



MALAGO VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP

NEWSLETTER

No. 31
January
2000

ONCE AGAIN, we have a number of planning applications to report in this *Newsletter*. In many ways they are the ‘bread and butter’ of any local amenity group, and it’s quite right that we should monitor the proposals for changes to our built environment.

When we respond to an application, it’s almost always to criticise it in some way (there isn’t enough voluntary time to write ‘yes, it’s OK’ letters on every reasonable scheme). No apologies for that - some of them need a lot of criticising - but we try to be positive where we can and suggest ways of improving an unsatisfactory design. We’re realistic and recognise both the requirements of planning law - an application can’t be refused just because we don’t like the look of it - and commercial constraints - though that doesn’t mean we will accept the lowest-cost solution if it is a bad design. One trap to avoid is the idea that ‘at least it’s better than what’s there at the moment’. No change is better than a bad scheme which we have to live with for years.

As well as a balanced approach to planning applications, we try to keep an overall balance in our other activities and take positive steps to improve things locally as well as criticising bad things. The monthly Garbage Raids are an ever-present example (and more volunteers are always welcome); but, within the constraints of voluntary labour, we also take larger initiatives. The *My Manor Woods* book is progressing and a spring launch is likely. The other big project is Elm Tree Corner, which you can read about on page 5.

If you’d like to know more about what we’re up to, come to the A.G.M. on 15 February. If you’d like to get involved, join the Committee. But in any case, please show your support by promptly renewing your subscription for the forthcoming year.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

IN THIS ISSUE

A.G.M. and Birthday Party .	Page 2
Annual Accounts	Page 3
Planning Matters	Page 4
Elm Tree Corner	Page 5
Christmas Party 1999 . . .	Page 6
The Programme	Page 7
Who’s who	Page 8

A.G.M AND BIRTHDAY PARTY

THE FIFTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of Malago Valley Conservation Group will be held on Tuesday 15 February at St Peter's Rooms, Church Road, Bishopsworth, starting at 7.30pm. The Officers and Committee members retire each year but are eligible for re-election. The names of the current Committee members and Officers are on the back page.

New volunteers for the Committee would be very welcome. Our constitution specifies that nominations for either Officers or Committee members should be made in writing at least 14 days before the A.G.M. They must be supported by a seconder and the consent of the proposed nominee must first have been obtained. Nominations can be made to the Chairman, André Coutanche, at 14 Queens Road, Bishopsworth, Bristol, BS13 8LB; tel. 964 3106. However, please don't be put off by these formal requirements - if you think you would like to come on to the Committee, just let us know!

The format for the meeting will be slightly different from previous years. Don't worry - it's still our Birthday Party and we'll still have suitable celebratory refreshments. But our special guest speaker would like to appear first, so we'll start with him, move on to an abbreviated version of the report-back and formal elections and then finish with wine and cheese/orange juice and nibbles.

We're delighted to announce that our Guest Speaker will be DON CAMERON, who will speak on 'The Rise of Cameron Balloons'. If you have friends who would like to come, they will be very welcome (especially if they might like to join!)

ANNUAL ENVIRONMENTAL AWARDS

FOR THE LAST TWO YEARS, M.V.C.G. has presented awards to mark good new developments throughout the BS13 area. They have ranged from a short piece of traditional stone wall to extensive landscaping around the 'Bishport Fives' tower blocks. The important thing is that they are improvements to the environment which are visible to the general public.

What do you think should be given an award this year? Please let us have your suggestions for any building, landscaping or other environmental improvement completed in 1999. Ring André Coutanche on 964 3106. Thank you.

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS FOR 1999

THESE ACCOUNTS will be considered by the A.G.M. on 15 February. The March *Newsletter* will contain the report of M.V.C.G.'s activities during 1999 which will be presented to the Meeting.

