

Altrincham & Bowdon Community Voice

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Join us and share your views

Newsletter of Altrincham & Bowdon Civic Society November 2020

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FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Reader,

I do hope you have been able to keep safe and well.

This year our newsletter will be printed for distribution to members and other outlets. As usual it will also be available online via the website altrinchamandbowdoncs.com.

Due to Pandemic Lockdown Restrictions, our AGM this year will be a virtual one for committee only, although we do have a guest speaker Mr. Stephen O'Malley who will give a short presentation on his idea for 20 minute neighbourhoods.

Please consider joining the society to support our work, a membership form is available to download and print off on our website membership page.

There are several ways to contact us with enquiries or comments on local issues. Twitter: [@aandbcs](https://twitter.com/aandbcs), Facebook: [@altrinchamandbowdoncs](https://www.facebook.com/altrinchamandbowdoncs), Instagram [@altandbowdoncommunityvoice](https://www.instagram.com/altandbowdoncommunityvoice) or Email: Via the Website contact page or directly to altrinchamandbowdoncs@gmail.com.

My thanks go to the many people who have contributed news and stories for this issue and also to our colleagues at Bowdon Conservation Group who do excellent work in helping to preserve the heritage of our area.

I hope you enjoy reading the newsletter and if so please encourage others to do the same.

With best wishes,

Richard Hagon, Editor

Altrincham & Bowdon Community Voice

Newsletter of the Altrincham & Bowdon Civic Society Registered Charity No: 246145

Compiled and Edited by Richard Hagon © Altrincham & Bowdon Civic Society 2020

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FROM THE CHAIR

We have made use of Zoom to meet with Labour executive members for regeneration, community and heritage/environment, The Conservative Leader and regeneration shadow member. We have discussed the Spatial Framework with Lib Dem councillors and have kept in regular touch with our MP as well as our ward councillors in Altrincham, Bowdon and Broadheath.

We have met with Richard Roe Trafford's Director of Place and asked for an update on outstanding concerns. We were very pleased to hear that Phases 3 and 4 of Public realm in town centre are about to start though dismayed there is no progress on Altair. News of the Leisure Centre is expected shortly.

The Neighbourhood Business Plan Working Group has looked at the possibility of a town council with much assistance from CHALC who look after Trafford's four parish councils.

We have worked closely with Trafford's Conservation Officer on heritage issues in Altrincham and Broadheath. Industrial Heritage in Broadheath is of particular concern and Leslie Cupitt has been doing extensive work with affiliated bodies and with Mike Nevell chair of STAG and Salford University.

There has been partnership working with Friends of Carrington Moss over the Spatial Framework with particular regard to Timperley Wedge. We have also been working extensively with Civic Voice, our parent body over the government white paper on planning.

Now that Bruntwood and Trafford Council have a joint venture for much of the town centre, we have met with Bruntwood and agreed to community use of any empty units.

- Altrincham FC fan zone plans
- Trafford Veterans
- G Force Social Prescribing art work
- Regent Road car park archaeology and Bravest Little Street (Trafford Local Studies)

We have been pleased to announce a Heritage Champion for Trafford. Councillor Michael Cordingley has agreed to take on the role and we look forward to working with him. Mike is Labour Councillor for Gorse Hill Ward.

Two hard working committee members are now down south. Sue Nichols in Islington is adding Timperley and Broadheath to the Heritage Website. Michael Armstrong is in deepest Exmoor with much to do on his new dwelling. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Trish for her hard work in Bowdon and wish her well.

Our AGM will probably have to be on Zoom but we have Stephen O'Malley from Civic Engineers to talk about 20 Minute Town Centres and we shall have another worthy winner of the Don Bayliss Award for Civic Excellence to announce.

Judie Collins, Chair



COMMENTS ON PLANNING MATTERS 2020

From Paulina Lewis

Due to the pandemic, the Planning Committee have been forced to hold on-line Planning Committee meetings to consider applications and either approve or refuse them. It is still possible for a member of the public with an interest in a particular application to speak at the on-line meeting having made arrangements beforehand to do so.

This year has seen numerous planning applications, mostly for alterations to retail units with the upper floors being converted to residential use. Major developments were started and then postponed due to the Covid 19 restrictions. However, work has now restarted on the Regent Road/New Street car park. Additionally work has begun on the New Street site adjacent to the Apollo Blinds shop. Also the development off The Downs and Railway Street behind The Downs pub is proceeding well.

