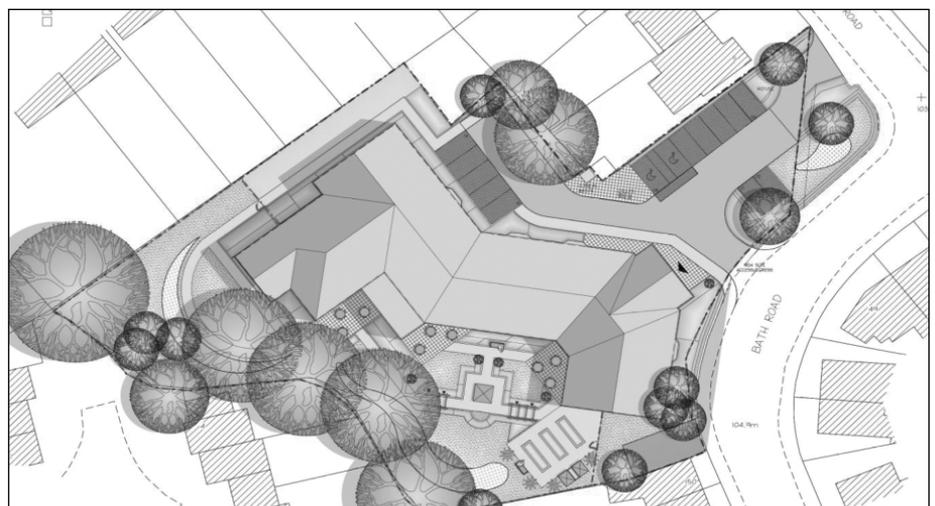


## New Care Home in Bath Road

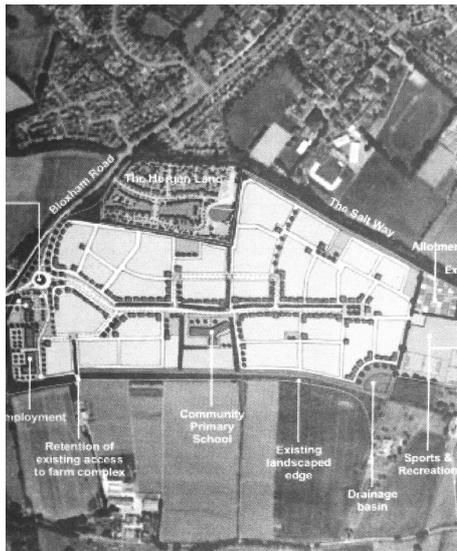
An application has been submitted by Green Pastures to build a new 60 bedroom Christian Care Home on the site of the old 50-bed Holly House. The site occupies a dominant corner location on Bath Road, which was incorporated into the Banbury Conservation Area in 2004, following campaigning by the Civic Society and the Town Council. The Civic Society is more than happy with the principle of redevelopment as a care home but, in common with most local residents, we are very disappointed with the position of the building on the site and the proposed massing and architectural detail. A row has broken out between the Council and the developers following very public comments by the

applicant, where they blamed the shortcomings of the design on the Council's officers. Sadly we have had to ask the Council to request that the

application be withdrawn, pending the submission of a more satisfactory scheme, or, failing this, that it be refused.



## Land west of Salt Way



Background: A planning application for 145 homes south-east of the A361 and south-west of Salt Way was submitted to CDC in Jan 2012. The application was contrary to the emerging Local Plan, which seeks to prevent Banbury expanding beyond Salt Way. It was refused for its effects on the heritage value of Salt Way and for its effects on landscape. The applicants, Barwood, appealed the refusal to the National Planning Inspectorate on the grounds that Cherwell has not got an up-to-date local plan and that it cannot demonstrate a 5-year housing supply. The Inquiry started before Christmas and has now been completed. The Civic Society opposed the application and made representations to the Inquiry stating that the application was predatory, speculative and unwanted and that it was a clear stalking horse for a far larger development of up to 2845 homes south-west of Salt Way, as revealed on Barwood's website.

