

# Hitcham and Taplow Society

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[www.taplowsociety.org.uk](http://www.taplowsociety.org.uk)

# Hitcham and Taplow Society

*Protecting and enhancing Hitcham, Taplow, and the surrounding countryside for the local community*

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Cover picture: The Towpath by Issy Sellers

All material by Roger Worthington unless indicated.

## Editorial

The last issue highlighted the emerging Local Plan as a concern but the interim consultation on sites and Grey Belt that has just closed has rung all possible alarm bells. The Green Belt has been all but written off and the County has had almost all its control over development removed and democratic means of objection stifled. We must remember that this is not all the County's fault, they are under the government's jackboot. The Parish Council is paying consultants to assess how best to respond, in collaboration with Burnham Parish. We are also setting out with the Parish Council and EDRA and with the very generous assistance of a local donor to quickly develop the Neighbourhood Plan as this is one of the few remaining tools available to influence local changes. These problems arise through the power of the National Planning Policy Framework document, the latest version of which has just completed consultation and that acts as a straitjacket within which the County must make their plans. We will try to keep you updated as things progress towards the next full consultation of the Local Plan in late July.

The new AGM date in April is a little awkward. It is too late for this issue to carry a reminder for it and too early to be able to report on it. The magazine used to carry a full report but with modern technology the reports are now put straight up onto our website.

### Abbreviations and Acronyms

CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
County	Buckinghamshire Unitary Authority
EA	Environment Agency
HTS	Ourselves
TPC	Taplow Parish Council
LP	Local Plan
NP	Neighbourhood Plan

**Back-issues of this Newsletter  
can be found on our website:**

**[www.taplowsociety.org.uk](http://www.taplowsociety.org.uk)**

# Planning

This article is quite lengthy but I think it is needed to put things in context. I was going to put a grey map on the front page but there is enough grey in the article already so I went for something more cheerful. Impatient readers can jump to the summary at the end of the article.

The English planning world is driven by a government document called the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that sets the rules for the making of Local Plans (LP). It introduced the concept that development is presumed to be good, replacing the old idea that development was bad. When the present government came to office it didn't so much reform the planning system but rather took a steamroller to it. The 2024 NPPF version reintroduced mandatory housing targets and provided a mechanism for removing land from the Green Belt ("Grey Belt"). They have now just closed a consultation on yet another version which contains further drastic measures for cutting back the Green Belt. (the removal of footnote 7, prioritising development close to stations etc.) In conjunction with the parish council we did make objections to this NPPF consultation.

Bucks Council is now writing an LP for consultation this summer while noting possible impact of the next NPPF. It has been told by the government that if it hasn't submitted a Plan by the end of the year the government will do it for them. This is all of great importance for Taplow as our existing LP dates from 2011 and is now almost useless as protection against development.

So the County has now done an informal consultation over how it intends to find the 95,000 dwellings the government has told it to get built by 2045. That is close to being a modest sized city. There are two allocations concerning Taplow.

**First** is something called the HEELA table which lists all the sites that have been assessed under headings of Suitable and Unsuitable. There are no Suitable sites listed for Taplow but some 13 Unsuitable and 2 for Further Assessment (by the station). Fig 1 (overleaf) shows these sites.

**Second** is the allocation of Grey Belt land and several such areas are identified for Taplow. Fig 2 shows this. The Grey Belt across the county is assumed to be able to provide 4,500 dwellings but these are not yet allocated.

The presentation is technically correct but is misleading as to what can actually happen when the new version of the NPPF arrives. If the new NPPF is implemented quickly the LP will have to comply with it. If later it will have to form part of a revision and be borne in mind when assessing development applications.

