to the west,

Babergh District to the south, Mid-Suffolk District to the east and Norfolk's Breckland District Council to the north.

Q: How & why should the public contact you?

A: At any engagement event, setting a Community Speed Watch or getting involved in or working with the Constabulary. If someone needs signposting to any element of

email is

CEOburystedmunds@suffolk.pnn.police.uk

Tel: [01284 774169](tel:01284774169)

Q: How do you engage with the public?

A: Through social media, twitter and Facebook and by being out in the community at events and carrying out foot and mobile patrol in the community.

Q: How long have you been in the Police?

A: 18 years now.

Q: What is your favourite part of your job?

A: Meeting a wide variety of people and being able to make a difference to their lives, even in a small way.

Q: What is your least favourite part of your job?

A: Witnessing the personal loss, suffering and tragedy people experience which is made all the more difficult when it involves a child or young person.

Q: What benefits derive from community policing?

A: Being able develop and maintain trust between the police and the public to reduce the fear of crime, jointly solving community problems and adding to policing legitimacy.

Q: How can residents in The Churchgate Area Association help you?

A: Reporting crime and ASB promptly so they can be dealt with effectively and keeping an eye on activity that might not happen in the presence of a uniform officer. Providing a cup of coffee and biscuit if seen on foot patrol.

Q: How do you like to spend your spare time?

A: I am a keen, but not competent gardener, I like swimming, kayaking and reading books made of paper, not on screens. I enjoy spending time with family when not on duty.

Q: Is there an interesting fact about you that may surprise those that don't know you?

A: I hold a 1 dan (black belt) in the Japanese art of Jodo - using a short stay. RE-W

Meet one of our new Councillors

Over a nice cup of tea it was a pleasure to meet and chat with one of our new Councillors, Julia Wakelam. She was elected to our Abbeygate ward in May this year and is the only Green Party councillor on West Suffolk Council. I started out by asking her how easy it is to be a councillor with very green credentials on a council that is perhaps not noted for its willingness to accept change. A wry grin preceded the measured response that she had been a Green Party (and before that Ecology Party) Councillor in Bury for many years. In the early days there were definitely climate change deniers on the council. What is more, they were proud of it. Now the whole issue of

conservation and ecology is treated in a way as if it had been invented by West Suffolk Council.

I went on to ask Julia about her priorities as a Councillor in the Abbeygate ward. The issue of traffic was, perhaps, her predictable response. She is determined that Civil Parking Enforcement Officers should be allowed to pursue drivers who leave their engines idling thus adding to the poor air quality in the Grid. However, she did admit that this is an issue that will not be resolved overnight. She would like to see bus companies prevent their drivers from leaving engines running when in town. Another of her long term aims has been to see

delivery lorry drivers banned from the centre of town and deliveries to be made by a local shuttle service. She mentioned her desire to push for a park-and-ride electric bus service to help relieve congestion and pollution in the town centre.

Again, on the town centre front, Julia would like to see the town centre Master Plan sorted out after the pandemic. The pedestrianisation of Cornhill and Abbeygate to allow more permanent outdoor eating facilities. In addition, the planting of many more trees in the centre to help offset the carbon impact of traffic.

Finally, I asked Julia for her advice on someone wishing to consider becoming a Councillor. After a pause, she said that anyone considering such a course needs an ethos of public service and....a great deal of patience. She ended our discussion by saying “if you moan, do something about it”. She would dearly like to hear from anyone in Abbeygate Ward who has a moan. Her email address is julia.wakelam@westsuffolk.gov.uk
NL

The New West Suffolk Hospital

At long last we are to get a new hospital. The present hospital, finished in 1974, was designed to last 30 years. The concrete forming the walls and ceilings is crumbling.... Our need for a new hospital was agreed by the government in 2020 and as part of the Health Infrastructure Plan, West Suffolk was confirmed as one of 40 new hospitals to be built across the country by 2030.

