

Altrincham & Bowdon Civic Society

Registered Charity 246145



THE CHANGING FACE OF ALTRINCHAM

The new Health and Wellbeing Centre takes shape (right)

The Aldebank residential apartments development on Ashley Road start to appear on the old YMCA site (top left)



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FROM THE CHAIR

Altrincham and Bowdon Civic Society have been great supporters of Civic Voice since its early days and we were thrilled to get our second Marsh Christian award at the annual convention in Wakefield. This was in partnership with Trafford College and we were pleased to welcome Joan Scott from the College to our AGM.

Chair of Civic Voice Joan Humble also came to the AGM and was very impressed with a tour of the town centre and tea at our favourite community heritage pub, The Roebuck.

Our speaker was Councillor David Hopps newly appointed to the local authority executive and we look forward to working with him.

We were sad to lose Don Bayliss and our first award for Civic Excellence in his name went to the Chairs of the Neighbourhood Business Plan now adopted, Mike Shields and Tony Collier.

We were sorry to lose Katie Bland from Altrincham Unlimited with whom we worked on projects such as Altrincham Hosts and the much praised large map of Altrincham on the Interchange. It is to be hoped this can continue under the new team.

The Neighbourhood design Team hosted by Damian Utton at Pozzonis has been a great success and with the adoption of the neighbourhood plan we are looking at how to continue this work.

National Civic Day this year will centre on Chapel Street, "The Bravest Little Street in England" will be part of the Regent Road Car Park regeneration and we are talking to Trafford Local Studies and the Imperial War Museum in London. Civic Voice held a very successful event re WW1 at Stockport Art Gallery which is well worth a visit.

We continue to support and protect green space in Altrincham and the three local parks Friends groups. John Leigh Park has finally got their archaeology project which we will feature on our excellent website.

The planter in memory of Martyn Hett on Altrincham Interchange has been much admired and we managed to reinstate the railing planters on Stamford New Road outside the Interchange. We support the prize winning Marathon Day community effort to welcome runners and visitors to the town.

With two Altrincham ward council seats being vacant this May we are organising a hustings so residents can get the councillors the town deserves.

This year should see the completion of the Altrincham Health and Wellbeing Hub on the old hospital site (see front Cover picture) together with the new Library. Work has also started on the Community Hall next to the primary school in Broadheath.

The long awaited phase one of Altair should start shortly and we are pressing for the new Leisure Centre to happen sooner rather than later.

With so much happening in Altrincham we are actively seeking new members and would ask anyone who has an interest in green space, heritage or planning to consider joining us. Membership details are available from the website.

Judie Collins, Chair

ALTRINCHAM INTERCHANGE

When the Manchester Metrolink Tram network was officially launched by HM The Queen on 17th July 1992 there were just two services – One ran from Bury to Altrincham and the other from Piccadilly to Altrincham or Bury. Over the past twenty five years or more the network has developed very substantially. Whilst trams have always run through to Bury, there was a phase when a change was involved and recently, if wanting to travel to Piccadilly, you needed to board a tram with Etihad Campus as its destination.

Throughout all this time only platform one has been used; two recent changes took us both backwards, with no detriment, and forwards in one transition. Trams out of Altrincham are once again marked as services to Bury (via Market Street) with the alternative now to Piccadilly – both continue to be at 12 minute intervals. Piccadilly trams depart from P1 and those for Bury from P2 (until the frequency transition in mid-evening when Bury trams revert to P1). Bringing Platform 2 into regular use is very welcome – until now it had only been used when circumstances demanded it – and with longer dwell times at Altrincham it will give some leeway to services to improve punctuality. The frustrating holds at Timperley South signals *should* become significantly reduced.

Once the decision had been taken by Metrolink to bring platform 2 into regular use, they did so perhaps a little too swiftly and we quickly pointed out a lack of facilities: The trams stop at the very point where there is no protection from the elements in adverse weather, there are no litter bins at that end of the platform, there is no Metrolink ticket machine on P2, there is no ‘Get me there’ reader on P2, there is no passenger information display on P2. All these are to be addressed in the short term but should have been covered before P2 came into regular use.

