



The Chesham Society's vision for the town is 'exciting,' MP says

AN MP has called the Chesham Society's vision for the future of the town 'exciting' after being shown the plans.

"A very exciting proposal for the future of Chesham," was Chesham and Amersham MP Cheryl Gillan's comment after she met members of the Chesham Society recently.

She added: "Their proposal is radical, original and has been thoroughly researched along with extensive local consultation. It will require substantial capital investment and detailed planning."

Mrs Gillan had been inspecting A Vision of Chesham, the Chesham Society's proposal for the redevelopment of the centre of Chesham, as part of the new Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan 2014 to 2036.

The Plan is intended to meet the districts' needs over the next 20 years, during which time it will have to accommodate a large number of new houses.

The Vision is to bring together the three disparate elements in the centre of Chesham, the high street, the Old Town and Lowndes Park.

Currently these are physically separated by St Mary's Way, which in the Vision would be accommodated in a new short tunnel.

This will then allow shoppers and visitors to seamlessly enjoy all the facilities that Chesham offers.

Improvements will be made to the high street and new multi-storey housing and car parks will be constructed within the centre, principally near to the station.

New buildings around The Elgiva will offer additional cultural opportunities to the growing population.

Affordable housing will be included as well as accommodation suitable for older persons.

There will be provision for small businesses, café and restaurant uses but large scale employers will be encouraged to move to specialist sites on the periphery of the town.

Mrs Gillan commended the proposal for addressing important issues about infrastructure and hopes it will be considered for inclusion within the new Local Plan.

She added: "Serious thought must be given to new infrastructure needed as the town expands. The development will ensure that it is unnecessary to intrude into the green belt, which is such a precious asset to the people of Chesham. I welcome the time and effort which members of the Chesham Society have dedicated to working on the proposal."

Chairman of the Chesham Society Tony Molesworth said: "We were delighted Cheryl Gillan made the time to come to Chesham to look at our proposal for redeveloping the centre of Chesham. She asked us lots of questions, rapidly identified key issues and showed her support."

To view a video of A Vision of Chesham or for more information visit www.cheshamsociety.org.uk.



SUMMER 2016 Chairman's report



The committee has been recovering from the build-up to submitting its response to Consultation on the new Chiltern District Plan in March, more of which later.

On Saturday 11 June the Chesham Society hosted the Spring Meeting of the Association of North Thames Amenity Societies. It has not been held in Chesham since 2008. Over 25 people attended and heard our Mayor Cllr Noel Brown open proceedings prior to rushing to the School's Carnival procession. Societies shared their experiences with district planners over the last six months, the keynote speaker was Dr Andrew Brown, Planning Director of SE Historic England who gave a fascinating talk "Heritage Planning: an ever-changing story" and finally the Chesham Society presented "A Vision of Chesham" which drew a lot of interest, discussion and praise.

The next stage of the Local Plan will be the Consultation on Preferred Issues and Options starting in mid-September. This is when hard decisions will need to be taken. We were hoping to have the opportunity to discuss our initial response with Planning Policy at Chiltern District Council (CDC) in the meantime but that option is not available. However we do have some guidance, not all of it good news:

- Development, new houses mainly, will be far higher than previously with almost certainly much more on the Green Belt – there is likely to be a lot of unhappy people!
- Chesham will remain a priority focus for new development (as it currently is); this does not automatically mean in the Green Belt. However options are being considered around Chesham
- Employment opportunities must be maintained in Chesham. We are being asked to look at what is needed, how to bring in new business and what sort of business.
- Brownfield sites must be used for housing. New industrial sites will be on the edge of town, subject to on-going technical work and a CDC Joint Cabinet

decision in due course. CDC see no other option if new development opportunities are to be found in Chesham.

- There is likely to be a need for additional town centre uses in Chesham, delivery of which will present opportunities for mixed use schemes including housing.
- CDC has not yet assessed "A Vision of Chesham" submitted by the Chesham Society, but they welcome a community based vision that can be fed into the Local Plan process.
- CDC are undertaking a number of traffic modelling studies prior to the next stage of the Plan.