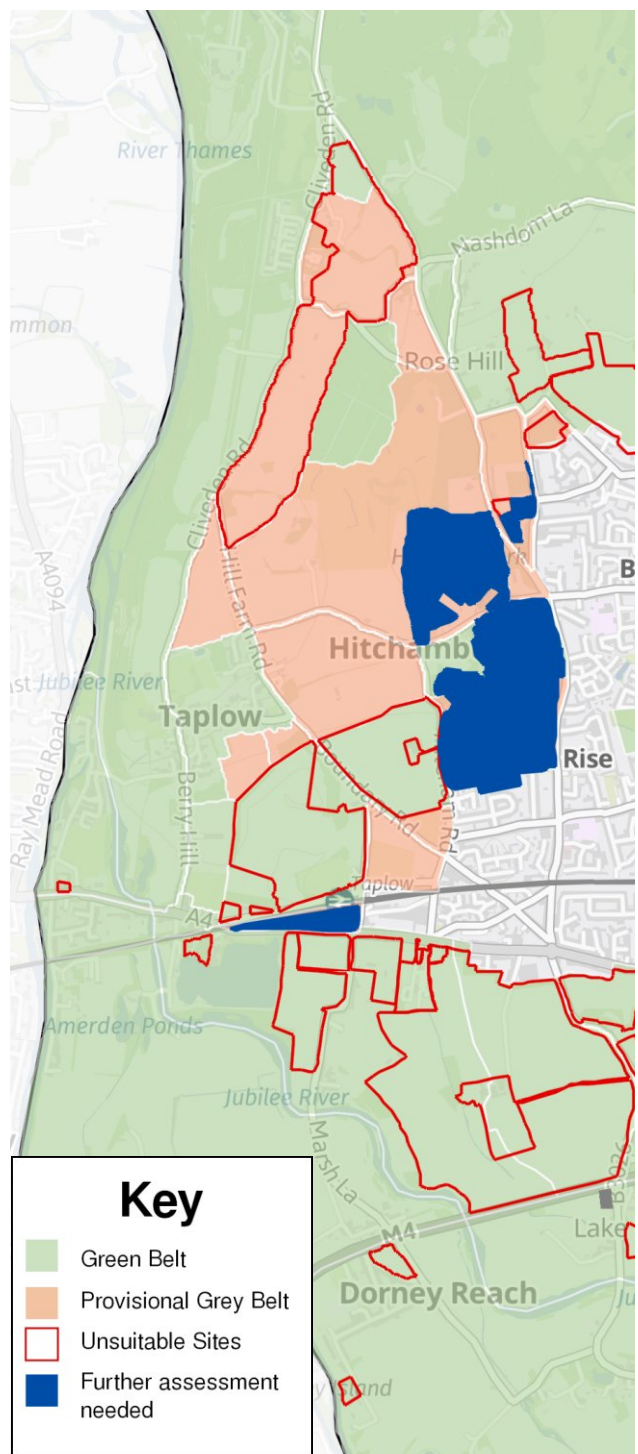


Figure 2: Provisional Grey Belt

**UNSUITABLE SITES**

Site Name/Location	Post Code	Type of Site	Promoted for	Conclusion Category
Land at Taplow Estate	SL6 0PQ	Greenfield	Residential	Green Belt, Flood Risk, Unacceptable harm on Heritage assets and Unacceptable harm on the Landscape
Land at Odds Farm	SL1 8PF	Greenfield	Residential	Green Belt, Unsuitable location and Unacceptable harm on the Landscape
Barge Farm, Land south of Bath Road, Taplow	SL6 0NP	Greenfield	Residential	Green Belt
VW Garage, Bath Road, Taplow, Maidenhead	SL6 0AH	Brownfield	Residential	Green Belt
Land at Wooburn Common Rd, Wooburn Common	HP10 0LX	Brownfield	Residential	Green Belt
Land south of Mobile Home Park at Wooburn Common Rd, Wooburn Common	HP10 0JX	Greenfield	Residential	Green Belt and Unacceptable intrusion into the Open countryside
Cliveden stud	SL6 0HL	Mixed	Residential	Provisional Grey belt, Out of character and Unsustainable location
Land adjacent to 1 Railway Cottage, Approach Road, Taplow	SL6 0NP	Greenfield	Residential	Green Belt and Flood Risk
Marshmead Farm and Marshmead, Marsh Lane, Taplow	SL6 0DE	Mixed	Residential	Green Belt and Flood risk
Taplow Car boot Sale, Land at Marsh Lane and Bath Road, Taplow	SL6 0NP	Greenfield	Residential	Green Belt and Flood risk
Land at Approach Road, Taplow	SL6 0NP	Greenfield	Mixed Use	Green Belt, Unsustainable Location, Unacceptable Intrusion into the open countryside and Flood risk
Land North of Station Road, Taplow	SL6 0NP	Greenfield	Mixed Use	Green Belt
Land off Amerden Lane, Taplow	SL6 0AR	Mixed	Residential	Green Belt, Trees and Unsuitable access
Poplar Farm	SL1 7AE	Greenfield	Mixed Use	Green Belt

**SITES TO BE CONFIRMED**

Land to the south of Taplow Station (including Roots Nursery), Taplow	SL6 0NL	Brownfield	Mixed Use	Provisional Grey Belt
Land adjacent to Taplow Station	SL6 0NL	Greenfield	Residential	Provisional Grey Belt

Figure 1: Taplow's part of the HEELA table

The data to see what impact the new NPPF could have is contained in the Appendix 10 files. For strategic planning matters Taplow is divided into a number of land parcels. Currently Taplow has five – four are in the south west area and one very large one covers the rest of Taplow. To be able to make allocations of Grey Belt, Taplow is to be divided into many smaller parcels. For each of these parcels the county has conducted an evaluation for it to be classed as Grey Belt. Most of these remain as Green Belt but only by virtue of footnote 7 of the current NPPF (see below). The pink areas of Fig 2 are identified as *provisional* Grey Belt as they are also protected today by footnote 7. The NPPF in preparation removes footnote 7 protection from the evaluations, so if unamended then many of these sites can become Grey Belt.