Income	£	Expenditure	£
Membership	266.00	Hall Hire	180.00
Functions	96.45	Speakers fees/donations/ expenses	64.00
Refreshments	7.00	Postage & Stationery	12.00
Other income	78.82	Refreshments	14.42
Building Soc./Bank interest	<u>28.16</u>	Printing	78.00
		Other Expenditure	<u>96.54</u>
Total	476.43	Total	444.96

	£
Excess of Income over Expenditure	31.47
Brought forward from 1998	1213.75
Balance carried forward to 2000	1245.22

Made up of:

Cash in hand	33.85
Bank account	1211.37

Detail of Functions Income	£	Detail of Other Expenditure	£
Plant/Bring & Buy sales . .	14.95	Refuse bags	0.74
Coffee Day	62.50	Owl boxes	50.00
Christmas meeting	<u>19.00</u>	Donation for screen	25.00
	96.45	Christmas meeting	<u>20.80</u>
			96.54

Detail of Other Income	£
Donations	20.00
Visitors	3.60
Sale of aluminium cans . .	46.47
Bring & Buy Sales	<u>8.75</u>
	78.82

BERYL HEATON

PLANNING MATTERS

THERE WAS ANOTHER FIRE at **Chestnut Court** at Christmas, but it hasn't affected the current planning application which goes to the City Council South & East Planning Committee on 9 February. We welcome enthusiastically the restoration of the house (and removal of the 1960s extensions) and its conversion to five flats and a 'cottage' (a two-storey extension at the back). However, we don't support the vehicular access from the bottom of Kings Head Lane and we think the four new houses planned for the old car park are too many. We also oppose the absence of garden walls on the Vicarage Road frontage. We have met the new owner, who is being very open and co-operative, and we hope that these issues can be resolved when a planning permission is granted.

Up the road at the '**Matties' block** (1-4 The Parade), there is an application to convert the entire block to flats - a total of fourteen, including some new-build on the side by Chapel Road. We have no objection in principle (we suggested residential use on this site in our January 1996 *Newsletter*, though in a rather more attractive design); although some of us might well miss the Indian restaurant and takeaway. This application doesn't affect the Fitness Centre next door, which is a totally separate property.

Two major developments in our area which have been simmering for some time have now come to the boil. At **Symes Avenue**, there is an outline application for a major supermarket, car parking for 500 cars, associated retail units and a new library. This would totally replace everything on the site at present, with the single exception of Symes House, the district office, which some people would pay money to knock down (it's very nice inside). M.V.C.G. are happy with the principle of this development - Hartcliffe certainly needs a good district centre - and we support the granting of outline permission. We would then take a fine-toothed comb to the subsequent detailed application.

And at the **former Wills site**, there is a application which fleshes out the detail on the outline permission which already exists. This would provide a B&Q store and other non-food retail outlets, some light industrial units, and the inevitable sea of car parking. We still have to look at this in detail, and, while we don't object to the principle, we will be checking carefully the reservation

for the route of the eventual (maybe) L.R.T. ('supertram'). It's important to note, too, that this application does not cover a substantial part of the site along the Hengrove Way frontage, nor the Office Block, which is in a separate ownership. An application for a supermarket is still a distinct possibility, with adverse implications for Symes Avenue.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

ELM TREE CORNER

THE LAST *Newsletter* reported that we were on course to receive the grant we applied for from BRITAIN IN BLOOM to plant trees at Elm Tree Corner and bulbs throughout our area.

I have now had confirmation from Britain in Bloom that we were successful and we will be receiving £500. We can now go ahead with consulting local people on our scheme, which involves trees making 'gateways' at the road junctions. André has met the City Council Assistant Arboricultural Officer on site, and she says there will be no problem with planting trees in the grass areas. However, some of our suggested sites are in tarmac and that's a different story. It *can* be done, but it's very expensive to excavate a 'planting pit' and the Council only plant in tarmac when it's being relaid for other reasons.



We are now preparing a leaflet explaining our ideas which we will circulate throughout the area and make available at the shops, the bank and the 'Elm Tree' itself. We will ask people for their views with a simple questionnaire and invite them to a public meeting. The pub has kindly agreed that we can meet there at 6.00pm on Monday 14 February. Wherever possible, we would also like to involve local people in planting and/or looking after the trees.

Our ideas for 'Elm Tree Corner' involve more than tree planting, but we're grateful to Britain in Bloom for giving us a good start in improving this part of the Conservation Area.

LIS PIBWORTH

CHRISTMAS PARTY 1999

MALAGO VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP may not be long established but there are already a number of traditions attached to the Christmas Party. Guests are greeted with a glass of mulled wine, and before the enjoyable and lavish 'American style' supper, the Wassail Bowl circulated to the strains of the Wassail Song.