Some of the applications have been for buildings within Altrincham's Conservation Areas where plans and designs which contravene regulations have been challenged. The result has been that Developers have made modifications prior to submitting plans for planning approval. The Altrincham Neighbourhood Business Plan and its off-shoot the Design Forum (on which Altrincham & Bowdon Civic Society are represented) gives strength to comments which have been made about various planning applications. In addition Elisabeth Lewis, Trafford's Heritage & Conservation Officer is much appreciated for her in-put about controversial plans.

Although outside Altrincham boundaries, the two large proposals for residential development at Warburton, on farmland, and on Carrington Moss are being strongly contested. Environmental considerations and the encroachment onto Green Belt land are serious problems. The Carrington Moss site is huge. In addition to thousands of new houses it is intended to build several new roads to link with Altrincham and Broadheath.

There has been no progress on the Altair site adjacent to Altrincham Leisure Centre. Almost ten years have passed since the first planning application was approved. There have been extensions to the permission and some variations to the plans. Nikal, the original Developer has recently given assurances that Phase 1 work will start next month, October 2020. Phase 1 is the residential multi storey block overlooking Tesco's car park and runs parallel to Moss Lane.

Paulina Lewis

Vice-chair, Altrincham & Bowdon Civic Society



BUSINESS NEWS IN ALTRINCHAM

from Angela Stone

It's been a challenging time for town centre businesses over the summer. Having received grants to help them to pay business expenses and furlough schemes for their staff during lockdown it was a relief to see the town centre come back to life in July.

House of Fraser finally closed in August, Tree house, Agape Bridal, Smart Financial, La Fillia, Locanda, Kokoa Ankor Soul have all closed over the summer. Tim Horton's, Warrens and Sardus remain closed.

So Marrakech opened in a new home on Shaw's Road. There's a new green Juice bar on Moss Lane – Green and Co and Green and Grounded plant gift shop has taken one of the Novo units on Stamford New Road. The Bottle Shop, selling a range of beer, spirits and fizz opened in Goose Green this week, run by the team who own the Green Room.

We've been working with businesses on Oxford Road over the proposals to change the layout of the road. Initial ideas have been shelved in favour of a one way system. The proposal is that Oxford Road will be accessed from Peter Street and the Oxford Road area from Peter Street to Ashley Road will be available for business use for California Coffee, Off the Wheaten Track and Oxford Road café. I attended a Zoom with residents organised by Sean Anstee at the weekend. This goes for wider consultation in October.

Most of the restaurants and café's opened on July 4th dubbed "Super Saturday" and all of our bar venues reopened. Most of the bars are now operating over 21 policies.

The Government "Eat Out to Help Out" scheme was warmly received and venues reported that Wednesday became the new Friday. Some continued offers on October to encourage customers back to their venue.

At one point almost weekly rules changed for our evening economy venues and additionally they're now operating under a 10pm curfew.

It's really hard for managers and owners to manage under the curfew, takings are considerably lower, many venues have now dispensed with door staff and are now talking about possible redundancies.

The curfew is also putting considerable extra pressure on Trafford Licensing and GMP who have been brilliant supporting our venues and helping to manage the town centre during the evenings.

I've been lobbying Graham Brady to help with the curfew and other issues and he's optimistic the curfew restrictions will be reversed in the House of Commons this week.

There's proposals for a new bar on Central way. It looks an excellent use of a redundant space and further brings life to Central Way.

Public space Protection Order signage has been increased in the town centre and anyone caught drinking alcohol on the streets can now be fined £200 (£100 if paid promptly) Venues selling take-outs can also be fined.

The Altrincham Unlimited rebalot will now take place in November.

NEWS FROM OLDFIELD BROW COMMUNITY

An update from Friends of Cow Field - Mike O'Neill – September 2020

In these challenging times we've really felt the benefit of having Cow Field as community green space where local residents can get out of the house to get some fresh air exercise and peace, play football, fly a kite, walk the dog, or have a family picnic while maintaining a sensible social distance. It has been a reminder of just how valuable informal recreation space is for use by everyone, at any time and in every circumstance, at no cost.