Until now Friends of Altrincham Interchange have held meetings twice a year with the TfGM management of the bus facility. These have lead to limited results and, at our instigation, a series of higher level meetings have been set up. It is hoped that some long awaited improvements might be effected as a result. Our prime objective is to make every effort to improve the ‘Interchange experience’ of those using public transport so that people from all walks will feel more inclined to use it, even if only to avoid the challenge of car parking in the town centre.

We had reservations about the operation of bus services after the refurbishment since the number of stands in the revised layout of the bus apron had been significantly reduced. Our concerns have been allayed and things have turned out satisfactorily with the number of holding bays providing the necessary leeway. To some degree this has been helped by a steady reduction in the number of, and the frequency of, services into and out of the Interchange. As readers will be aware, there are a number of services on many routes that are not commercially viable after the evening peak period and, so that operators will be willing to continue to operate these, they are ‘operated with the financial support of TfGM’. These continue to be eroded with the support being cut back and it’s a vicious circle in the poorer the service the less people will use it/them until eventually the operators produce passenger volume figures which justify the service being cut back further. If you don’t use it, you’ll lose it, so the saying goes.



The facilities on the heavy rail platforms received little or no improvement at the time of the refurbishment three/four years ago other than the new bridge – which itself still has some problems – and the installation of the lifts between the platforms and the bridge. There is little scope for anything to happen on platform 3 but there is definitely potential for the buildings on platform 4 to be brought into significant use. Building improvements had been put on ice for a while until the start of the new franchise but now that this is well under way Northern Railways have come on board and are sympathetic to proposals we've put forward. Improvements will be in two phases but more on this at a later date.

Northern are very supportive of all our efforts and good at keeping us informed over their forward planning. Within the next twelve months, not only will we be seeing most of the old rolling stock used on the Mid-Cheshire line replaced by new or totally

refurbished units but we'll also be enjoying two trains an hour in each direction rather than just the one. The additional service is likely to run from Stockport to Greenbank rather than the whole length of the line Piccadilly to Chester.

We strive to get some momentum behind efforts to make the Interchange more attractive to the eye. On platform 4 there has been installed, in a prominent position, a very attractive planter in memory of Martyn Hett, a regular user of public transport from Altrincham, who lost his life in last summer's terrorist attack at Manchester Arena. Our main target is the combined area at the south end of Platforms 1&2/3. We still have high hopes of achieving something there, even if not in as short a term as we would wish.

Friends of Altrincham Interchange will continue to work to achieve their objective and can now be easily contacted via their Facebook page - @foaigroup – all comments will be taken on board.

Ian Stuart - Chairman: Friends of Altrincham Interchange

ALTRINCHAM STATION RECEIVES BEAUTIFUL PLANTER IN MEMORY OF MARTYN HETT

Family and friends of Martyn Hett, who tragically fell victim of the Manchester terror attack, gathered at Altrincham Station on Wednesday 6th December to witness the unveiling of a planter in his memory.

Martyn Hett, 29, was a regular passenger on the Mid Cheshire line. He frequently travelled on services into Altrincham, where he worked at a local public relations firm, Rumpus. Family and friends recall Martyn as a bright and bubbly character, who made the best out of every situation he was faced with.

Figen Murray, Martyn's mother, was tremendously pleased with the planter and thankful to see Martyn's memory live on in Altrincham. The planter was

donated by Arriva Rail North and the community of Altrincham, in hopes that the family will be able to find some comfort knowing Martyn will be thought of everyday by passengers using the station.

Stuart Murray, Martyn's step father, commented: "It's quite amazing that this sort of thing is ongoing, and all these gestures of good will keep happening for Martyn. It seems that so many people have been touched by what's happened, and want to do something in memory, or as an act of resilience towards it."

"It's very comforting for us to see it happening, and helps us as well, but in the bigger picture, it's a defiant act and memory of what's happened. It's very nice and very touching that all this has happened in memory of Martyn."