Strongly present at the Inquiry were Gallagher Estates, whose application for 1000 homes west of Salt Way was first made public during the course of the Inquiry. The plan above published in the Banbury Guardian shows the 145-home Barwood site (in the north-west of the overall site), engulfed by the Gallagher Estate site stretching south towards Wykham Lane and Wykham Park Farm.

In pushing the bounds of Banbury beyond Salt Way, both proposed developments are contrary to general public opinion and all existing and emerging local plans. Should these proposals succeed, as well

they may, they will leave the emerging Cherwell Local Plan and Banbury Masterplan in tatters.

CDC is expected to refuse Gallagher Estates' application. Whether Gallagher will appeal is likely to be influenced by the result of the Barwood Inquiry, which is currently awaited.

## 12 & 13 Church Lane

In November 2009 CDC (rather inexplicably) gave consent for the substantial reconstruction and enlargement of 11-12 Church Lane to form one large retail unit and 5 flats. As this consent is now time-expired, the owners have re-submitted the application. We previously objected strongly, arguing that the proposal represented insensitive over-development of the site and that the loss of the existing Georgian building would harm the character and appearance of Church Lane and the 'Medieval Core Character Area' of the Banbury Conservation Area. The Civic Society has now reiterated its previous objection, backed up with additional information on the building's history.

To our dismay, we find that the building's



*Above: 12 & 13 Church Lane as it now is  
Below: before and after the proposed reconstruction.*



owners have already started pulling the building apart, despite not having any live consent to do so. They clearly believe that either the renewal of the lapsed consent is a given, or they are hoping to do so much damage as they can as quickly as possible, in the hope that this makes it impossible for the council to refuse the renewal of the expired consent.

We have written to the Council, asking them to take immediate enforcement action to put all works of demolition and development on hold, pending the planning situation being sorted out. Whether the re-submitted application stands or falls will be a test of CDC's new-found commitment to the district's built heritage.

## Traffic and Transport

### Banbury Traffic Advisory Committee

A matter of great concern raised at the Banbury Traffic Advisory Committee in March was the consent granted for the new 750-space multi-storey car-park at Banbury railway station. This is on the east side of the station, approached from Merton Street, replacing the present parking on the west side, approached from Tramway. The application was vociferously opposed by nearby residents, particularly those in the flats overlooking the station, as they will suffer much additional traffic and loss of daylight. It was also opposed by the Civic Society, Banbury Town Council and local CDC councillors.

The car-park is to be on the east side of the station, with a pedestrian bridge connecting to the present station footbridge. The car park and link bridge will be useful for pedestrians and motorists from the east side of the tracks, but it is feared that the loss of the Tramway car parks will result in traffic chaos as passengers from Banbury and the west are forced over the road bridge to access the new parking. Major hold-ups are anticipated, aggravated by the need for cars to negotiate both the very busy Bridge Street cross-roads and the Middleton Road/Merton Street junction. It seems that some efforts will be made to improve the existing road junctions. We will have to see what happens when the

car-park opens.

Elsewhere, considerable work is planned to facilitate traffic movement within the old cattle market area. Alterations are planned on Ermont Way, to make access to the Stroud Park restaurants and hotel, more "pedestrian and cyclist friendly". Some new pedestrian crossings have been recommended among other measures. The Sainsbury's junction on the Oxford Road and the Bridge Street cross-roads are still awaiting decisions on how they can best be improved.

A working team is looking into further car parking restrictions in certain roads within easy walking distance of the town centre where cars are being parked by people avoiding paying town-centre parking charges. Enforcement of parking restrictions in Banbury is perceived as lax now that there are no traffic wardens. The police have been approached over the matter and it remains to be seen what steps will be taken.

There is a clear wish in the Traffic Advisory Committee and the Oxfordshire Policy and Strategy Team to make things as convenient as possible for those who use public transport in Banbury, with some bus-stop improvements and new shelters to materialise soon.