The arrival of Covid-19 halted the community consultation between Oldfield Brow Partnership (the overarching group for community bodies on Oldfield Brow and managed by G-Force) and Trafford Council over future developments on the Allotment Gardens and Cow Field. Trafford Council are keen to build houses on the old Allotment Gardens and to seek community thoughts on placing/building community/sports facilities on a portion of Cow Field. Ideas include a community centre, football pitch, rowing club, and maybe even a foot/cycle bridge over the canal to connect these to the Bridgewater Way. For the local



community, the concern is to ensure that what happens is wanted by and will benefit the local community enough to justify reducing the area of green space for informal recreation. And it is a sobering thought that any formal facilities/activities on Cow Field, had they already been there, would have been closed since the arrival of Covid-19. It underlines the value of having a decent area of green space for informal recreation.

The other news is the proposed closure of Oldfield Lane to cars. This idea seems to have been welcomed by local people. Two concerns though are protecting walkers should the route become popular with cyclists (this is a concern also on the Bridgewater Way), and ensuring visitors parking cars does not cause a problem for residents (especially if National Trust promote this route for access to Dunham Massey).



We had a foretaste of the latter recently when a field of sunflowers (wonderful as they were) brought a large influx of sightseers (see parked cars pictured left). We wonder if the golf club, which has an entrance and car park at the Brow end of Oldfield Lane, might be able to benefit from any discussions over this and we've flagged up the thought to our local councillors.

For the rest, all is quiet on Oldfield Brow. The new owner of the former Bay Malton pub seems to be slowly starting work on restoring it as a private residence. The bulbs planted in Cow Field are starting to proliferate and the trees we planted are establishing well. We would love to see better play equipment and, perhaps even more importantly, some kind of path so that the disabled/wheelchair users could enjoy Cow Field: the ground is usually too soft underfoot to allow that (poor drainage in parts even discourages use by residents generally). Perhaps the Government, in seeking to create work opportunities where they are being lost elsewhere, could look at funding locally driven improvements like this which are aimed at improving wellbeing especially for those badly affected by the consequences of Covid-19. We can but hope.

Mike O'Neill, Resident of Oldfield Brow



COMMITTEE PROFILES – Judie Collins

Our Chair Judie Collins has a background in journalism.

She grew up in Blackpool and has lived in Trafford since she moved to Sale to do her A levels.

Her career has included working for The Guardian, Press Association and Newsco where she was involved in research with local and National Government.

Her involvement in the community started when she fought to keep Altrincham Hospital open and also against a commercial development in John Leigh Park.

Chairing Altrincham and Bowdon Civic Society she says is interesting and challenging but stresses “it is very much a team effort. We work with Trafford Council officers and members, liaise with developers and I hope we make Altrincham a better place.”



Altrincham Neighbourhood Business Plan

A Report by Damian Utton

With the current pandemic, there has been relatively little in the way of new developments and planning applications coming forward for Altrincham Town Centre during the past few months.

The Design Panel have responded to several planning applications, the most interesting being a proposal to convert the former St John’s Medical Centre to residential use – a generally sympathetic design apart from a somewhat out of context extension.

Disappointingly, Trafford Council’s intention to partner with a commercial developer to redevelop The Grafton’s has fallen through so unlikely that much will happen there soon.

The quarterly meeting between the Design Panel and Trafford Planners has been put on hold for the time being. Trafford Planners have also advised that progress of the Trafford Design Guide has also (understandably) been slow with the intention of a draft document issued for consultation in the New Year.

The wider Altrincham Neighbourhood Plan forum has started to explore the possibility of the formation of a Town Council. Early days yet and if this does progress there are many questions to resolve – Why? What is the benefit to Altrincham? How much effort is involved? Who will be involved?

Damian Utton

Altrincham Interchange & Public Transport



Public Transport will survive

A great many of us use public transport but there are, inevitably, those who never use it and others who rarely use it. In an affluent area such as South Trafford the latter two groups probably form a majority. Those who do use it will, at some stage, alight or board at the Interchange.

With the challenges of the present circumstances, the use of all forms of public transport has been discouraged with the difficulty of 'social distancing'; almost by definition, travel at peak times will mean that you are in close, or very close, proximity to others.

Other forms of personal transport have been highlighted, not least, of course, cycling and walking; for those who rarely go anywhere except by car, such suggestions are an anathema.