A number of different sites have been considered and the “preferred site” was finally agreed in December 2020 – Hardwick Manor. This is the land immediately behind the existing hospital, land which, providentially, the

Trust was able to buy a year ago, it will effectively double the size of the existing hospital site. This means that several newly built buildings like the education centre, the new staff accommodation and Day Surgery Unit can be retained, as can existing car parks. It is still early days.– Planning permission is not expected before early 2022. The Foundation Trust are keen to have comments and feedback from local residents. You can write to them at: The Future Systems Team, Quince House level 2, West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust, Hardwick Lane, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 2QZ, or email: futuresystemprogramme@wsh.nhs.uk or on their website: www.wsh.nhs.uk/new-health-care-facility.
BJ

Renovation Project – Crown Street

Michael and Estelle Watson bought their new home at No. 4 Crown Street at the end of 2012, and they knew that major renovation works would be required before they could move in.

The property was Grade II Listed and had been built in the latter part of the 16th Century. Naturally, the original structure and character of the house could not be altered, but there was a problem with the kitchen – a single storey 19th Century add-on which had no redeeming features at all.

The Conservation Officer’s view was that this part of the house had no historic importance and that plans for replacement of the rear ground floor rooms with a contemporary redesign would be possible.

Prior to the construction of the 12th Century Precinct Wall, and also later, a number of properties and tenements had been built on the east



Prior to the construction of the 12th Century Precinct Wall, and also later, a number of properties and tenements had been built on the eastern side of Crown Street and some are believed to have housed Glovers, Pursers, and Silversmiths which would have catered for the needs of visiting pilgrims as well as wealthy locals. The current house, probably built around 1560 right up against the Precinct Wall was, therefore, by no means the first building to occupy the site.

Following the Dissolution and during the huge upheavals in the years following, some individuals had acquired ownership of pieces of land on the inside the Precinct Wall. How they achieved this is anyone's guess, but it is thought that these purchases had all taken place before 1798, because at that point, ownership of The Great Cemetery, as it was then known, was transferred to the Borough by a Conveyance. In subsequent years owners of the Crown Street property bought some of this acquired land including outbuildings and this eventually enabled the building of a kitchen and creation of a small garden at the back of the house.

This broad history is relevant to what happened next. Perhaps it was naïve to expect that the kitchen might have been built with the benefit of foundations, and investigations soon revealed that there were none - just a 3 inch thick concrete slab. Removal of a small amount

of the slab revealed part of a human skull and a number of loose bones.

The Police and Forensic specialists were called but within 48 hours had concluded that the human remains were far too old to warrant investigation.

An archaeological project had to be in place, and it was arranged for this to be undertaken by Archaeological Solutions of Bury St Edmunds and overseen by Suffolk County Council Archaeology. Completion of the Archaeology Project and approval of the findings would form part of the overall Planning Consents.

Removal of the whole kitchen floor subsequently revealed 24 graves containing 19 skeletons. One grave was empty whilst four more contained remains of a large number of individuals and these are, in effect, charnel pits containing the remains of skeletons disturbed during the digging of later graves. Within the charnel pits there were 34 skulls.



The graves are all Medieval and comprised members of the lay community of St James' and St Mary's Churches.

Of the 19 burials, the sex of each individual was established as well as the approximate age at death and an analysis of dental issues, congenital diseases, and acquired injuries. There was no evidence of coffined burials or shrouds, nor grave goods. The dead seem to have been just buried in the soil.

It was customary in Medieval times to bury children alongside an adult. Those aged under 18 years old comprised 16% of burials – well under the Medieval norm of 20-30%. The male/female split was 50:50 with the majority dying between the ages of 45 and 55. Males were between 5'6" and 6'1" tall and females were between 5'2" and 5'7". A few of the skeletons had little or no injuries indicative of high status though most other males had spinal and other injuries indicative of heavy manual work. One particular condition was found in females, that of "Weavers Bottom" which is understood to be the result of spending a substantial part of one's life on a low stool.

