



Business, As Usual

Rebecca B. DUEÑAS LEÓN

Ultimately an Amersham businessman bought *JJ's*: not the community, not even a Chesham Bois resident. Christopher Mellor and his business partner, Francesco Rocca, now own 28 Bois Lane.

The premises will comprise 'Chesham Bois Village Store' and, subject to planning and licensing permissions being obtained, 'The Bois Club'. The Store will include a high-class delicatessen but will still sell everyday items like baked beans, stamps and cards. "I hope that The Store will return to being the focal point of village life, somewhere villagers can meet and have a natter or just stay and read the newspapers." 'The Bois Club' will serve as a much-needed social centre open throughout the day until evening Monday to Saturday.



Christopher is adamant: "It will *not* be a restaurant serving three courses nor a wine bar; just light bites, baguettes, sandwiches and home-cooked, hot and cold dishes"

So we will have our store, a place to sit, eat and drink alcohol, we will even have an ATM machine, what else? "A parcel collection service may run with a small fee charged by Royal Mail." Are Christopher and Franco the saviours that the village hoped for then? Christopher is unflinching about the project: "It's 99% business, 1% 'save the store'. We are in a business to make a profit but with attention to community needs as well."

**"I hope villagers use it:
I hope it succeeds."**

It would be easy to snipe at the hard-nosed business attitudes of Francesco and Christopher but it may be just what the village needs: even had the community bought the premises, it would still be looking for a profit and new ways to attract custom. Christopher and Francesco have energy and drive, experience and plans and most of all the money no other individual or group was willing to supply. We, the villagers can make it sink or swim: let's give it a chance and help it become what we need. "We expect it to complement what's already there. I hope villagers use it: I hope it succeeds."

Chesham Bois Village Store and 'The Bois Club'



We are delighted to announce that our grand re-opening will be in the New Year. Regular updates can be found on www.cheshambois-parishcouncil.gov.uk If you are interested in working in the new venture please call Chris Mellor on 01494-434555 We look forward to meeting and welcoming back all The Store's customers and many new ones in 2004.

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Front Lines

The term 'affordable housing' here attracts as fierce a reaction as 'asylum seekers' does in Kent. We ask, 'Why here?' 'Who's coming in?' 'Where from?'

Concerns about housing being built and whether it will fit the character of the village are really concerns about whether newcomers will 'fit' into the village. What style characterises the village anyway? The twelfth century church? The Edwardian era? 1960's? Under all this lies the worry that things will change - for the worse.

Makes me think of Royston Vasey

Yes, the village has a quasi-rural way of life; it is orderly and almost consensually conservative. Yet it lacks vigour, the influence of young people, a real community spirit (like tends to mix with like) and the idea that embracing the new could be socially profitable. This leaves us feeling hostile to new faces, suspicious, vulnerable and wholly unwelcoming. Makes me think of Royston Vasey.

People from shabby areas where no one speaks properly, where people get shot and where teenage Mums form a sizeable part of the population do move into affordable housing in small villages - often with no one even noticing.

Housing matters: you are at least being asked to comment, now be polite and complete and return those questionnaires!

Editor

❖ *Deep thanks to my partner for his godly intervention in this newsletter...*

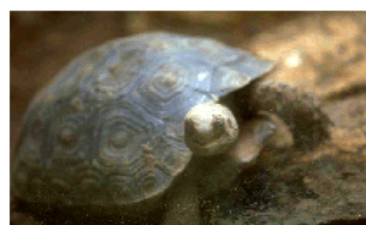
No Place Like Home

Sam GALVIN

As the Rural Housing Enabler my aims are to work in the project area in partnership with Aylesbury Vale and Chiltern District Councils' housing and planning departments, Buckinghamshire County Council and other local partners in order to:

- ▶ Enable the provision of affordable housing to meet the local needs of rural communities within the part of Buckinghamshire that comprises the identified project area
- ▶ Raise awareness of the need for affordable housing in rural areas

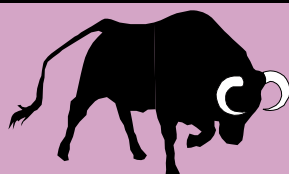
Meeting local Affordable Housing needs can be achieved in different ways. In the Aylesbury Vale District, it will be common for most affordable housing to be new build on small sites. In the Chiltern District, it can be difficult to provide new, affordable housing in rural areas due to high land prices and restrictions imposed by the Greenbelt and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Consequently, although there will be some potential for new build development, much of the affordable housing will be provided through other initiatives using existing accommodation, such as:



On the move... human beings want a secure home

- ▶ bringing empty properties back into use
- ▶ encouraging people to let rooms out
- ▶ helping people access support in their own homes e.g. help with mobility adaptations.