**Footnote 7** applies restrictions on where the presumption in favour of development applies.

*7: The policies referred to are those in this Framework (rather than those in development plans) relating to: habitats sites (and those sites listed in paragraph 194) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, a National Landscape, a National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 75); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.*

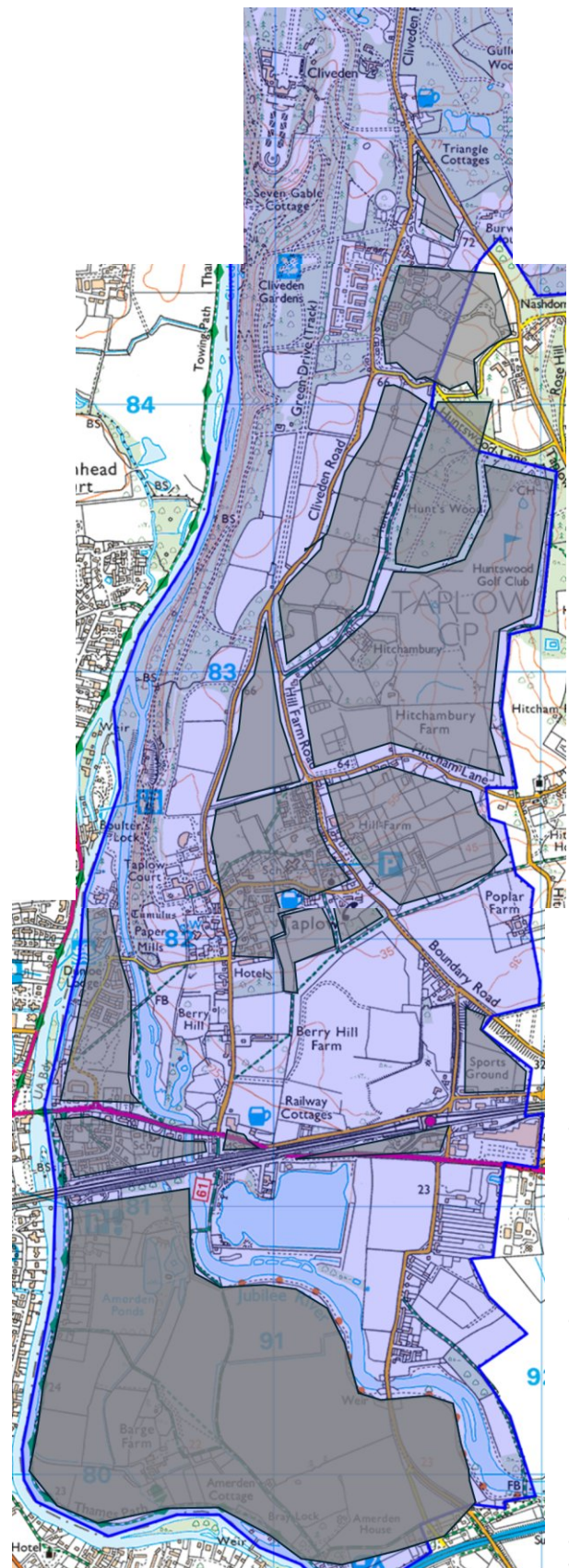
**Of twenty two parcels assessed in Taplow only five would remain as Green Belt.** This means that many of the 13 Unsuitable development sites of Fig 1 would become Suitable as they sit on land parcels kept as Green Belt by footnote 7. See Fig 3.

## So what is Grey Belt?

Green Belt is defined by five criteria but only two of these are relevant here. If a land parcel does not meet at least one of them "strongly" then it can be downgraded.

Grey Belt is still regarded as part of the Green Belt but its strength as an objection to development is greatly reduced.

It does not mean that it is necessarily suitable for any development and an application will still have to pass all the normal criteria (highways, sustainability, eco,..) but the Green Belt defense is greatly weakened. The Taplow maps above show



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Fig 3: Potential Grey Belt

which areas could become Grey Belt with the implementation of the new NPPF.

A pending problem for Taplow is also the priority given in the coming NPPF for housing development close to stations even if the land is Green Belt.

## So what should we do?

The Parish Council is cooperating with Burnham Parish Council and consultants to advise on responses we can make when the LP comes for full consultation in the summer. This can focus on things like the absence of adequate infrastructure (roads, medical facilities, station parking etc) that will make any large scale development unacceptable. We can criticise the processes used by the county in assessing sites and Grey Belt areas. We can also create a scenario for how we want Taplow to evolve in the middle / longer term. It may also be that the new NPPF is modified in response to the consultation and some of the more drastic impacts reduced.