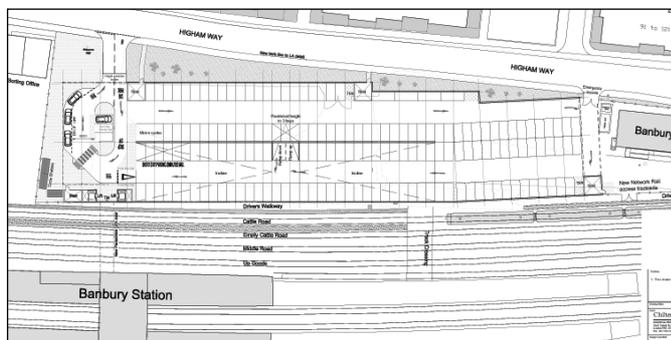
At the beginning of June Oxfordshire County Council is likely to be effecting changes to those bus services which it subsidises and puts out to tender. A great deal of research has been going on to understand the transport needs of people in the villages around Banbury, with the help of surveys of residents' views.

As has been mentioned before, members of the Civic Society are welcome to use the society to raise issues about transport and traffic matters in and around the town. Requests for matters to be taken to the Banbury Traffic Advisory Committee will be carefully considered.

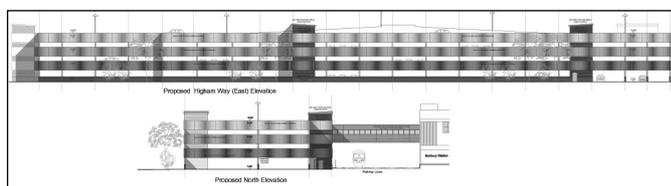
## Station Car Park

The Civic society submitted the following comments in response to Chiltern Railways application: 'The Banbury Civic Society has previously suggested this as a sensible location for a station car park, but ONLY as part of a wider development of the Canalside area, in conjunction with a road bridge across the station throat to Tramway and a link southeastward along the abandoned course of the Banbury - Brackley railway to a junction with the proposed Banbury South-to-East link road near the Banbury sewage works. Without such links, a substantial car park here (replacing the present car park on Tramway) will cause further traffic chaos on the station bridge, (as mentioned above in the Traffic and Transport section) on Middleton Road and the Bridge Street junction, particularly in conjunction with the now-consented temporary station car park on the oil depot site, accessed from Station Approach. We do not believe that a widened bridge (that MAY be delivered by the electrification of the Nuneton - Southampton electrification) is either desirable or capable of resolving the traffic issues at this location.

We are also concerned at the height and opacity of the proposed design. In its current form it will utterly blight the newly-built flats on the east side on Higham Road. The design could be significantly mitigated through the use of green, living walls, in place of the hard, opaque panels proposed. Whilst we would hope that the design of the car park will be mitigated,



Above: Plan of proposed car park  
Below: East and north elevations of the proposed car park, showing the view from Higham Way.



we are unfortunately compelled to oppose this application, unless the applicants are prepared to also build a public road bridge across the southern throat of the railway station, linking Tramway to the new car park and Higham Road.'

## Station Mural

The Civic Society has found itself embroiled in a row with Chiltern Railways.

As part of the centrally-funded National Stations Improvement Programme (NSIP), Chiltern Railways are creating a new passenger concourse in the low, 1950s part of Banbury station. This is so that the existing newspaper shop and half of the existing spacious, airy concourse, built in 2001, can be leased to Costa coffee. The conveniently located existing café on the footbridge is to close. Sadly the scheme conflicts with Nigel Fletcher's mural, commissioned by Chiltern in 2001 to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the opening of Brunel's original Banbury station, presented as a gift to the town with great ceremony in 2001 by Adrian Shooter (Chiltern Chairman, now retired) and accepted for us by Tony Baldry MP.



This was the suggested compromise scheme, put forward by the Civic Society but rejected by Chiltern as 'not presenting the forward-looking image Chiltern and Network Rail wish to present'.

Whilst the Civic Society has taken the public lead in highlighting the loss of the mural, disquiet about the proposal was first raised by the Cherwell Rail Users Group (CRUG), who were angry both about the loss of the artwork and by Chiltern's lack of consultation with them over the proposed changes to the station.

Saddened at the threatened loss of the mural, the Civic Society suggested that the left-hand side of the mural (showing the arrival of the first train) could be retained on view, with the remainder

carefully preserved for the future behind Costa's false ceiling. The Civic Society has since learned that Chiltern (now managed by Arriva) and Network Rail have rejected the idea, as they feel that 'the mural does not reflect the forward-looking image that Network Rail and Chiltern wish to project'.

