

AGM – Chair’s informal report

We have recognised for some time that we need to raise our profile to attract new members - and broaden the base of people who get actively involved in our work. We decided in 2021 that one way to do this was to focus more on our projects – that way people can get involved in things that interest them without necessarily having to commit to too many formal meetings. The 4 projects we identified were:

Walks

- mentioned at last year’s AGM
- our newly-designed leaflets have attracted much praise, as did the Walks days we organized at the Jubilee and at last year’s Heritage Weekend. They are on our website.
- we are working on two new walks but need to find funding to design and print the leaflets
- Sue Killoran is doing a fantastic job leading all of this
- We have our usual May Bank Holiday Walks programme on Monday 25 May

“Picturing Abingdon” – creating an online archive

- Setting up a widely accessible online archive of historical images of Abingdon
- Mike will be talking about that shortly.

Heritage Weekend – September 16-17

- not everyone recognizes that the Civic Society is the lead organizer for this
- team of individuals from ACS, Historical Society etc
- this year’s theme – Creativity Unwrapped – celebrating art in all its forms
- ambitious plans but we need more people to help – both in advance and on the days

Conservation Area Appraisals

- Roger Thomas has done an enormous amount of work on the Albert Park appraisal –with help from others with relevant knowledge
- Work being led by the Town Council but other demands on their time mean that progress has been slow
- We would like to do more of this kind of thing, including establishing one or more new CAs but would probably prefer to lead on it ourselves, with assistance from others with relevant knowledge and skills – and including local residents.

If you would like to help with any of these projects – even in just a very small way - do please come and talk to one of us afterwards. And if you know of anyone else who might be interested, do tell them about us – getting people to know what we do is the first step to getting more of them on board!

I have tried to keep you up to date on ongoing issues via the Members’ Bulletins, but if you have any questions on anything like the Upper Reaches, Lodge Hill, new housing developments, the Neighbourhood Plan, CARF etc please ask.

There was some discussion about the Lodge Hill slip roads:

- A planning application has been made, but has been referred back for clarification on some points
- Part of the funding package is supposed to come from national government but due to delays their original offer has been withdrawn and the County Council have reapplied. Layla Moran MP has raised the issue with the Minister, pointing out that until the work goes ahead, the proposed housing cannot all be delivered and this will conflict with government policy.
- The condition remains that only 400 of the houses on the Abbey Fields and Twelve Acre Drive can be occupied before contracts are let for the slip roads.