The Parish Council is also urgently restarting the production of a Neighbourhood Plan (NP). The Society is a member of the Taplow Neighbourhood Plan Working Party. The value of an NP is that when made it has equal status with the NPPF and the LP provided it does not contradict them. Even in draft form its policies can influence the content of an emerging LP. To that end the council is funding, with some very generous local support, a rapid production of core policies for an NP, looking to have them in place by the time of the LP consultation. It would not be sensible to complete an NP before the LP is agreed to avoid clashes but it should be

fully ready and waiting by then. An NP cannot stop all development but it can direct where it is suitable and influence its form through things called Design Guides.

The Parish Council increased the precept for 2026 in anticipation that we will be having to defend against multiple applications for significant developments. These will be arriving well before the new LP is in place but using the grey belt expectations to succeed.

## Homework guide

### NPPF:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/697b71c52ff8d10a830d5d4a/Draft\\_NPPF\\_December\\_2025.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/697b71c52ff8d10a830d5d4a/Draft_NPPF_December_2025.pdf)

### The County Local Plan documents:

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-planning/buckinghamshire-local-plan/>

## Summary

If current government planning changes are implemented then much of Taplow parish will be reclassified as "Grey Belt" and become vulnerable to development applications.

*Roger Worthington*

# Regular planning items

The previous article referred to two sites by the railway station – the Roots site and the other piece of land running down to the railway bridge. These two sites are in pre-application discussion for development – "mixed use" for the Roots site and residential for the other one. The sites are presently Green Belt and any application would almost certainly rely on the provisional identification of the sites as Grey Belt in the Local Plan and the fact that our current LP is very out of date. They might not need to wait for the new LP to be adopted.

The long running battles over unlawful activities on Cliveden Stud land continues although some appeals have failed and land is being slowly cleared. The land is provisionally identified as Grey Belt in the Local Plan consultations.

## Parking Enforcement

The new parking scheme around the station is fully approved and funded and we are told it will be implemented before the existing temporary yellow lines system expires in the summer. You may remember that earlier schemes for yellow lines went nowhere as the county had no money to do it or to cover enforcement. The introduction of charges for parking sadly solved this.

Our previous issue reported on the anticipated arrival of enforcement by the parking teams for the river moorings. River cruisers will, of course, have to suffer the nautical indignity of having to PARK their boats rather than MOOR them.

Great credit to the Parish Council for this double success.

# Cedar Chase at 60 – Then and Now

*"The test of good housing is not whether it can be built easily, but whether it can be lived in easily."  
Eric Lyons, Architect*

Looking over the back-issues of HTS magazines, I find that *Newsletter 86* (Autumn 2006) covered the 40th birthday of Cedar Chase and *Newsletter 105* (Spring 2016) celebrated the 50th. Well it is now Spring 2026 and our SPAN-designed estate is preparing for its 60th birthday.

*"I was getting tired of dragging right across London every day to BBC Television Centre at Shepherds Bush, and a half-hour tootle down the new M4 motorway seemed very attractive (yes, seriously, it used to take me 29 minutes in my Mini; I even used to come home at lunchtime occasionally – but then, petrol only cost 3s 6d a gallon). As convinced modernists, we were bowled over by the brilliant design of the houses – Eric Lyons was probably the finest domestic architect in mid-century Britain" ... "Only the bottom row had been finished, including the show house at No 9, furnished and decorated in the height of sixties' style, with walls in Thames green, Seville orange and damson purple." (Author's note: If ANYONE has a picture showing this colour scheme we would be delighted to have a copy).*



Large windows bring in plenty of light

Cedar Chase was built on the site of the old Bible College known as Taplow Hill and as was the custom for SPAN, the existing mature trees

Photos by Andrew Findlay

Much has already been written about the enlightened partnership of Eric Lyons and Leslie Bilsby who designed and built over 30 SPAN estates between 1947 and 1978, offering good, modern design set in carefully designed landscapes. From the original prospectus of 19 Cedar Chase, SPAN estates "spans the gap between the monotony of the typical speculative development and the architecturally-designed, individually built residence that has become for all but a few, financially unattainable". I note that *HTS Newsletter 86* had a piece entitled *Living in Taplow Toilets* from Tony Read who, with Rosemary, was one of the original residents:





Taplow Hill was originally the home of a wealthy London wine merchant

and planting were preserved and integrated with new horticultural ideas led by Ivor Cunningham. Today we still have many of the mature trees (the apple crop was particularly generous last autumn) and some of the 'new' planting is still thriving, despite the necessarily brutal pruning that our viburnum bushes sometimes receive from our trusty communal gardeners, Holdfords.