Thankfully, the day will come, not this year but hopefully next year, when the restrictions necessary to combat the pandemic are behind us and things are back to *relative* normality. That is not to say that things will ever be quite the same again.

The case for getting from one place to another by a means that doesn't result in many of us taking a ton (or more) of metal as our personal encasement for the journey will continue to be made for decades to come. The statistics for people to use public transport is very strong and the more people that use it the stronger the case – a five ton bus to transport, on average, five people is not good but when that same five ton bus transports 25 or 45 passengers the case is very strong.

Door-to-door conveyance it is not; running at your behest it is not.

A short walk at either end will do many a passenger quite a bit of good; running to a time table does require a bit more personal organisation and self-discipline as does the allocation of a little more time for the journey. The alleviation of the stress that can result from that daily journey behind the wheel of a car can make the journey both relatively relaxing and productive. Not having to find a parking place at the other end (acknowledging that many may have their own slot at both ends of their regular journey) is another bonus.

Altrincham Interchange is right in the heart of our Market Town and (with five excellent secondary schools within walking distance, the furthest an acceptable 12-15 minutes walk) there is a good case for those coming from further afield to use the tram or a bus. The Victorian station dates back to 1881 and considerable effort is made to enhance the experience of the public who use it, whether that is on an occasional basis or a daily basis.



The Friends of Altrincham Interchange tend to focus on presenting the case to the operators for better services – station facilities, frequency, reliability, punctuality, cleanliness etc. On the ground we have excellent and dedicated teams from both TfGM and Northern Trains to enhance the journey of passengers but since mid-March there has been the inevitable downward slide. The frequency of tram services went out from a six-minute to ten-minute; train services went out from hourly to two-hourly.

In both cases, however, all vehicles running were double units to give better provision for passenger distancing. The lesser frequency has resulted in improved reliability and punctuality with the greater driver availability after taking into account Covid 19 absences.

For some years MCRUA, who concern themselves with the mid-Cheshire lines, have been campaigning vigorously for us to have the frequency enhanced to a half-hourly service, at least from the morning peak through the working day until the evening peak is over; evening services may be less easy to argue with lower passenger volumes. Obstacles are brought up (not space to go into those here) but the campaign will go on.



Volunteers and regular train / tram users Anne and Bev

I've kept the best bit of news till the end: Cheshire is alone in recognizing the presentability, in all aspects, of railway stations across the historic county of Cheshire which is organized by Cheshire Best Kept Stations. This year, Altrincham was proud to receive the TfGM award at the annual presentation in January which was unveiled by the Mayor of Trafford, Cllr Rob Chilton, on platform four on 13th February. In an effort to build on this motivation, we have been successful in recruiting additional members to the group including some with a specific interest in tending and looking after our planters and floral efforts.

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

Ian Stuart - Chairman: Friends of Altrincham Interchange



NEWS FROM TIMPERLEY VILLAGE

A Report by Hazel Pryor



The building of the new Library and Medical Centre (pictured left) continues to take shape and is due to open this Autumn, with the medical centre opening to patients shortly after.

The mixed use development which incorporates the new Bakers Court Apartments is overall being funded and delivered by Laurus Homes. Once complete, Warrington-based primary care property company specialists Assura will be the long-term premises partner.

Bakers Court Apartments (pictured right) at the rear of the medical centre.



There is some local concern now about what will happen to the present Park Medical Practice premises – the attractive Edwardian house is situated on a large plot on Park Road, Timperley, which is next to the current temporary library in The Homestead. (See Photo left)

Hazel Pryor, Chairman of Altrincham History Society

NEWS SNIPPETS FROM THE WEBSITE

Old Linotype Works

Morris Homes to demolish the old Linotype Works and create 18 apartments.

Brown Street Car Park Development To Restart

Work on the £6million scheme to transform Brown Street car park in Hale into 22 homes and a multi-storey car park is to restart – despite the original construction company going into administration during lockdown. Developer Novo, in partnership with Trafford Council, is building the 10 town houses and 12 affordable apartments – along with the new car park – on Brown Street next to the village's railway station.

Government To Introduce Controversial Planning Reforms In The Early New Year

Dominic Cummings the P.M's most senior aid, revealed to ministers on 16th June that BORIS Johnson will unleash a series of controversial planning reforms in the early new year, in a bid to turbo charge home building and solve Britain's housing shortage.

