

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Growth Point Status plans continue to be prepared. The draft master plan is scheduled for September when, I would hope, the public will have a chance to comment. A number of workshop sessions have been carried out but I would prefer a little more input from those who actually live here. I am keen to get our planners to come and address us in the near future. It is concerning, piecemeal development of strategic town centre sites continues whilst the master plan is being developed. Without proper sites being earmarked and possibly compulsory purchased there is a high chance that when we come to provide the services required e.g. bus station, car parking, retail and leisure all the possible sites will have been used for flats. I hope that planners and councils appreciate this and are already looking to secure these strategic sites so that the development of the town centre can be properly planned rather than trying to cram things in to the only remaining areas of land left.

The Town Council have agreed for the old garage on



the lower level of the Guildhall to be used for a Dad's Army museum. Anyone with any artefacts relating to the programme or the Home Guard who would be willing to put them on display or could lend a hand with displays or decoration should contact Susan Glossop on 754038.

Contact is being made with the Desert Rats Association and the Tank Museum at Barnham for possible loan of items. Still on the Dad's Army theme

the BBC will be filming in Thetford during July for The Comedy Map of Great Britain which will be screened in the autumn.

ENVIRONMENT

The death of the Environmental Committee Chairman, John Fadden was an unexpected blow; he gave sterling service over several years. Our sympathy goes to his wife and family. The Healthy Living Centre with which he was primarily concerned is open and it has been indicated that the consultancy services are to be reinstated. Measures are being taken to alleviate parking problems and the bus stop is being moved closer.

Plans are still awaited for the conversion of the Anchor. A number of plans for development of gardens have been put forward in the town. One alarming one is the demolition of Glebe House and subsequent building on the site. It seems we are powerless to stop the loss of yet another building of character in the town. No formal plans have yet been submitted in relation to the grade I listed buildings in the Abbey Barns complex. The Secretary of State has ruled in favour of in excess of 50 dwellings on the Norwich Road near to the Ark. Permission has been given to fill in the section between the Angel and the Chip Shop on the Market Place. We have sent Breckland Council a dossier of the listed buildings that are in need of urgent repair in the town hoping some enforcement action may follow! English Heritage has agreed to improve security to the Prioory site however action seems a long while coming. An application has been made to upgrade the play equipment in Castle Park and I know this will be appreciated by many of the Society's members. Negotiations continue to drag on in respect of the transfer of play areas from Breckland to the Town Council. The Town Council have refurbished the fingerposts in the town centre. The Ancient House Museum goes from strength to strength receiving an award from the RICS. We now need to get some brown direction signs in place in order for visitors to have a clue where it is.

An application is being made to the Secretary of State to fence off an area of Barnham Common in order for reinstate some of the football pitches. I think most

people would welcome the area being used but many people are concerned with the loss of access fencing will bring and the use of the pitches by one particular club as there are other Thetford clubs having to play out of town. A great deal of dissatisfaction has been expressed with regard to the grass cutting and management of weeds in the town. From discussion with many parties it seems there is no quick fix but to continue to complain to Breckland and Norfolk County Councils. The handbooks for Community Rangers have now been prepared and anyone interested in becoming a community ranger should call 01362 656878.

Margaret Ince and the Thetford Litter Campaign are looking for further funding to roll out the campaign to local schools.

THETFORD LITTER CAMPAIGN

Don't be a dirty devil -



It's a sin not to bin!

No news on a new bus station but those of you who heard Digby Smith's letter read out on BBC Look East will know how we all feel about the current one. Stuart Wilson has joined our committee and we're sure he will be a useful member.

ACTIVITIES REPORT

Meetings

In April Corrine Turner gave a professional talk on the Father of the Brontes and a special meeting was called to discuss the future of St Peter's Church. In May Mike Wabe gave an enlightening talk on life at Wayland Prison. Laetitia Hilling could not make the June meeting but her place was taken by Emma Shaw who spoke about the Air Ambulance.

Outings

We had a beautiful day for our outing to the Museum of East Anglian Life at Stowmarket and everyone enjoyed it. The weather was cold for the morning of our trip to the bulb festival at Spalding but it warmed up by the time of the parade and the floats were excellent. The proposed trip to Anglesey Abbey was cancelled through lack of support. Those who went to the Nunnery Stud open day enjoyed their visit. The trip to Bury to see the Gurkhas beating the retreat was a bit of a disaster with persistent rain and the Gurkhas having been posted abroad, being replaced by the Royal Artillery.



We were lucky with the weather for the Strawberry Tea, entertainment was provided by Martyn Williams and for all those who helped a big 'thank you'.

Future Activities

Meetings - United Reformed Church at 7.30pm unless stated

July 3rd Elephant Country - Dr Giles Smith

Aug 7th Water Conservation - Mr Spidey, Anglia Water

Sep 4th AGM & Update on Moving Thetford Forward.

Outings & Events

July 14th Hampton Court Palace & Garden depart Bus Station 8am. Cost £26

Aug 18th Boat trip on Southern Belle Itinerary to be advised. Cost £23

Aug 24th Minibus to Peterborough Beer Festival & Cambs Pub of Year

Sep 6th Provisional trip to Wyken Vineyard & Cotton Mechanical Music Museum

Nov 27th Final date for House of Commons trip. If everyone who asked to go can do the new date we have a full bus.

Anyone interested in any of the trips please contact Danny Jeffrey (01842) 753770.

Other Forthcoming Events in Thetford

July 15th Thetford Music Project Concert, King's House Gardens 2.30pm

Aug 19th Downham Swing Orchestra Concert, King's House Gardens 2.30pm

Sept 2nd Dragon Boat Festival

Sept 8-9th Heritage Open Days - Tours of Bell Hotel, Gaol, BTO. St Peter's Church, Burrell & Ancient House Museums open. Guided Walk of Thetford's Hidden Ecclesiastical sites.

Sept 9th Bridgham & Harling Band Concert, King's House Gardens 2.30pm.