Tree houses and dens come and go though the remnants of Giles's 'man trap' can still be seen. In the heydays of the late 1960s there were around 50 children between the 24 houses and all those we have talked to report it as an idyllic place to grow up.



Warren and Cris building the tree house

The community is not only for children. During the covid pandemic the community spirit, always strong, became even greater. Neighbours actively looked out for neighbours. Jeanette designed monthly competitions to tax children and adults alike, from the socially-

distanced Beanie Bear hunt over Easter 2020, through art, craft, photography and talent competitions, to the Cedar Chase Bake Off over Easter 2021 (with socially distanced sampling).

Something we have particularly noticed recently is that when a house comes up for sale many potential buyers are looking specifically for a community to join, not just a house to live in – the queue for the seller's open day literally stretched down the path for number 11!

Our communal strength is in each and all of our residents. We hear of other communities with Residents' Associations run by just two or three elderly members or who have handed the management job over to professional managing agents. Cedar Chase has always run it's own estate for it's own residents and we have always had a full committee of eight, each taking responsibility for a particular element – gardens, finance, buildings update and maintenance, and so on. Is it sometimes hard work? Definitely. Is it worth it? Absolutely!

I note that the article for the 50th started "50 years old and still modern". That is still true, and getting more so! Although the fabric of a Cedar Chase property is the responsibility of the owner, over the last 10 years we have managed projects to replace our old hot-air boilers, renew windows and doors with exact replacements using a local craftsman, renew roofs with up-to-spec insulation and install solar panels on roofs.



The colour and position of solar panels is carefully defined

Typically a project is driven by one or two houses who gather ideas, consult with experts to get a detailed design, liaise with the committee to gain approval and, if necessary, present the design to an AGM. The result is a reference design with trusted craftsmen who can do a good repeatable job for anyone on the estate. That's real community!

Our latest project has been to design and install Electric Vehicle (EV) charging in our main car park with much of the labour provided by Cedar Chase residents.

No heat pumps yet – that's next on the list.

And so to our birthday celebration. We invite you to an exhibition in Taplow Village Hall on Sunday September 6th from 10:00 am; we also anticipate having some open homes and gardens. There are so many people around Hitcham and Taplow who have lived in Cedar Chase over the years so do come and see what stays the same and what has changed. Always been curious about 'those modern houses' in the middle of Taplow? Come and join us to see how we have evolved and how the community works.

Jane Curry



Many residents turned out for several days to help with the groundworks for the EV chargers.

Here you see Sarah, Jane, Clare, Alan, Tim, Cris and Andrew. One of the dual-charger posts is shown on the right: job done!

[www.cedar-chase.org.uk](http://www.cedar-chase.org.uk)



## 50 years ago

A busy year in Taplow. The Village was declared as a conservation area:

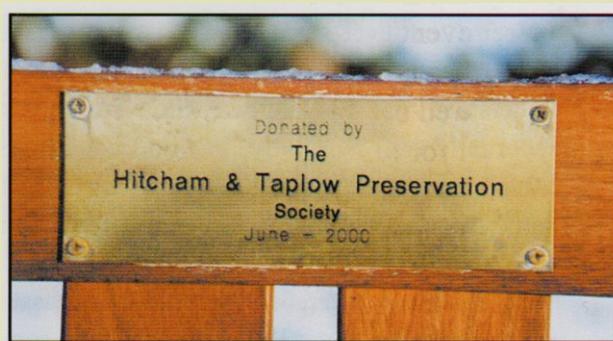
*The Beaconsfield District Council formally designated Taplow as Conservation Area V50 on 25th June 1975.. Many of the suggestions made at the special meeting last Spring have been adopted. The two areas of the original proposal have been made into one by the inclusion of Springfield and the gardens of Stockwells; the whole field to the south west of Taplow Court has been included and the northeast corner has been extended to bring in the Church Cottages. Your committee feels that this is a very satisfactory result and was gratified to receive the thanks of the Beaconsfield District Planning Officer for organising the public meeting and providing detached comment on the consultative edition of the document.*

The Playgroup at the Village Hall was set up and the Society helped restore Bapsey Pond. The County Plan emphasized the need to *restrict* development in South Bucks!

Hitcham and Taplow Society

## 25 years ago

The Society funded a bench on the Thames bank by the Maidenhead Bridge. It is now in need of some TLC which we will be doing shortly.



**A seat with a View**



# Hassocks

We all know about hassocks (Old English, now kneeler) – those dusty cushiony things to kneel on for prayers in church. They did give some comfort though after wriggling on a hard bench during the sermon. They had retired to dingy oblivion at St Nicolas after being removed during the Covid epidemic and there they lay until Esmé Mitchell came across them.

Photos by Esmé Mitchell



Who made them, when, how, she wondered and being Esmé she set off to find out.