On the basis of this your committee has agreed to further develop "A Vision of Chesham" immediately rather than awaiting to see the next Plan Consultation document in late October. A project team will work on this and we will be seeking your participation both in the team and through wider community consultation. In the meantime we are applying for grants to fund the project team and ultimately actual construction of the new town centre infrastructure and buildings.

On a slightly different note, assuming we don't already have enough to do, I have got The Chesham Society actively involved in another group, "Impress the Chess", which I believe will fulfil an important role and make a meaningful contribution, working alongside other groups preserving and improving the River Chess and raising community awareness. This will fit well with "A Vision of Chesham" and there will be more details in the next edition of Focus.

I hope you all have relaxing and sunny summer holidays – the first day of June does not look encouraging! We will have a full programme for the autumn for you to look forward to, starting with our annual Panel Meeting on Thursday 8 September

Tony Molesworth



Editor's letter

HELLO and welcome to the Summer 2016 edition of Focus

Summer has finally arrived – hooray! But that also means we are half-way through the year, where has the time gone?

The first half of 2016 has been an extremely busy one for the Society, with a large chunk of committee members' free time being taken up by responding to the initial consultation for Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council's Emerging Local Plan. The Local Plan is the single largest issue that will affect Chesham over the next 20 years, so it is vital that we get involved and secure the best future possible for the town.

The consultation was submitted earlier this year, giving committee members, especially Tony and Roger a much needed break. However, the hard work will soon start again because the next stage of the Local Plan will be the Consultation on Preferred Issues and Options starting in mid-September. This is when the hard decisions will need to be made, and

we need your help. Do make sure you take part in the consultation.

As part of the consultation, the Chesham Society submitted its Vision of Chesham (see more about this on page one.)

I am delighted that Chesham and Amersham MP Cheryl Gillan has taken interest in our Vision and has even called it exciting, which I most definitely agree with and I hope you all do too. Committee members are also busy organising our biennial Chesham Heritage Open Day, which takes place on Sunday, September 11.

This is a great opportunity to explore some hidden gems in Chesham, and all for free.

We have some new venues for this year's event.

Read more about this great day out on page four.

Well all that is left for me to say is thank you for continuing to support the Chesham Society and I hope you all have a great summer in our beautiful town.

Camilla Goodman



Waiting for the House of Lords ...



Treasures on your doorstep

- Chesham Heritage Open Day 2016

THE Chesham Society is once again organising a Heritage Open Day event in Chesham and this year more venues than ever before will be opening their doors.

The venues will be completely free for the public to explore on Sunday, September 11.

Company premises, private homes, gardens and places of worship, not normally fully accessible to the public, will be welcoming visitors with guided tours, exhibitions, talks and refreshments.

Heritage Open Days has been running for more than 20 years and is now England's biggest and most popular heritage festival.

This year the event is being supported by



the National Trust, the People's Postcode Lottery and Historic.

The event is a great chance to explore local history and culture. The Chesham Society organises the event in the town every other year focusing on Chesham's incredible history, its diverse communities, its fascinating collection of buildings in both the old and new towns, its long religious heritage, and its manufacturing and industrial past.

On Sunday, September 11, a larger number of properties than ever will be open, from The Bury House, built in the reign of Queen Anne, to Hearse House in Chesham Cemetery, which was recently restored in 2015 with a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

This year there will be a number of venues opening for the very first time for Heritage Open Days, so keep an eye open for updates and publicity.

In the meantime, put the date in your diaries!

By John Graves



For more information visit www.cheshamsociety.org.uk.



Eddy Ward - Businessman, Soldier, Sportsman and Bon Vivreur

William Edward Ward, always known as 'Eddy' or 'Ted', was born into a well-to-do London Irish family in Turnham Green, London.