Vicky Cropper, Regional Community and Sustainability Manager for Arriva Rail North, commented: "We are delighted to be able to donate this lovely planter in memory of Martyn. We are proud to support the local communities and families this tragedy affected, and help Martyn's memory carry on. The planter is also there to be a comfort to other passengers who have lost a loved one, so they can take a moment to reflect and remember them."

Gareth Clements, Director of Rumpus, said: "Martyn travelled daily on this service and often had fond stories to tell of passenger encounters along the way, which provided him with some great social media content. This tribute is a constant reminder of a wonderful guy who graced so many lives."

Northern are extremely grateful to the Friends of Altrincham Interchange, who suggested having this beautiful planter in memory of Martyn. The fantastic group were heavily involved in getting the planter ready, and will be the ones to take care of it going forward.

ALTRINCHAM HERITAGE

The digitising of historic material kindly loaned by local residents continues to reveal unique items which enrich the Altrincham Area Image Archive. The project has been supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund.



Boys from Addison Road, Hale with their effigy of the Kaiser, later burnt and followed by fireworks, biscuits and lemonade. Peace Night, 19th July 1919.

The images and maps provide content for the talks and publications of Altrincham History Society, Bowdon History Society and local historians. They include forthcoming topics such as the history of the Catholic churches of Altrincham and the

Marriott fountain in Bowdon, as well as newly published books on the histories of Hale by David Miller (2016) and of Bowdon by Don Bayliss and David Miller (2017).

Our illustrated Guide to Bowdon Parish Church and the Surrounding Area continues to be freely available at Altrincham Library, Art with a Heart and the church and Parish Centre in Bowdon. It contains a handy map showing the green and quiet walking routes between Bowdon and Altrincham.

The detailed work of volunteers on the map section of the web site is ongoing and once it goes live will feature much of the digitised historic material providing a valuable resource for family, social, local and architectural historians.

Another future-proofing exercise was the quest to find a safe haven for the Pizza Hut mosaic from the old Cross Street location in the centre of Altrincham. Designed by Scurr and Partners in 1998, the mosaic work featuring a pizza was undertaken by Paul Marks. The mosaic was rescued by the Civic Society and stored in the garage of a local resident. Late last year with the help of Mark Watson of the Tile and Architectural Ceramics Society, it was taken into the care of the Heritage Trust for the North West in Colne.



The Pizza Hut mosaic in 2013, rescued from destruction by the Civic Society

Sue Nichols, Project Coordinator

NEWS FROM OLDFIELD BROW COMMUNITY

News from The Brow – an update from Friends of Cow Field - Mike O'Neill – February 2018

Since we last reported (in September 2016) we've been cheered by increasing engagement and support from One Trafford/Amey, our local councillors and hoping to be elected councillors (Alex Williams, Angela Stone, and longtime supporter and stalwart Dan Jerrome , and now, Ulrich Stephane Savary), and from Trafford Council itself. We've been advised that badly degraded surfaces on the bus route are to be reconstructed in the Spring (hurrah!) and that none of the beloved trees that form part of the essential character of the Brow will be removed without consultation. Currently, only trees on St Marks Avenue are being considered for removal: Dan has been consulting with affected residents. We wonder if pollarding might be an appropriate alternative.

We have attended several of the Friends of Trafford Parks meetings at Trafford Town Hall and have been made very welcome. We've done some bulb planting ourselves in Cow Field, Amey have trimmed the boundary hedge and started on clearance of a badly brambled area, and they are looking at a plan to start planting areas of Cow Field as a wildflower meadow if we can persuade Trafford Council to find just a small amount of money to buy bulbs that Amey can then plant. We've litter-picked with Sale Wombles on the banks of the Bridgewater Canal near us, and we've continued to act as a news and information exchange for the community on Oldfield Brow. A number of issues continue to cause us concern:

Bay Malton, Seamons Road canal bridge, Rose Cottage (National Trust).