It appeared that almost all of them were created by the ladies of St Nicolas some 60 years ago. There were thirteen of them who made 152 tapestry tops:

The Bishop(!), the Hares (17), Grigg (50), Moore, Garner, Lewis, Jones, the Wellers, Urwick, Morrison, Warburton(20) and Sim(34). The kneelers were made up by: Henly, Hubbard, Sim and Williams.

Esmé was able to find who they were and where they lived without too much difficulty through current senior members of Taplow who remembered most of them. That was true except for Miss Grigg who no-one knew of. It mattered because Miss Grigg made by far the most of the kneelers in the church – 50 of them. So Esmé set off again via archives and on-line Ancestry and found her.

Miss Gladys Ethelwyn Grigg.

Surprising that no-one remembered her as she lived in Taplow most of her life although born in Warwickshire in 1888. She lived finally at The Old Manor House and earlier at Hill House and her father was the Stationmaster at Taplow. She died at the Red Cross Hospital in 1965 and is buried at St Nicolas. This late Victorian spinster led an apparently blameless life but Esme discovered through more research that in August 1952 she upped sticks and sailed to New York, returning on the Queen Mary on December 28th. Sightseeing

trip of a lifetime? family visit? romance?.. We shall never know.

So that was how the kneelers came into being but what to do with them? They were grubby and tatty but on close inspection the tapestry tops were beautiful and actually in good repair. A plan was hatched to restore their beauty and bring them back into use. Esmé, Claire Spencer, Hilary Monaghan, Sheila Peroni and Gillian Hanbury set about it. Rather than restore as hassocks it was decided to strip off the tapestry tops, clean, straighten and remake into pew length runners with a foam rubber backing. Seventeen unpickers toiled at this task. The assembly into runners was done by Mr Derek Fagg, a professional upholsterer from Windsor who has been very involved and supportive of the project. It all cost money and an appeal was launched. Although challenging, this was rather small beer for a church that has raised enormous sums recently to replace the heating system and remove the asbestos from the crypt and happily many donors have been able to support the project in tandem with three fund raising events.



Derek Fagg and Esmé



Although all the covers are unique (except the two for the churchwardens), only four colours of thread were used for all of them. So the runners are now in use and have brightened the church. The comfort they provide has supported better attention to the sermon although prayers are now perhaps a reminder of the mortification of the flesh. The project started at Easter last year and has been fully completed just in time for this Easter.

*As told to Roger Worthington by Esmé Mitchell.*



The 17 unpickers with sore fingers were:  
 Anne Alton, Linda Beer, Sue Blore, Marianne Bolton, Joan Broers, Gillie Hanbury, Marion Hawkesworth,  
 Nikki Jeffries, Chris Jones, Ann King, Esmé Mitchell, Hilary Monaghan, Julia Paskins, Sheila Peroni,  
 Angela Plant, Sonia Sharma and Fiona Uden



# VGP

The Village Green Party celebrates its 40th year this June. Eva Lipman tells me that its origins come from when the paper mill was still in business on Mill Lane. The mill held an annual jamboree in a big marquee, They apparently offered the use of the marquee to the Society for an extra day. The Society had visited the New Taplow Paper Mill previously but the first mention of the marquee is in our Spring 1984 issue:

*"The Restoration of the Cliveden Hanging woods is of concern to us all. On 5th July we are having our Society's own talk on this topic and the venue will be the New Taplow Paper Mills, which have kindly offered us the use of their marquee."*

The Autumn 1985 issue refers to another party:

*"After two previous occasions when the weather was less than favourable – quite awful in fact – we reckoned that we were due for a really fine evening this year for the party at the Cliveden Orangery. On the afternoon of 21st June, Midsummer Day...."*

The event then appeared in its current form at midsummer 1986 as recorded in the Spring Newsletter:

*"On Saturday 21st June the Society is organising a Pic-Nic on the Taplow Village Green in aid of the Hitcham Church Appeal. We gather together from 6.30pm and the revels end at 10pm. We expect you to buy a ticket for £1 head. You will be regaled by the Hitcham Players and there's also Barn Dancing to a caller. There will be a bar and we hope to roast part of an ox and you can buy a slice or two.."*

The Hitcham Players (Mike Sanderson) are still with us although the bar has disappeared (surely the Oak & Saw?) and our chairman at the time was Robert Hanbury who has only just stepped down from your committee.

The party has endured unchanged since. We think that is much of its charm as a family party for all ages. With no distractions people talk to each other and dance till well after dark.

The fun of the evening obscures the enormous workload needed to make the evening look effortless.

After inventing the event from scratch every year a spreadsheet now carries the wisdom of the ages.