It's clear that NR and Chiltern see Banbury station as their gateways to 'their' railway, notwithstanding that the railway network, including Banbury station, has actually belonged to us, the taxpayer, since we were obliged to buy Railtrack out of administration and take on their (now) £17.5 billion debt, following the disastrously-run upgrade of the West Coast Main Line and Railtrack's fatal incompetence at Ladbroke Grove, Southall and at Hatfield.

The public thus rightly sees Banbury station as 'our' gateway to our historic town. The mural is a key feature of this gateway. Frankly we view the use of public funds to re-site the concourse so that the existing space can be leased to Costa as an abuse of public money. We thus asked Tony Baldry to ask the Transport Minister to intervene in this unedifying affair. Unfortunately the Minister has declined to do so. It should be added that, following the Society's publicising of the issue, Chiltern have offered to work with the Society and the Town Council to find a new location for the mural elsewhere in the town, if a new location for it be found for it and if it proves possible to separate it from the wall it is painted on. These are both big 'ifs'. The artist, like ourselves, is understandably distressed at the separation of the mural from its designed context. Let's hope that Costa's coffee leaves a better taste in the mouth than this rather bitter affair...

## The Jolly Weavers

The Civic Society has objected to the proposed rebranding of the Grade II Jolly Weavers public house as 'The V Lounge', including the over-painting in black of the existing pub sign with its depiction of a jolly Georgian Banbury weaver.

Banbury was the national centre of the plush weaving trade through the 18th and

19th Centuries, with the area around the corner of South Bar and Bloxham Road being the centre of the out-working community of weavers who wove the material in their homes.

Banbury plush (a hard-wearing velvet) was used for furnishings (inc in the Houses of Parliament) and for the liveries (costumes) of the servants of all the crowned heads of Europe. The Jolly Weavers (so named for well over 150 years) is the last remaining visible vestige of this once world-renowned Banbury industry.

Government planning policy makes it clear that development should aim to preserve the heritage significance of designated and undesignated heritage assets, and wherever possible should aim to make that significance more apparent. The proposed renaming of this historic pub will only serve to obscure the heritage significance of both the pub itself and the wider Banbury Conservation Area. With no compensating public benefit, the application is contrary to the NPPF and thus cannot be approved. Following recent press coverage, Voujon have expressed a willingness to look again at the naming issue.



## Thai Orchid evening last December

The evening with Adrian Colwell was a great success. Adrian is the recently appointed Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy for Cherwell and South Northamptonshire District Councils. He talked at length about his ambitions for the town and the input he hopes for from organisations like the Banbury Civic Society.

## Social evening and AGM 12th June at 7.00pm

All Civic Society members and friends are invited to a social evening at **St Mary's Church Centre** to be followed by the 2013 AGM. Ian Harvey, the Civic Voice Network, Development and Campaigns Manager, will tell us what other civic societies around the country are doing and what the Civic Voice is doing nationally for the civic movement. There will be wine and nibbles and we hope that some of you will join with us to widen the scope of our society and demonstrate publicly what the civic movement can achieve. *We look forward to seeing you.*

## Summer Coach Trip

### Discovering Swindon

A Summer coach trip to Swindon from Banbury is being planned for a day in July. Some places to be included will be the STEAM museum, the railway village conservation area, the National Trust's eco HQ (Heelis) and the Wilts and Berks canal. A price of approx £20 pp is envisaged. Provisional bookings are being taken as seats will be limited. To book please contact Mo Mant : 01295 721630 / momant@btconnect.com. More details will shortly be published on the website and sent to members.

All comments to Laurence Carey  
design@h-and-p.demon.co.uk

## Banbury Civic Society Membership

Help us recruit new members.

**More members = more action.**

**More members = a louder voice.**

**Help us help Banbury.** Membership forms can be obtained from the Membership Secretary.

Please write to:

Jane Chen

BCS Membership Secretary

Flat 7, Northumberland Court

Duke Street OX16 4NJ

or telephone: 01295 279640

or email: chen\_yongmei@hotmail.com