For further information about affordable housing schemes in your area, please contact Sam Galvin on: 01296 421036 or at sam@bucks-comm-action.org.



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Be A Local Hero

June GOSSLING, Village Appraisal Group Secretary

Did you scribble something on a post-it note at the Golden Jubilee fair in 2002? And what did you think would become of it? Well, most ideas and requests have been taken seriously. They now form the basis of an official draft action plan for Chesham Bois. First on the list was 'save the village shop'. We did that.

Do you walk your children to school? What speed is the traffic doing in Bois

Lane? Can you get about if you don't have a car? The Village Appraisal Group (VAG) wants to tackle these concerns as highlighted by you, the public. There must be many of you who have something to say about traffic and transport. So please put yourself forward to join a small working group to take them further. Members are just ordinary folk like you with limited time. The last meeting was in September, the next one on January 19th at 7.45 pm. We have successfully bid for a grant to do the groundwork so it's ready, steady, go! Visit www.cheshambois.com the VAG website or call me on 01494 432585.

2. Stop speeding traffic

3. Safer routes to school.

3. Park-ing!

4. No over development!

5. Play-ground

6. Provide social centre

7. Affordable housing

Dishing the Dirt

David KIRCHHEIMER

Wouldn't most people in Chesham Bois would be upset if they saw someone throwing litter in the streets or dumping rubbish in the gutter? It seems strange then that there are a number of residents who see nothing wrong with dumping their garden waste in the local woods. There are piles by footpaths, in hollows and even the occasional bonfire seen this summer right in the middle of tinder-dry woods - which lunatic was that?



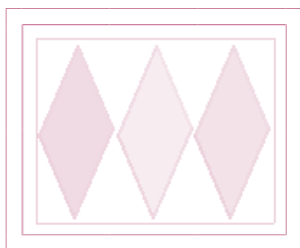
Dirty, slovenly louts... The wealthy folk of Chesham Bois

Judging by the wheelbarrow ruts, this is clearly being done by people who either have big enough gardens to provide their own compost heaps or places for bonfires or who no doubt have cars so they could take garden waste to the local dump.

All perpetrators are anti-social, selfish, have dirty habits and scant regard for either the environment or their fellows in society. Litter louts are litter louts whether they throw paper in the streets or garden waste into the countryside. Shame on you.

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The VAG website is at...

www.cheshambois.com

- free ads
- minutes of meetings
- local photo album
- messageboard...& more!

Progress Without Development

Janet KIRCHHEIMER

One of the problems identified by the village appraisal work done last year was “over development”. So that our views on this are taken into account, we need to produce a Village Design Statement (VDS).



Planning vs. the people?

This describes what people value in their village and its surroundings. It sets out clear and simple guidance for the design of all future

development. It cannot actually be used to stop a development but will influence developers and local planning authorities.

Are you interested in how the area develops? We need a group to produce a report which will eventually go to Chiltern District Council. Full community consultation and involvement in this is important! If you want to be involved, please contact the Appraisal Group secretary, June Gossling on 01494 432585 or at parishclerk@btconnect.com

Twin Villages: Chesham Bois and St. Leonard des Bois?

David and Sheila ELDRIDGE

Well why not? If you want to give Chesham Bois its own twinned identity, the two names do sit nicely together. And make no mistake, St Leonard des Bois actually exists – in southern Normandy, a few miles south west of Alençon, and in the heart of the Alpes Mancelles.

Contact has been made with the Mayor of St Leonard des Bois and there is interest in pursuing the suggestion of forming



Identical twins? The centre of St Leonard des Bois

a twinning association between the two. This is supported by our own Parish Council and a committee is now being formed to carry the proposal forward. If you are interested in joining this committee please contact us at dandseldridge@btopenworld.com

St Leonard des Bois is easily reached by road from the ports of Caen and Le Havre. It is a “village fleurie” and there are a few shops supplying the essentials, a number of small restaurants and a hotel* with 35 bed-

rooms, indoor swimming pool and leisure centre; there is also a spacious campsite on the banks of the river and a 12th century church.

Town twinning was born over fifty years ago to encourage good international relationships between European countries; since then the European Commission has supported the creation of links with funding being provided for twinning activities. It is now encouraging projects by smaller towns and villages and assistance is also being given by the Local Government International Bureau based in London which has a counterpart office in France.

We hope that the initial indications of interest on both sides of the Channel will bear fruit and that the next issue of *Bois Own* will include further details about this scheme.

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site at www.forestdale.com/touring-hotel.htm

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