Booking the band well in advance, running the ticketing system, risk assessment, buying a cow leg (have you ever tried pushing a 6ft iron rod through one?), electrics, the fire from 6am,... but the greatest effort is finding the many volunteers to erect and dismantle the marquee, man the roasting, do the carving, serve the food (350 helpings) and clear up afterwards. Without them there would be no party. So when someone from Rupert Sellers' team knocks on your door and says "can you help for a couple of hours?" – just say **I would love to**. Bring your children along to show them your skills.

So come along on June 20th to celebrate our unique midsummer frolic and lend a hand to make sure it is there next year.



Photos by Andrew Findlay



# Old Priory Gardens (OPG)

The Old Priory Gardens are the remnants of the garden of Taplow Priory which stood where Wellbank is now.

Although liability for safety lies with the Parish Council it has long been maintained by dedicated volunteers such as Tony Harding under the guidance of THRGA (Taplow Recreational Grounds Association, a charity). As is the way with volunteers they sadly fade away over time and the OPG has been neglected for some time other than for the need of the Parish Council to safety-check the trees and prune as needed.

Recently an initiative from the council led by Saty Joshi has led to

an appraisal of what is needed at remedial level and how it may be maintained at a more consistent manner. An initial cleaning up and clearing away has been very successful and TPC are working on future support approaches. There has to be a balance between keeping it as natural as possible while supporting access. The clean-up team was: Graham Jones, Nate Eitutis, Miv, Paul Monroe, Dan Evans, Michael Barnes, Hugo Reeves and Saty Joshi.

A second professional clearing of the larger hut proved rather challenging but again successful.

*Roger Worthington*



Saty Joshi

# Tidy up Taplow 2026

We seem to be lucky with the weather for the annual TUT event however, this year, not so fortunate with A4 traffic. The start of the car boot sale brought out the crowds which held up many of our participants.

It was a jolly crowd who walked far and wide across Taplow, maps in hand, with routes set out by Mike Turner. the Hi-viz tabards not only useful safety features but also a great HTS advert. Most folks enjoy a drink, home-made cakes (thanks Charlie and Julia) and chat after their trek. Many people completing their litter pick with a local they have never previously known. It's a very social event.

Interesting statistics:

- 1 – person came to help from outside the area
- 8 – decades of ages collecting litter
- £20 – donation from the car boot sale
- 35 – participants
- 50 – bags of litter collected

*Jacqueline Turner*

Hitcham and Taplow Society



Aidan and Ava



# Village Hall Art

While not quite a gallery yet, the Perkins Room at the Village Hall is steadily acquiring paintings with some local connection.

Miv Wayland-Smith has added to the collection with the purchase of another watercolour by Philip Priestley appropriately titled *Spring in Taplow*.



*Spring in Taplow*

Philip Collingwood Priestley, 1901-1973, was a celebrated painter, illustrator and teacher. He was born in Leicester and studied at Leicester Art College under John Frederick Pettinger and George Ingles. After being apprenticed to a graphic designer and lithographer, Priestley joined the RAF during the war years but continued to paint with a preference for watercolours. In 1945 he had two watercolours exhibited at the Royal Academy, London, with other works following at the Royal Institute, the RBA, and galleries in Brighton. And so began a prolific professional career. After debriefing in 1947, Priestley joined film companies as

a cartoonist and started teaching at Maidenhead College of Art where he also drew cartoons for the local Newspaper. He had works shown in the Royal Academy Summer Exhibitions of 1955 and 1958 and exhibited in galleries in Leicester (College of Art), Nottingham and Bournemouth.

Priestley lived in Ray Mill Road East where he also had his studio and continued to paint right up until his death on September 5 1973.

*Catherine Howard*



Priestley with his friend Stanley Spencer



*Footpath to Taplow* previously donated to the Village Hall by Miv and Victoria Wayland-Smith

# Cricket Club

The 2026 cricket season will soon be upon us. Once again Taplow Cricket Club will be hosting junior cricket programmes for 5-8 year olds (All Stars) and 8-11 year olds (Dynamos). Registration is open on the ECB website now; places fill-up fast so don't delay! The 8-week All Stars and Dynamos programmes will

start on Friday 8th May at 5:30pm. We are also offering All Stars on Saturday morning this year.

The Taplow Cricket season will be busy with the juniors in the Berkshire Youth U11, U13 and U15 leagues, three Saturday teams playing in the Thames Valley League, and a full schedule of

social Sunday cricket. If you are interested in playing or volunteering, please do email the club on [admin@taplowcc.org.uk](mailto:admin@taplowcc.org.uk)

For 2026, we are excited to announce that we are installing two new outdoor nets. The club are grateful to the supporters of our Crowdfunder campaign, and especially the £5,000 donated by the Sport England Movement Fund. It is hoped the new facilities will help to reinvigorate the use of the cricket club by the community.

