



The Cookham Society

Registered Charity No. 257224 | messages@cookhamsociety.org.uk

Spring 2023 Newsletter

5G MASTS, A BLOT ON THE LANDSCAPE?

By Dick Scarff

The advent of 5G networks could produce some very welcome high-speed mobile connectivity. Unfortunately, it is also bringing forward a rash of applications for tall, ugly, masts and ground-level installations. The first application in Cookham was at the corner of Mill Lane and Sutton Road, on the edge of the conservation area and close to a listed building. It was refused by the planners and then appealed by the applicants. Happily, the Planning Inspector rejected their appeal. The second, was for a site at the junction of Westwood Green and Maidenhead Road and regrettably, this was approved despite our, and many local people's objections. The third application was for a site close to Cookham Dean school. This was subsequently withdrawn. We suspect the applicants had not realised that this was common land owned by the National Trust and that it was in a conservation area.



Earlier telecoms masts have been sited relatively discreetly around the village but the very short range of 5G signals means that there is a desire to locate masts in the middle of developed areas. As these masts are covered by relatively unrestrictive permitted development rights and as highway verges are easy to access and entail no difficult landowners, roadside positions are the obvious, inexpensive choices. For future applications we would like to persuade operators to opt for discreet, screened sites but sadly, legislation does not seem to be on our side in our attempt to force them to do so.

We will continue to resist further, undesirable applications.

AGM

NOTICE is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held at 7.30pm on Thursday 9th March 2023 at the Chartered Institute of Marketing, Cookham.

JOHN STRETTON

By Tom Denniford

We were greatly saddened to learn of the death of John Stretton (1920-2023) at the age of 102. Together with his wife, Jean, John was a long-standing supporter of the Society during his life in Cookham and for many years organised the preparation and printing of our newsletters. As both a borough and parish councillor John was a staunch advocate for our village in the face of proposals for gravel extraction and the development of Poundfield. He will be much missed.



ROSE GARDEN, WHYTELADYES LANE

RBWM has received yet another application to build a house on this site. The Rose Garden has been the subject of numerous applications and each application has consistently been met with fierce resistance by the Society and by local people. The Society will oppose this latest plan and we welcome individual objections from residents which show the extent of local opposition to the plans.



LOCK ISLAND *By Dick Scarff*

Our latest research shows that the accidental deaths in July 2020 were in the Lulle Brook and not in Odney Weir on the main Thames channel. It seems odd that the drownings were used by the EA as the reason for closing the path over the weir, when the accident happened on a different water course. We are continuing our campaign to get the access over Odney Weir to Lock Island re-opened.

The EA have also put up ugly, galvanised steel palisade fencing on the island side of the riverbank around the weir, and we continue to object to their proposal to put up similar fencing on Odney Common.



STAR OF THE SMALL SCREEN TO SPEAK AT COOKHAM SOCIETY AGM

The Society are delighted to announce that the speaker at the Cookham Society AGM this year will be the actor and documentary-maker, Ross Kemp.

SOCIETY SEEKS BETTER SERVICE ON THE BRANCH LINE

By Dick Scarff

Currently, the branch line operates a two-trains-per-hour service during peak times and just one train per-hour at other times. We understand that the train operator is reluctant to go to the expense of two trains during off-peak hours given the numbers of passengers using the service during the day. However, we think that this judgement fails to recognise that if trains were more frequent and more convenient to use, the level of passenger up-take could be substantially boosted. Working hours are much more flexible today and passengers come in and out of London on the new Elizabeth Line and might use the line more frequently if they could be sure of a shorter wait for a train on the branch line. We also think that it might encourage more school children to use the train rather than being driven to school.

Until now, the two issues of two-trains-per-hour and of getting longer trains from Maidenhead to Marlow through Bourne End without passengers needing to change at Bourne End, have been considered together by the railway bodies. We understand from the Maidenhead and Marlow Passenger Association that Network Rail have recently made it clear that previously available funds to pay for



the trackwork to facilitate longer trains at Bourne End, has now been lost and that the scheme is unlikely to proceed any time soon. This does not mean, in our view, that the two-trains-per-hour proposal should also go into cold storage. This could be provided with only modest extra running costs and minimal capital investment by accepting passengers to Marlow would still have to change at Bourne End.

There are serious concerns about the growth in traffic and congestion at river crossings which will be exacerbated by the substantial amounts of new housing planned on both sides of the river. Anything that encouraged individuals to get out of their cars and travel on the train would be helpful. We will continue to work with others to push for a better off-peak service.

TURKEY BARN ON SWITCHBACK

By Dick Scarff

We continue to be most concerned that the retrospective application to put up a large cluster of turkey barns on Switchback Road has still not been decided by RBWM. The original determination date was set for the 5th of January 2022.

We are seeking categorical assurances from the authorities that the waste from the turkeys will not affect the water supply pumped from the wells in Whyteladyes Lane. More than one year later, and despite persistent enquiries, we have still not yet received this assurance.



MARLOW FILM STUDIO UPDATE

By Tom Denniford

More than 2,300 representations have now been sent to Buckinghamshire Council in connection with this application, which will comprise more than 1.78 million sq.ft. of new buildings, much of which will comprise large sound stages that will be highly visible from Winter Hill.

The scheme is projected to generate between 1,780 and 2,415 full time equivalent jobs next to a town where there is virtually no land for new housing. The additional traffic which will arise will be considerable and there are obvious concerns about further traffic overloading on the A4094 and Cookham Bridge.

SUPER-SIZED BARGES ON THE THAMES?