Excavation of the ground external to the Precinct Wall found traces of the earlier buildings on the site, including evidence of domestic occupation and a cellar and oven, alongside pottery used in food preparation. Parts of decorated floor tiles were also found and these have been left with the Watsons for safekeeping. These are most likely to have originated in important rooms in the Abbey or alternatively, the renovation of St Mary's Church (1425-1435), or the rebuilding work necessary following the "Great Riot" in 1327 may be the source. We will never know. What we do know however is that Clipsham stone from the Abbey has been used in the construction of the large fireplace in the Dining Hall.



Once the Archaeology project was over, heavy machinery was brought in and the Renovation project could proceed. Around 22 months after the purchase, the Watsons moved in. Later they commissioned the re-design of the courtyard garden.



Note: If any CAA member would like to read the full Archaeology Report, please contact Michael Watson by email (michael.watson@outlook.com). The PDF including illustrations is approx. 3.3MB.

Air Quality and Climate Change – my problem?

I started writing this following a short time away in deepest mid-Shropshire, close to the Welsh border. The weather was glorious and the countryside green and lush. The freshness could almost be smelt and felt.

Returning to Bury St Edmunds was a pleasure, but just maybe the very freshness of Shropshire

was missing. Not that our air is that bad, but... of course, we do have more vehicles in this ancient town than in the mid-Shropshire countryside. That set me to considering (and catching up with) where we were with our hopes to improve the air quality in the town.

The CAA has been concentrating on two areas:

anti-idling and speed reduction. This piece concentrates on anti-idling.

We had been hoping for progress on reducing unnecessary vehicle engine idling, following our article in the BFP about the impact of emissions. And we had a 60 second video produced to support our case which remains available on the CAA Facebook page. Ideally, all drivers who are stopping for more than a couple of minutes should turn off their engine. Sadly, this is not always the habit. All too often when vehicles are seen to be idling, the driver is either eating a takeaway meal, texting, or telephoning. Sometimes – they are just waiting. We can only request that drivers consider turning off their engines. Not surprisingly, perhaps, the request is not usually welcomed, received with understanding, or complied with.

There is no realistic way that anti-idling can be imposed. What we are left with is continued education about the harm that emissions can cause. That is what we will continue to do and find alternative ways of getting the message across. Rather like the seat belt “clunk, click every trip” in the 1960s, the aim is to make switching off vehicle engines while stationary a natural habit. Maybe this will eventually coincide with greater use of “stop start” ignition or electric cars.

An ‘active travel’ scheme for schools in the Grid

CAA residents are ideally placed to notice the ways children get to school these days. With Guildhall Feoffment and St Edmunds on the doorstep, perhaps 1000 children are travelling to or through the Grid each morning and afternoon using one transport mode or another. Greater numbers of parents taking their children to and from school by car is contributing to increased congestion, higher levels of pollution and greater risk to pedestrians and cyclists from cars. Suffolk County Council’s *Suffolk Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan* says “For the sake of the current and future generations we must tackle poor air quality and address the issues raised in the climate emer-

Of course, anti-idling is but a small part of the larger plan linked to the climate emergency that we are all facing. There is a Climate Emergency Plan for Suffolk. It seeks to achieve net zero by 2030. The technical details are in the report:

<https://www.greensuffolk.org/app/uploads/2021/05/Suffolk-Climate-Emergency-Plan-Technical-Report-2020-10.pdf>

Suffolk County Council (with West Suffolk Council) is now working to develop and implement its climate change proposals. Whatever changes are proposed, however, will take some time to be implemented. But the reality is that we will all need to change many things in our lives if we are to help the county (and country) achieve net zero by 2030 – which is only 9 years away.