He went to the Salesian Brothers School but left in 1921 when he was 15 and joined Davis Shopfitters, an old-fashioned paternalistic company in which he blossomed, rising from tea boy to manager by 1937.

Eddie was always keen on sport and in 1921 became a founder member of Chiswick Priory Athletic Club, a 'wandering club' that played mostly football and cricket and only on Sundays. He was not a major cricketer himself, although he had a good reputation as a fast medium bowler, and was invited that year to play for Lord Ebbisham's XI against Lord Jellicoe's XI. He was, however, highly regarded by his fellow club members as an organiser and leader.

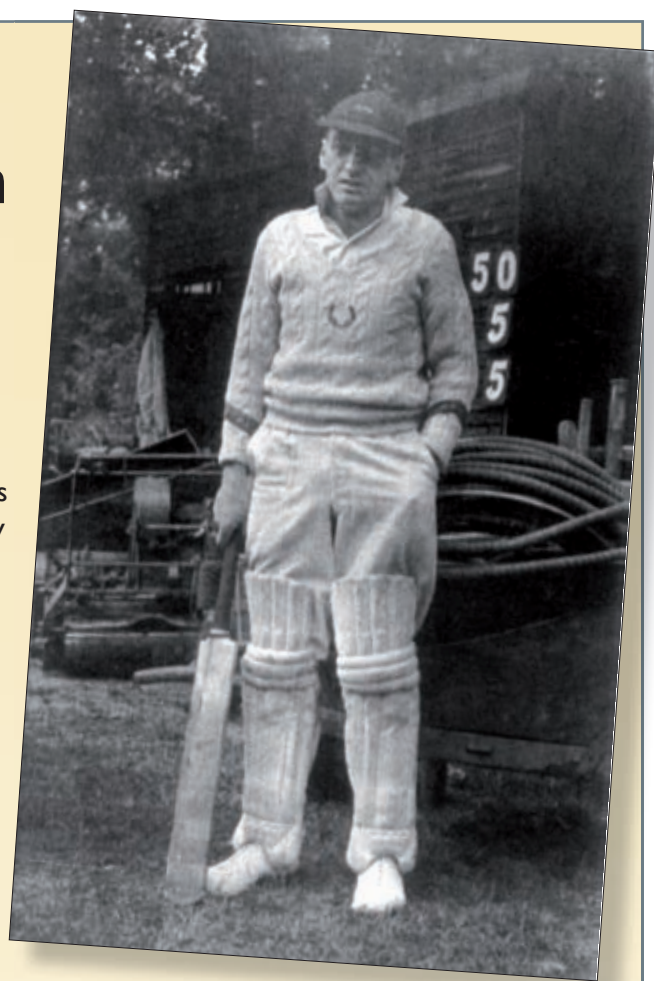
By 1930, when he was 24, he had risen to Hon. Secretary of the club and captain of the cricket team. One of the early tours he organised was of the Isle of Wight, and at the end of it his fellow players presented him with a silver cigarette case inscribed: To Eddy, our captain and very best friend in appreciation of his wonderful tour. Isle of Wight, 1930.

At the club's 10th anniversary dinner in 1931, he was described by the president as the "backbone of the Chiswick Priory". Because of its nature, Chiswick Priory Cricket Club specialised in slightly unusual fixtures and opponents regularly included such teams as The Gentlemen of Wiltshire, The Indian Gymkhana, The Metropolitan Police, The Foreign Office, The Royal Army Ordnance Corps, the Royal Navy and many local teams on tours of Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Devon, Cornwall, Norfolk and others.

Many of the people Eddy met in these fixtures became personal friends, for example Jack Slipper of Scotland Yard (of Ronnie Biggs fame), the Nawab of Pataudi and Prince Victor Narayan Bhup Bahadur, the brother of the Maharajah of Cooch Bihar.

Other people who played for the club in Eddy's team in the 1930s included several who were to become very famous later and who remained lifelong friends: Jack Robertson, Bill Edrich, Dennis and Leslie Compton, Laurie D'Arcy, and Jack Young to name but a few.