By Tom Denniford

Short or long-term stays on boats are becoming ever more popular and the Canal and River Trust has recently recorded 35,262 licenced craft using its waterways, a 3.3% increase since 2019. Many of these boats are in permanent residential use; indeed, in 2014 the Greater London Authority found that 10,000 people were living on houseboats in London. Short term lettings are readily available on airbnb and Vrbo. Unsurprisingly, this is leading to a trend away from the traditional 'narrow boat' to more sophisticated craft and much larger boats have been seen recently moored up to our riverbanks in Cookham, some of which are of 2-deck construction. It seems these have raised some adverse comment since, of course, they have a much greater visual impact than more traditional craft. If you have an opinion about this issue, please let us know at: messages@cookhamsociety.org.uk.



SHANLY HOMES APPEAL AGAINST STATION COURT DEVELOPMENT REFUSAL

By Dick Scarff



Following the refusal by the RBWM Planning Panel to approve Shanly Homes' application to build a dense terrace of eight, three-storey houses on the location of the old station yard,

we have been expecting a further application to be submitted for a more modest development at the site. Unfortunately, Shanly Homes have ignored both our, and local people's comments and lodged an appeal. We have made a further submission against the proposal to the Planning Inspector and hope that the Inspector rules that the Panel were correct to refuse this most unsuitable application.



NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN LATEST

By Bill Perry

The Working Party has finished its review of the latest draft of the Plan, and it has now gone back to the consultants for a re-draft. While this is being done, the Royal Borough is undertaking the strategic environmental assessment and habitats regulations assessment. When the draft is returned, the next step should be for the Working Party to put the up-dated, revised version on to the Parish Council website, along with all the associated documents. Residents, and all the other groups, institutions and landowners who have been consulted throughout the process, will then be able to comment on this latest iteration.



COOKHAM VILLAGE CONSERVATION AREA APPROVED

By Bill Perry

After a long gestation, with consultations in 2016 and 2018, RBWM has finally approved the new Cookham Village Conservation Area Appraisal. The area has now been extended to include Marsh Meadow as far as Cock Marsh, Black Butts Cottages and Cookham Nursery School, on Station Hill. The entirety of Poundfield remains in the area. We are pleased about the extended area and think it adds a level of certainty to the protection of our lovely village.

THE COOKHAM SOCIETY DESIGN AWARD

The Society has been awarding an annual Design Award Prize since 2014, although we will not be making an award for 2023. However, we will be on the lookout for projects completed by the end of the year for the 2024 award. If you are starting a new project that you think should be considered - it can be a build or a garden - please go to our website and fill in an application form. www.cookhamsociety.org.uk/design-award

THE COOKHAM SOCIETY AGM GUEST SPEAKER, ROSS KEMP

The Society are delighted that our local celebrity, Ross Kemp, will be speaking about his career as an actor and documentary-maker at the Cookham Society AGM on Thursday 9th March at 7.30pm at the Chartered Institute of Marketing.

Ross Kemp is a BAFTA award-winning documentary-maker, actor and author who rose to prominence in the BBC1 soap, *Eastenders*. Since 2006 he has received international recognition for his documentary series, including

Gangs for which he won a BAFTA, *Ross Kemp in Afghanistan*, and *Extreme World*. His documentaries have focused on destinations as diverse as Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, the Congo, Ukraine, Libya, Syria and Iraq.

He has also made a number of documentaries focusing on issues closer to home, including the UK prison and NHS systems, exotic animal ownership in *Britain's Tiger Kings* and most recently, his new Sky History diving series *Ross Kemp: Shipwreck Treasure Hunter*. Ross is also the presenter of the BBC1 quiz show *Bridge of Lies* and is a Sunday Times best-selling author.

Ross considers himself very lucky to have spent over 35 years working in television, but his great loves remain ... family and friends, his dog Bruno, his home in Cookham, food and wine. Ross is a huge rugby fan, a



patron of the military charity *Help for Heroes*, an ambassador for the *Royal British Legion* and is on the Board of the *Invictus Endeavour Fund*.

NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS



Stephen Cooke, Membership Secretary

As Ossie Wardell-Yerburgh will be retiring in March, Stephen will be taking over the position.

Stephen and his late wife, Ann, lived in this neck of the woods for over 40 years, starting in Pinkneys Green and working their way round via Boulters

Lock, finally, to Cookham in 1999. All their three children attended Holy Trinity Primary School then went to separate senior schools, including Claires Court, Sir William Borlase's Grammar School and Bradfield College.

Stephen and Ann were both Chartered Accountants, working as finance directors. Stephen

retired in 2009 but expects that his finance and administration skills will be useful in his new role with the Society.

One of Stephen's children is settled in Furze Platt, one in Fort William and one in The Hague. Stephen also has a house in Devon, but Cookham will always be home.



Jonathan Foord, Committee Member

Jonathan is married to Claire, and they have two daughters who are now of university age. They all moved to Cookham from Fulham in 2004.

Cookham seemed ideal, with its rural setting, closeness

to the river, its shops, pubs and restaurants and excellent access to London. Eighteen years later, they continue to enjoy it as much as when they first moved in.

Jonathan is a land economy graduate, a chartered accountant and has consulted in the energy sector. He has also been a

director in a commercial property development company.

He is keen to utilise his experience to further the interests of the residents of Cookham and to preserve the unique character of the village for future generations.

KEEP UP-TO-DATE WITH THE SOCIETY

You can keep abreast of key issues facing Cookham by staying in touch with the Society in any number of ways.

- Join the Society and get access to our twice-yearly newsletter
- Read our website, www.cookhamsociety.org.uk
- Follow us on Facebook 
- Read the Drum on Cookham Station concourse.