We can, of course, all take little steps to help. For example, we can walk (or cycle) more if possible. We can avoid unnecessary car journeys. We can take public transport rather than use the car. And don’t forget if you do use the car, please avoid idling! GH



CAA's sub group on West Suffolk Council's Air Quality Group is working on reducing engine idling - a contributor to air pollution - largely as a result of school traffic. Meanwhile Suffolk County Council is looking at a variety of proposals to make it safer and easier (for everyone, not just children) to walk and cycle in and around the county. The aim is to embed 'active travel' as part of a long-term habit and reap the associated health, air quality and congestion benefits.

BSE Rickshaw is all for promoting cycling in our town, and has come up with an idea specifically to address the school run: an active travel scheme for the two schools in the Grid, involving a special bicycle bus. A bicycle bus is a multi-person e-bike. The model under consideration, called Bicco Bike, is made in the Netherlands and widely used in northern Europe. The Bicco Bike is suitable for 10 children, of which 8 children are able to pedal. The smallest children can sit in front of the bike on the bench. The bench can be provided with a safety net. The driver has full control of the bike, and the hydraulic brakes are strong enough to make a full stop, even when the children are still pedaling. The driver has a good view of the smaller children in the bench.

Since it would take all day to ferry every child to school on a 10-seater bike, BSE Rickshaw has been working with the schools and West Suffolk Eco Hive, on establishing Walking and Scooting Crocodiles too. In Walking Crocodiles, long espoused by CAA Chairman Vivien Gainsborough Foot, children walk to school in an organised group with registered adult volunteers looking after them. This means parents don't all need to walk with their own children every day, but the children can still get the benefits of walking all the time. A variation on the Walking Crocodile is the Bicycle or Scooter Train, in which adults supervise children riding their bikes or scooters to school. Scooting to school is growing in popularity; for the children it's a fun, fast way to get there. It's also a great way to get children more active and is a

great sustainable solution to coming to school by car.



The two head teachers, as well as the pupils, staff, governors and parents consulted about the scheme are supportive (the children are especially excited about the bicycle bus). Success would depend on a reliable group of volunteers willing and able to 'drive' the bicycle bus, and operate the Crocodiles and Trains. Several Rickshaw volunteers have already expressed an interest but parents and, ideally, local residents would also need to be involved to make this a genuine and sustainable community effort.

Of course, the scheme would have health as well as environmental benefits. The way children travel to school can have an enormous impact on their health and lifestyle. NHS guidance recommends school age children aim for an average of at least 60 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity a day across the week. If we can reduce school traffic, other car-users may be encouraged to cycle in the town. At present riding along Westgate Street at 8.50am on a school day is not for the faint-hearted! Together we can change this.

For more information, or to express an interest in volunteering (walking, cycling, scooting or admin) please contact Libby Ranzetta at BSE Rickshaw on 01284 339449, or admin@bserickshaw.org.uk

Why does Bury Water Meadows Group want you to get involved?

Bury Water Meadows Group (BWMG) came together in 2013 to safeguard the 'Leg of Mutton' an arable field which has had an uninterrupted view of the town since mediaeval times. Since then the Group has expanded its activities and in 2019 registered as a charity.

The Group's members are concerned individuals who work together with other local organisations to conserve, preserve and improve the Rivers Lark and Linnet in Bury St Edmunds and their adjacent green spaces for the benefit of the public and wildlife. The Lark and Linnet are both globally rare chalk streams and the land around them has been an essential part of the town for many centuries.

These precious green spaces and rural landscapes are very important in contributing to the town's historic setting and identity. To retain the character of the town, and preserve its heritage, they should be considered as key elements of the town for future generations.

BWMG has a wide range of opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to get involved. This helps to restore and conserve the rivers and the surrounding water meadows in and around Bury St Edmunds.