The cricket club falls within the Taplow Conservation Area and therefore our Planning Application had to be sensitive of the impact to

significant viewpoints. There are two significant viewpoints within the boundary of the Taplow Cricket Club: (1) Looking North towards the Wickenden House (a significant unlisted building); and (2) Looking South towards the Club pavilion. Both viewpoints will not be impacted by changes to the cricket nets as they will be in the same location. Those of you who are familiar with the planning process, will know how stressful it can be. The club wishes to thank the parish council and Roger Worthington for his support.

*Drew Somerville*

## Churchill and Hess: The Hitcham House Mystery

At 5.45pm on the 10th of May 1941, a Messerschmitt Bf110 took off from Southern Germany bound for Scotland. Its sole pilot had spent months preparing: testing the specially modified aircraft, fitting auxiliary fuel tanks for the long crossing, and studying North Sea weather patterns. Despite favourable conditions that evening, the journey was hazardous – three Spitfires were scrambled to intercept the enemy plane following radar sightings. After evading their defensive efforts, the pilot ejected just south of Glasgow and parachuted into Allied territory.

The pilot was Rudolf Hess, Deputy Führer of the Nazi Party.

Hess's intention was to broker peace with Winston Churchill. Disillusioned with the prospect of fighting a war on two fronts, he made the covert and apparently completely unsanctioned diplomatic mission to the UK. He sought an audience with the Prime Minister, hoping to carve up Northern Europe and prevent the destruction of Axis powers.

Meanwhile, during the Second World War, Hitcham House was requisitioned by the RAF and became the headquarters of the RAF Military Police. After being captured in Scotland, Hess was taken into their custody and transferred south, possibly to Hitcham. Churchill was informed and discussed the matter with members of the War Cabinet before dispatching a foreign affairs aide to interview Hess. His own movements over the period are understandably opaque but it is difficult to imagine that Churchill, even if determined to

reject any peace overture, would have ignored the opportunity to question Hitler's deputy firsthand.

Further, notes found at the property and referenced in the Times suggest that an RAF Officer stationed there revealed that a meeting between Churchill and Hess specifically took place in the Castle Room, now the master bedroom of 2 Hitcham House. The room has views across to Windsor Castle – a detail rich with symbolism, given Hess's belief that King George VI opposed Churchill's wartime strategy.

Hess's mission was unsuccessful. He would ultimately be found guilty of 'conspiracy to commit crimes against peace' at the Nuremberg Trials and spend the rest of his days in Spandau Prison where he took his own life in 1987, aged 93. A divisive character – considered, by some, to have attempted what appeared to be a humanitarian act, but who was nonetheless also the architect of much of the Nazi philosophy.

The official record remains silent. No itinerary confirms Churchill's movements, and no transcript survives. Perhaps none ever existed. Yet if the Prime Minister did sit across from Hitler's deputy in a quiet room in Hitcham House, it would have been one of the most extraordinary conversations of the war. Two men briefly confronting the future of Europe, one defending it, the other seeking to reshape it. Some secrets of the Second World War remain sealed not in archives, but in silence.

*Simon Wray*

# Lincoln's End

*Remembering Lincoln Lee*

## Taplow on Tour

Four Taplow cyclists recently embarked on a 109km cycle race. The Cape Town Cycle Tour is known as one of the most beautiful routes in the world. Our Taplow on Tour cyclists (and medalists) from left to right: Dan Evans Brar, Jane Barnard, Paul Monroe and Jamie Barnard.



Lunel Van-Zijl

Although well known by now it is worth recording that St Nicolas Church was able to announce at its Christmas Fair that it had fully raised the £30,000 needed for the asbestos removal from the crypt so the church was warm for the event!

If you have interest in or concerns for the River Thames – look to join the River Thames Society: [riverthamessociety.org.uk](http://riverthamessociety.org.uk)



Roger Worthington

## Miscellany

The Parish Council has welcomed Graham Jones from the High Street as their newest member and is now up to full strength. We are told that Graham will be looking at bringing the web site up to date.

Don't forget to be up early in July for the Boulter's to Bray Swim  
<https://boulterstobrayswim.org/>

The Ocean Oarsmen Ben Cornwall and Henry Eastick have safely completed their rowing of the Atlantic in 47 days. Their fund raising for the Alexander Devine Children's Hospice Service is still open at:  
[justgiving.com/page/ocean-oarsmen-1](http://justgiving.com/page/ocean-oarsmen-1)

The Taplow Boys choir more than held their own with the Wooburn Singers in a recent full concert at All Saints Church Maidenhead. Founded by Gillian Dibden, the choir was conducted by Elisabeth Cullen.

St Nicolas school celebrating around the Christmas Tree on the Green

## Village Green Party

### 40th Anniversary!

18:00 – 22:30

20th June 2026

[www.taplowsociety.org.uk/vgp](http://www.taplowsociety.org.uk/vgp)

There will be a raffle in support of Alexander Devine Children's Hospice Service