Between these bouts of drinking (only moderate amounts to reassure those not present) we played a number of ingenious games devised by the Programme Group, each with a theme connected to our more serious activities. We looked for names of flora and fauna hidden in sentences, attempted to illustrate film and book titles for the rest to guess and repeated last year's efforts to make objects from scrap (clean rubbish).



Mulling things over



◀ '... and then this bit goes here ...'



The Winner!



◀ *Whatever it is, it came second*

All this activity added up to another tradition - we all had a jolly good time! And everyone who helped in the organisation deserves our thanks.

MARY SYKES

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS

THE **M** SYMBOL means an event organised by M.V.C.G. The regular meetings on the third Tuesday of each month start at 7.30pm at St Peter's Rooms (by the side of St Peter's Church, Bishopsworth). Everyone is welcome (non-members will be asked to pay a 50p visitor's fee). Most months we will also have a repeat of our successful PLANT AND PRODUCE BRING AND BUY to add to our funds - please bring what you can. M.V.C.G. members are also welcome at events arranged by the Dundry Hill Group (DHG - ring 935 9710 for more information).

Sunday 5 February: SNOWDROPS AND WINTER TREES WALK. Meet at 10.00am at the Carpenters Arms, Dundry, for a 12.00pm return (steep in places, several stiles) (DHG).

M Tuesday 15 February: Malago Valley Conservation Group ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING and BIRTHDAY PARTY (see page 2). Our special guest speaker is DON CAMERON who will speak on *The Rise of Cameron Balloons*.

M Monday 28 February: *Garbage Raid*. Meet at 3.45pm at the 'Elm Tree'.

Sunday 5 March: ARCHAEOLOGY WALK from 10am-noon. Come and help gather information on Dundry's past (postponed from last December). Meet at 10.00am at the Carpenters Arms (DHG).

Monday 13 March: Dundry Hill Group Meeting at 7.30pm at Norton Malreward Village Hall (DHG).

M Tuesday 21 March: *The Work of the Park Rangers* by PHIL RENDLE, lead Park Ranger for South Bristol. Plus BRING AND BUY.

M Monday 27 March: *Garbage Raid*. Meet at 3.45pm at Witherwood Post Office.

M Tuesday 18 April: Our community policeman, MIKE LIPPIATT, will speak about the local scene, including combatting vandalism. Plus BRING AND BUY.

YOUTH SHELTER

YOU MAY BE AWARE that there is a proposal to build a ‘Shelter’ for young people in the vicinity of the entrance to Manor Woods behind Bishopsworth Library. It would be an open-sided structure, with low-level lighting, and possibly a tarmac ‘kick-about’ area and/or wall. Shelters like this have been used in other parts of the country and the experience there has been positive, providing a focus for young people to meet and removing them from areas where they can be perceived as a threat.

M.V.C.G. has been involved in some consultations on this, and we want to see the right sort of facility provided in the right place. We have serious misgivings about any site further into Manor Woods and about the impact such a shelter might have, both visually and on wildlife. The City Council officers in the Youth Service are arranging exhibitions and meetings and are keen to consult widely and find the best solution. We support this approach and will be fully involved.

There is a display at Bishopsworth Library and in the foyer of Bishopsworth Police Station, and an initial public meeting will be held at Headley Park Primary School on Wednesday 9 February, starting at 7.00pm.

Malago Valley Conservation Group

Chairman	André Coutanche	964 3106
Vice-Chairman	Lola Hardingham	964 1116
Acting Secretary	Lis Pibworth	987 0825
Acting Treasurer	Beryl Heaton	964 5780

Committee Members

Anton Bantock, Brenda Docherty, Royston Griffey, John Taylor

Co-opted Committee Members

Tania Ford, Peter Hall, Mike Jarrett, Anne King, Chris McFarling, Sue Walker, Barbra Wharton, Cllr Bernard Chalmers, Cllr Tessa Coombes, Cllr Peter Crispin, Cllr Richard Eddy, Cllr Ron Hodges, Cllr Dave Johnson, Cllr Mary Sykes (*All the City councillors for Bishopsworth, Hartcliffe and Whichchurch Park wards are invited to become co-opted Committee members.*)

Newsletter edited by André Coutanche, 14 Queens Road, Bishopsworth, Bristol, BS13 8LB; telephone 964 3106; e-mail andrec@flashmail.com; web address www.mvcg.tsx.org. **Letters, articles and suggestions from readers are welcome.** The opinions in this *Newsletter* do not necessarily represent those of M.V.C.G.