Other friends included England cricketers Jack Durston and 'Patsy' Hendren and, in conjunction with them (especially



Jack Durston), Eddy organised numerous dinners and dances at London nightspots throughout the 1930s which were very popular and featured several well-known showbiz stars of the day.

Two who became lifelong friends were Jack Warner (then mainly a comedian but later to become famous as 'Dixon of Dock Green') and Charlie Kunz, the American 'Wizard of the Piano,' who was very famous in his day.

Through him Eddy met many other showbiz legends and was a regular guest at the dinners of 'The Grand Order of Water Rats,' the showbiz charity.

At these he got to know Stanley Holloway and Will Haye, and on one occasion sat at the same table as Laurel and Hardy (they signed his menu).

Another special friend of the time was Sir Jack Hobbs, who became a sort of 'father figure.' They used to meet every month for lunch at the 'Wig and Pen Club' opposite the Law Courts and it was Jack who provided Eddy with references and support in several endeavours later in his life

Continued on page 6



Eddy Ward continued

In 1933, during a tour of the Isle of Wight, Eddy and his team stayed at the Prince of Wales Hotel in Ventnor.

It was there that he met the landlord Tim Hayes, originally from Chesham, and his daughter Phyllis, born in Wey Lane.

Eddie and Phyl married two years later, in 1935 and thus the 'Chesham connection' was established.

By 1939 Eddy had been recruited as manager by Arthur Lyons (Engineers) of Acton, a company well known for its innovative ideas.

Nonetheless, having been an enthusiastic 'territorial' with the Middlesex Yeomanry in the 1930s, Eddy was called up to 'do his bit,' which turned out to be somewhat unexciting guard duties on the east coast of Essex.

Arthur Lyons, meanwhile, was much involved in defence contracts and appealed to the War Office to send him back, as it was felt he could contribute more to the war effort there than guarding the mud flats.

He was accordingly recalled and did indeed contribute to the war effort, being behind such innovations as remote controls for search lights and mule-transportable radio generators for the Chindits operating behind Japanese lines in Burma.

Phyl, meanwhile, had returned to the Isle of Wight to run the Prince of Wales after the death of her parents.

Eddy visited whenever possible and became concerned for her safety as Ventnor was being regularly bombed by German planes trying to hit the radar station on the downs above the town.

He therefore persuaded her to move to the "safety" of London, where she arrived just in time for the blitz!

It had been a good decision, however, as not long after she moved out, the Prince of Wales was bombed and the manager who had taken over from her was killed.

Phyl did not stay long in London during the blitz.

Eddy had long hours of duty at the works and she had nothing to do, so she moved back to her birth place, Chesham. It is probably not a coincidence that Eddy soon followed, but not alone.

By Keith Fletcher

Continued next issue

Cheryl's Corner



Earlier in the spring I met members of the Chesham Society to talk about their Vision of Chesham.

The move in national legislation about planning is to put the emphasis on local neighbourhoods, with their future use tailored to the needs of our community.

A body like the Chesham Society carries with it "organisational memory," so it can refer to how the town has changed over time, with the differing demands on infrastructure which have existed over the years.

The group is also well placed to see how the town should function within its setting of the Chilterns.

This includes environmental and ecological considerations, like the green belt and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Chesham was and is a jewel in this setting and I personally would dread to see encroachment in the Buckinghamshire countryside, especially when we face the pressures of HS2 construction.

All places, however idyllic, do have to think about change, as changes occur in the world around them.

People in Chesham wish that the town will keep the best of the old alongside the need to adapt to the new, so as not to be stranded in the past.

Planning is part of that process.

I want to commend the way that the members of the Chesham Society have given huge thought and amounts of time into making proposals for the way that Chesham should tackle change and allow the town to flourish.

The Queen's Speech on May 18 announced the introduction of a Neighbourhood Planning and Infrastructure Bill. Taking the second part first, people in the Chesham and Amersham constituency certainly have decided views (drawn from first hand and regrettably sometimes bitter experience) about infrastructure projects and about compensation for those affected.