After nearly 3 years of closure, The Bay Malton has been put up for sale by Thwaites, despite their assurances over plans to refurbish it. Our application to have it registered as an Asset of Community Value was accepted by Trafford Council but although notified of the sale as a result, we were unable to mount a bid. Opposite, an NT property (Rose Cottage) sits on a large plot and is also now vacant and boarded. And the Grade 2 listed canal bridge – a portal to the short and scenic section running up to Atlantic Street - is neglected, with a badly degraded road surface and damaged parapet. The fear is that the land here will go to housing. We appreciate that the national political agenda may appear to license that prospect, but we believe that letting this happen to such a historic community focal point would represent a damning failure of collective vision. As well as housing, a community needs facilities, and the jobs and opportunities they bring.



In Broadheath, construction has just started on a new Farmhouse Inn restaurant, 120-space nursery and a community hub that is expected to create 140 jobs. (Left)

Connected with The Bay Malton, we have existing housing in Oldfield Brow; a large canal side housing development under construction nearby on the old Linotype site; connections enabled by the recently finished canal side cycleway into Manchester (which is expected before long to have a bridge over it near the Manchester Road); the attraction of the Trans-Pennine Way; and a thriving business community in Atlantic Street. The right revival plan could seize these opportunities and provide them all with a focal point, whilst playing a part in the revitalisation of the Altrincham conurbation. We would welcome support on this one: rather than dwelling on past failures and just as has been done in reviving Altrincham town centre, The Bay Malton (and this corner generally) needs reappraisal and a vision to get it working again and contributing to the turnaround that is now happening in our town..

Allotment Gardens – our application to have these registered as an Asset of Community Value was rejected by Trafford Council, who stated that as the land was derelict it was of no value to the community. However, locals have told us that allotment users were evicted before the land was left to become derelict. We think this land needs reinstating as useful green space (perhaps through projects such as the Green Gym initiative) as part of the drive on community health and wellbeing, perhaps as a canal side orchard and picnic area that locals and visitors can enjoy.

Oldfield Brow School Parking Problem – this one continues to cause local anger and frustration. Some residents have tried to remake their verges with flower beds (thanks to Dan Jerrome for helping to make that happen) but cars doing drop-offs have parked on them regardless. The School are very supportive of getting tough on anti-social parking, but an initiative with ‘teeth’ is needed.

Oldfield Brow Bus Service – the bus service was cut to one per hour a while back, including at peak times, and there are reports of even these buses not showing up. We think this is completely unacceptable and inconsistent with any vision centred on social inclusion and on getting people out of cars and using public transport. We have asked our local councillors to campaign vigorously on this one: perhaps the (underused?) loop service from Altrincham Station to Asda could be rerouted, if a smaller bus were used to get across the Seamons Road bridge.



Going nowhere!
The scene by the historic Bridgewater Canal. The boarded up Bay Malton is on picture left, boarded up NT Rose Cottage is in background middle, neglected Seamons Road canal bridge in the foreground,

with the new Bridgewater Way pedestrian and cycleway running underneath the bridge.

Mike O'Neill, Resident of Oldfield Brow

Review of Planning Applications relating to Altrincham Town Centre 2017 -2018

Altrincham & Bowdon Civic Society (ABCS) monitor the applications which are published by Trafford Council on a weekly basis. Where it was thought appropriate comments have been made, some in support; others seeking amendment or refusal. It should be pointed out that seeking a refusal is rare.

Altrincham has a number of designated Conservation Areas and ABCS has keen to help members of the public who wish to comment on any Planning Application are aware of the conservation guidelines and how to submit their comments. Details of the Conservation Areas are available via Trafford's Planning Portal.

Throughout the period, numerous applications have again been submitted for converting the upper floors of retail shops and other buildings, usually from office or storage use, into residential units. Some of the applications have been for the minimum space allowed for this type of development. Space for car parking is often not available, however applications usually include bike storage. Another difficulty can be the provision of a designated area for wheelie bins. As we all know, 4 categories of bin have to be available for various kinds of refuse. This is certainly a problem in some of the town centre conversions.