Opportunities include:

- Scything, which is wildlife friendly, fossil fuel free and reduces nettles and rank vegetation so that grassland thrives.
- Planting wildflowers and trees where appropriate. Yellow rattle seed, the so called 'meadow maker' is always sown since this helps reduce the dominance of the grass sward and helps create floral diversity from the natural seed bank in the soil. Clearing

weeds and debris from the rivers to allow faster flow. Faster flow means silt and debris is moved along the river so that fish have better quality areas for spawning in.

- Installing measures to encourage the fish spawning and decrease bank erosion
- Tackling invasive non-native species which take over the river bank and meadows and do not support wildlife lifecycles as much as native species do.
- Biological recording. Data is sent to the relevant bodies, so that research and education about the natural world is strengthened and protected by fact not hearsay.
- Litter picking (including the inevitable dog poo bags!) to keep our town a pleasant and safe place to live in for both humans and animals
- Getting involved in policy work and citizen science to address river pollution from plastics and sewage and over-abstraction, all things which Jo Churchill MP has emphasised in her report to Parliament.

It's not all about how you can help us as there are a range of benefits to you and your family as well. These include:

- Access to some little-known areas of beauty and interest in more than 150 acres of riverbank and water meadows
- Invitations to discussions, talks and social events
- The chance to meet, chat and work with like-minded people in your local area

- The knowledge that you are helping to tackle climate change and ecological degradation which have been declared an emergency at WSC.
- Preserving and enhancing some of the most valuable and ancient natural areas in Suffolk

Join us by completing a membership form on-line or email for a paper form which you can fill in and send back. We can always be found

somewhere in the meadows and green spaces at least 3 times a month on a work party!

Jillian McCready

burywatermeadowsgroup@gmail.com

<https://www.burywatermeadowsgroup.org.uk>

Congratulations to Bury Watermeadows Group for winning the Eco Friendly Award in the 2021 Bury Free Press Community Awards

Q. When is a farmer not a farmer? A. When he or she is a member of the Bury St. Edmunds and Farmers' Club.



The Farmers Club just off Northgate Street is a hidden Bury gem that goes back to its formation in 1947 by (you guessed it) a group of farmers. Today, however, it has grown into an exclusive club for members from all walks of life, including the odd farmer as well as several residents who live in the Grid.

However, no matter how society has changed over the years the Farmers Club has always stood by its founding ethos: to be a relaxing retreat in beautiful surroundings for the men

and women of Bury St Edmunds and the surrounding areas. Many members enjoy the club just for its recreation - the historic bar, regency dining room, Grade 1 listed lower lounge (dating back to about 1350) and beautiful garden are perfect for relaxing. All within a ten minute walk from the Churchgate area.

I think it is fair to say that the restaurant offers some of the finest dining in Bury St. Edmunds and all only available to its members and their guests. In summer, the garden area is a sight to behold and all tucked away behind busy Northgate Street. Now that the club is fully open again it is offering a full service as well as a number of special events throughout the year and all just for members

In addition, the club offers long and short stay parking to its members which can be a significant problem solver in our overcrowded part of town.

For the various membership packages and more details about the club may I suggest that you look at www.bsefc.co.uk? It's worth it. NL

YOUR COMMITTEE 2021-22

Vivien Gainsborough Foot, Chairman, 69 Whiting St. 750887 or 07769756249
vgf.masongill@gmail.com

Nick Law, Newsletter Editor, 35 Guildhall St. 07912648138
nicklaw1@hotmail.com

Brian Jones, Planning, 8 Hatter St. 762342 brian.hessett@hotmail.com

Nick Moon, Treasurer, 58 Churchgate St. 07809 687536 nick@moon.me.uk

Judy Broadway, Membership/Website, 68 Whiting St. 724034
judy@jbbroadway.co.uk

Cathy Friel, Licensing, Minute Secretary, 42 Crown St. 755549

Geoffrey House, Air Quality, 8 William Barnaby Yard, 07826 852145.

Richard Elsey-Warren, Police, 31 Crown St, 07757722448.
richard.warren@hotmail.co.uk