In the area of planning itself, the Bill is intended to strengthen neighbourhood planning and empower local people.

It would improve the process for reviewing and updating plans, as well as making the process by which local government has a duty to support groups more transparent.

**By Rt Hon Cheryl Gillan,
MP for Chesham and Amersham**



Planning Watch

By Roger Smith

Application details	Chesham Society position	Council planning decision
7 Station Road. Three storey redevelopment to provide six flats	Some thought in the design of the new building means it will enhance the street scene	CTC welcomed but concerns re bin storage. CDC planning decision awaited.
107-109 High Street, Chesham Redevelopment to provide retail units and 13 residential units. (Site includes Domesco)	The proposed development has little architectural merit and concerns about loss of parts of an old cottage within the structure.	CTC proposed frontage out of keeping with the area, concerns re bin storage. CDC planning decision awaited.
Development of land for up to 201 dwellings, Stony Lane, Latimer. Application for access only.	Contrary to policies in Local Plan, contrary to government guidance and premature of the new Local Plan. No special circumstances to allow this development in the AONB/Green Belt. Coincidental(?) similarities between the application and independent consultants recommendations for the Emerging Local Plan	Little Chalfont parish awaited CDC planning decision awaited. Unsurprisingly a very considerable number of objections submitted
Felling of trees in High Street, Chesham	This application to fell and maintain trees in the town centre to prevent further damage to pavements provoked more local interest than any other recently.	Application withdrawn.
163 Chartridge Lane Demolition of 163 to provide access for development of eight dwellings.	There are precedents for approving this type of development subject to consideration of overlooking issues.	CTC, one proposed plot likely to be overbearing. CDC planning awaited, hopefully contributions to infrastructure improvements will be secured.

Dates for your diary!

Date	Room/venue	Day	Purpose	Time
September 21	Council Chamber, Chesham Town Hall	Wednesday	Question Time	7.30pm for 8pm
October 19	Lowndes Room	Wednesday	Members meeting Peter Hawkes (provisional booking)	7.30pm for 8pm
November 16	Lowndes Room	Wednesday	Members meeting	7.30pm for 8pm
December 8	Council Chamber	Thursday	Christmas Reception	7.30pm

All meetings are in the Town Hall at 7.30 for 8pm unless stated otherwise

Admission charges: members £1, guests £2; which includes tea/coffee and biscuits.



EU Referendum – In or Out?

I suspect by now that you maybe tired of debates, talks and even everyday conversations about the EU Referendum. You will remember that, despite the Chesham Society being a non-political organisation, your committee believed that such an important issue should be discussed locally, so last month we held our own event.

Many of you attended St Mary's Church Rooms to hear Nick Varley, who is head of ground campaigns at Vote Leave and a dynamic and passionate ambassador for the Leave Campaign as well as being a Chiltern District and Chesham Town Councillor for Vale and Robert Buckland, QC, the Solicitor General in the Remain camp, lead the debate and answer questions.

The debate was chaired by our own Chairman, Tony Molesworth and was well attended by a cross section of the locale, including many of our local councillors.

Both the leaders of the debate set out their stall for approximately five minutes each and then the floor was opened up for questions. As one might expect, the questions came thick and fast with both sides, and indeed members of the public, becoming quite animated in their differing opinions and responses.

Many of the attendees appeared to have already decided which way they were voting and some took the opportunity to support and air their chosen views.

The questions were varied and plentiful and ranged from asking about border control between Southern and Northern Ireland and immigration to opinions on trade agreements with Europe compared with elsewhere.

Unsurprisingly there were many more questions than the time allowed for and the meeting could have gone on for several more hours.

At the conclusion we took an informal exit poll which showed 64 per cent supporting Leave, 32 per cent Remain and a mere four per cent still undecided.

Only time will tell how our demographic compares with the rest of the United Kingdom!

Emily Culverhouse



The Chesham Society

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