New Book About Altrincham In Saxon Times

A&BCSoc Committee member David Eastwood together with a colleague, is writing a book about Altrincham going back to Saxon times.

Regent Road Archaeological Dig

Norman Redhead, Heritage Management Director (Archaeology) at the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service, University of Salford has been in touch with the society. He will be inviting Archaeology England to give a presentation on this excavation for the GM Archaeology Day in November.

Health & Wellbeing Centre Update

The second floor of the Health and Wellbeing Centre now houses the Trafford Local Care Organisation – South Neighbourhood team, which is a partnership between the NHS and Trafford Council for such services as district nurses and adult social care. Seventy Seven Community Health and twenty one Adult Social Care staff will cover Altrincham and sale. Nineteen Children’s social workers will also be based there.

Trafford Housing Trust

Trafford Housing Trust has been taken over by a London Housing Association LQ. Several flats have been bought back from private owners.

Tackling Air Pollution

The A56 passing North-South through our town has a very poor record for air quality. Air pollution has been linked to a range of serious health problems. The Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan aims to tackle nitrogen oxide emissions from the most polluting vehicles. The GM Clean Air Plan seeks to upgrade the region’s buses, HGVs. Taxis, and van fleets. There will be an expected £116 million behind the upgrade. More information can be found at cleanairgm.com.

Leisure Centre Redevelopment

We have received the following update from Daniel Barlow of Trafford Council. Trafford Council agreed a combined investment over £46 million for the leisure centres in Altrincham and Stretford and are committed to investing in leisure facilities and increasing physical activity levels across Trafford. Improvements in the leisure centres are a key aspect of this commitment. Trafford Council are working with partners to provide a long term solution to a complicated site in Altrincham in order to provide a fit for purpose and enjoyable leisure centre for the people of Altrincham. Trafford Leisure are working hard to keep the amenities in Altrincham Leisure Centre working as well as they can and in the short term a condition survey has been undertaken and work is ongoing to prioritise the work required on the current facility.

Daniel Barlow Business Change Analyst – Place Shaping and Investment Programme Trafford Council

Trafford Partnership’s Sustainable Community Strategy for 2021

‘Trafford Vision 2021: a blueprint’

At our AGM last year, the guest speaker was Sara Todd, Chief Exec. of TBC. Her presentation set out the strategy and plans which the council has set up to improve the lives of people in the borough. The Trafford Partnership is the Borough’s Local Strategic Partnership, a body that brings together more than 100 organisations in Trafford from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors. All of these organisations are committed to working together to improve the quality of life for Trafford residents.

Friends Of Moor Nook Park

Moor Nook Park is in Sale Moor opposite Sale Moor High School. In two years a neglected park has become a cherished community asset and a focus for community events.

Find out more about how local people decided to make their local green spaces into something they are justifiably proud of <https://www.facebook.com/moornookpark/>

Promoting safer cycling and walking around Altrincham

The Society has been contacted by Councillor Michael Welton (Green Party) for support, as none of the public realm improvements agreed by Trafford feature local streets and spaces.

Altrincham and Bowdon Civic Society promoted the centre of Altrincham as a more pleasant place for walking and cycling with improvements to the public realm a decade ago. We approached Plan-it and were mentored by Poynton Town Council a front runner in public realm design. Everyone now knows the success of Altrincham Forward in turning the town round.

At another crisis point we are happy to support our Ward Councillors to install further improvements for safer cycling and walking in and around the town.

Full details of all the above news is available on the website.

If you have any comments or suggestions about any of the above, please get in touch via Twitter, Facebook or the website contact us page, we would be pleased to hear from you.

Or contact your local councillor directly and copy us in.

Altrincham & Bowdon Civic Society Membership

Why not help to make Altrincham and Bowdon a better place by joining the Civic Society. Your subscription will help the Society achieve its many goals. We can also keep you up to date by email on our events and important changes in the town that affect you.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES BECOME DUE ON THE 1st JANUARY

To APPLY for or RENEW your membership you will need to do the following:

FROM THE WEBSITE MEMBERSHIP PAGE

Download or read our **Data Protection Privacy Notice**

Download and print off a **Membership Form**

Download and print off a **Gift Aid Form** (optional)

Complete and sign the Membership form, together with a Gift Aid Form (if applicable) and return them to the address shown on the form together with your payment (if paying by cheque).