There are several major developments in the town. The Altair site adjacent to the Leisure Centre, Altrincham Ice Rink and Moss Lane has now been fenced off but building work has yet to start. ABSC was represented the original Planning Committee meeting when permission for development was given. This was several years ago, the original scheme has been altered considerably. Together with the Design Forum, ABCS made comments on types of landscaping to be used in addition to changes to the style of the buildings.

The Design Forum, on which ABCS has representation, is made up of a number of specialists who have a particular interest in the town. Most of the team live and/or work here. They meet on a voluntary basis. Their expertise has been recognised and developers have looked for their comments before submission of a planning application. This has been helpful in getting amendments to plans.

A major residential development is taking place on The Downs to the rear of the retail shops. Major concerns were traffic flow on and off the site with particular reference to the affect on pedestrians. The former Bowling Green belonging to The Downs Hotel has been sold and permission granted for some town houses to be built.

A variation of the permission granted for development of the disused Bowling Green on the north side of Albert Place, adjacent to Church Walk has recently been requested. It includes a total of 5 residential units retaining and extending the existing pavilion. In addition it is proposed to create a new vehicle and pedestrian access off Church Walk. At the time of writing the dead-line for comments has not been reached. ABCS will be commenting.

Major concerns are the plans for Regent Road Car Park that include a multi-storey car park, demolition of the Mobility Services building and toilets which will be replaced by ground floor retail units with residential units above. There is no provision to replace the public toilets. Increase traffic flow in the area will be considerable, particularly as the new Health Centre, Library and Café will be due for completion during this year.

ABCS has recently learned that The Graftons have been purchased by Trafford Council who have said they have no particular plans for the site at present. It is to be hoped that the pedestrian link between George Street and Stamford New Road will be re-instated. ABCS will be commenting on development proposals as and when they are published.

Over intensive use of sites is frequently commented on. Trafford Council are attempting to reach targets for the provision of more housing. In addition Developers are anxious to obtain maximum returns on their investment. Attempting to maintain a balance between the needs of various groups is difficult, but ABCS hope that their efforts do contribute to appropriate and beneficial changes in the town.

Deputy Chair - Paulina Lewis

COMMITTEE PROFILES

From the Editor: Our Chair Judie thought it was a good idea for readers to know what sort of talent and experience we have around our committee table. So here is the first profile written by one of our Vice Presidents David Eastwood B.A.

The members of the Altrincham and Bowdon Civic Society Committee have decided for some strange reason that they want to cease their previous anonymity and let Newsletter readers into all their dire secrets. So here goes with mine.

Firstly, I'm a Yorkshire man, born in a Huddersfield suburb in 1937. So were my parents, on father's side to at least 1512 and on mother's side about 1630, and all in only a small number of villages near Huddersfield. My first coherent but clear memory is of men digging a big hole in our garden, probably for an air raid shelter in 1939 or 1940 and I helped by being lifted into the hole, filling my little seaside bucket and being lifted out again.



Pictured left, David being presented to His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester on the occasion of the opening of the new Altrincham Hospital.

Very soon after, Dad moved to Cheltenham as Head of the Tool Room at Dowty Equipment, which built the hydraulic undercarriages for the heavy bombers. Therefore, every time you see the RAF historic Lancaster, that's Dad's handiwork, smooth as silk after 75 years. I was put into Miss Roache's Darley Collegiate School, it was what used to be called a Dame School, quite Dickensian and would have failed every single Ofsted criterion. However, after only one term, I was stricken by Rheumatic Carditis, was critically ill and barely survived. Four years later, however, I was diagnosed cured and went back to the dreaded Miss Roach for one further term before transferring to the junior school of Cheltenham Grammar School, into which I passed in September 1948.

Over the next few years I successfully demonstrated that my scientific ability was absolutely nil, but I was fairly good at languages, and the school decided to enter me for an Open Scholarship to Bristol University. (The really clever ones were entered for Oxbridge!) Perhaps to everyone's surprise, not least my own, I was granted a Scholarship and spent three years of French, German and working on stage for the Dramatic Society – the theatre is a lifelong passion of mine. I also enjoyed the compulsory two terms at the Sorbonne, speaking the sort of French not taught at school!

Then came a life-changing experience. I knew I would have to do the compulsory two years National Service and was quite happy about it. But during the final summer term, a recruiting team visited and the RAF representative mentioned to me the chance of a National Service Commission. Cutting the story short, I passed the various entry tests and was posted to RAF Jurby on the Isle of Man, the Ground Officers Training School, from which I (just) successfully passed out as a very junior Pilot Officer in the Education Branch and was posted to Germany. The RAF Germany Higher Education Centre wanted someone with German as the main part of the degree, but no such was available, mine was French, and I understood that as soon as the requisite became available, I would be posted. It happened and I spent two years at a fighter station in the north and was even given rides in two-seater fast jets, good fun.

Then to RAF Yatesbury in Wiltshire, where I met my dear wife Mary on a blind date (another story!) after which to RAF Weeton, near Blackpool. While there, I applied for the Russian course and in due time, became a qualified interpreter in Chinese Mandarin. Various jobs followed, the last of which was as a Section Head with the Joint Services Intelligence in Hong Kong.

On being retired by Mr Healey, I joined Trafford as Administrative Officer in the Social Services Dept and worked my way up that ladder, before being offered early retirement on health grounds at age sixty. Since then, I've been in many societies, I still work voluntarily for the National Trust, I have done a lot of historical writing and research, much of which has been published, and I flatter myself that I have done useful work in preserving much of Altrincham's historic architecture and buildings.

If you care to work it out, my official title is Squadron Leader D. Eastwood, B.A., R.A.F. retired, but I've never used it unless absolutely necessary.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

MEMBERSHIP CARDS

Please note we will not be issuing membership cards any more. Most members are now on email and all the information which was on the card is readily available on our website which is updated on a regular basis. For those members who are still without internet access I have listed below the Officers of the Society together with our committee meeting schedule for 2018.

ALTRINCHAM & BOWDON CIVIC SOCIETY CONTACTS

Officers:

Chair: Ms Judie Collins 0161 962 7108

Vice Chair: Mrs Paulina Lewis 0161 928 6789

Treasurer: Mr Trevor Stone 0161 927 7508

Clerk: Mr Richard Hagon 07960 102684

Dates for our committee meetings in 2018:

Meeting Room 2 Altrincham Town Hall All meetings 7.30 pm to 9.30 pm

Bi-Monthly on a Tuesday - 16th January, 20th March, 15th May, 17th July, 18th Sept, Wed 20th Nov.

AGM in the Council Chamber on Wednesday 28th November 7.30pm – 9.30 pm

DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS

To comply with the new GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) which come into force during May 2018, we will be sending to all our members a copy of our Data Privacy Notice document together with a form to complete. Once completed this will need to be signed and returned. The Data Privacy Notice document is also available to view via the membership page on our website.

Compiled and Edited by Richard Hagon © Altrincham & Bowdon Civic Society 2018

Chair: Judie Collins 0161 962 7108

Vice Chair: Paulina Lewis Treasurer: Trevor Stone Clerk: Richard Hagon

President: William Speakman V. C. Vice Presidents: David Eastwood B.A., Vivian Labaton M.Sc.

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Altrincham & Bowdon Civic Society Membership Form

To join and support the Society, please fill in the form and post it along with the annual subscription of **£7.00 per individual** or **£11.00 for two living at the same address**, to our Treasurer, Trevor Stone.

Name/s _____ Signature/s _____

Address _____ Postcode _____

Telephone _____ e-mail _____ (for our occasional updates)

Please make cheques out to 'Altrincham and Bowdon Civic Society'.

Alternatively, you may pay online via BACS to our account at:

Barclays Bank Sort Code 20-01-96, Account 30109185,

entering your name in the reference for identification purposes. Please send to Mr Trevor Stone, Treasurer, Altrincham & Bowdon Civic Society 14 Greenwood Street, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA14 1RZ

For any queries Email: trevor.stone@albex.co.uk

