

MakeNews

New café/bistro launches in September



The Glade: plans submitted for local centre



Alconbury Weald Education Campus designs on display



Town Centre: news and views on location



Summer of fun and Autumn events at Alconbury Weald



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Hello and welcome to our Autumn 2021 newsletter, which provides an update on the latest developments at Alconbury Weald.

It's been a busy few months and following online consultation, during which over 600 residents and neighbours helped shape our plans, a planning application has been submitted for the first local centre at Alconbury Weald. The Glade will provide a second shop and nursery, office space for flexible working and a public square for pop-up events, shops and markets. The area includes green space for outdoor events, with walking and cycling routes that will connect to the existing routes and trails.

The eagerly anticipated café, bistro and bar in the refurbished Watch Office officially opens on 10 September, providing an exciting new dining experience at Alconbury Weald, either within the listed Watch Office or in the outdoor dining area with seating overlooking the cricket green.

At the heart of the next part of Phase 1, the Education Campus will see the delivery of a new secondary school and special school. The project team at Morgan Sindall, who are delivering the school on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council, will share the latest proposals and answer questions at an exhibition from 3.30pm to 6.30pm on Tuesday 14 September 2021. The display will remain in The Club until the 20 September. Please do come and find out more and help us shape the final exciting plans.

With the first phase at Alconbury Weald moving forward, the Urban&Civic team is looking at future phases of development. As part of this work, the design team has started to look at the future role and location of the 'Town Centre' – the main hub at Alconbury Weald. We will hold events later this year to help us refine the plans but, in the meantime, we would welcome your initial thoughts on moving the hub focus into the heart of the development.

With Covid restrictions lifting, we've had a great summer with some fantastic events for the whole family to enjoy. From our Wild Weald day hosted by naturalist and TV presenter Mike Dilger, and the Pavilion launch with free sessions in a range of sports and activities, to Summer Saturday with a pop up restaurant from Bohemia and a mini school fair organised by Friends of ESCA.

We've lots of fun planned for Autumn too, with our Heritage Open Day on 11 September, outdoor cinema events on 17 and 18 September (with showings of *Top Gun* and *School of Rock*) and the launch of our community library on 2 October. We hope to see you there!

With very best wishes
Becca



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Follow us on Instagram: [alconburyweald](https://www.instagram.com/alconburyweald)

The Glade: Plans submitted for local centre

Plans have been submitted for The Glade, the first local centre at Alconbury Weald, which will provide a second shop and nursery, office space for flexible working and a public square for pop-up events, shops and markets. The area includes space for outdoor events and green space linking walking and cycling routes with the existing routes and trails.

The Glade completes a cluster of community buildings including the recently opened Pavilion community centre, the Watch Office café and bistro due to open in September and the Club, which provides a gym and will soon be home to a library and information centre.

The submission follows online engagement in which over 600 residents and neighbours participated to help shape the plans. Feedback helped refine the location and design of The Glade as well as the type of activities people wanted to see coming forward, including seasonal/farmers markets and outdoor screenings, as well as picnic facilities.

Rachel Arnold, Communications, Communities and Partnerships at Alconbury Weald, said: "We'd like to thank everyone who took part in the online engagement and discussions about our proposals for The Glade."



The Glade will sit along the development's central Boulevard and will create a dynamic local centre between the commercial and residential areas, close by the Incubators and the New Shire Hall. The Co-op has been confirmed as the operator of the new shop and the nursery will be run by Mother Goose Nursery, who also run Jemima House Nursery, the pre-school at Ermine Street Church Academy. The local centre will be the key focus for amenities and facilities until the 'Town Centre' hub comes forward in the next phase of the development (see page 9).

Joe Dawson, Senior Development Manager for Alconbury Weald said: "For our early residents, we ensured key facilities like Swynford Stores and the play areas were in place. Now we have over 500 homes occupied, The Glade will provide the heart of the first phase of the development and bring together important services and amenities the growing community needs. Crucially it will continue our focus on good quality public realm and space for people to meet or just sit and watch the Weald go by. It is an important milestone for the community and one we hope to have up and running by the end of 2022."



This is an exciting piece of the jigsaw and marks the local centre for Phase 1. We're so pleased the designs should enable all the activities and events people want to see coming forward. We look forward to bringing it all to life.

Rachel Arnold Communications, Communities & Partnerships, Urban&Civic

The Watch Office: Bohemia opens bistro

The eagerly anticipated café, bistro and bar in the refurbished Watch Office officially opens on 10 September, providing an exciting new dining experience at Alconbury Weald, either within the listed Watch Office or in the outside dining area with seating overlooking the cricket green.

Operated by local coffee connoisseurs and tapas aficionados Bohemia, the bistro will serve fresh ground coffee roasted in their own micro roastery and a selection of breakfast and lunch options. Breakfast and lunch will be available seven days a week and on Friday and Saturday the Watch Office will welcome guests to enjoy a tapas and drinks menu with a blend of cuisines from around the world. With Bohemia's set menu supplemented by weekly specials based on seasonal, locally sourced produce, there'll be plenty of reasons to keep going back for more.

From humble beginnings catering from a converted horse box, Bohemia established its first eatery in St Neots around five years ago and has expanded its premises twice to meet local demand. With a string of accolades celebrating its food and service, Bohemia's owners are looking forward to their new venture at Alconbury Weald.

James Larman from Bohemia said: "It has been fascinating to see this historic building sensitively adapted for use as a modern eatery and we can't wait to open our doors and share its transformation and our culinary delights with those living and working in the local community, as well as those visiting the area."

The ground floor of the bistro seats 60 people and there are another 120 seats outside with a fantastic view over the cricket green. Bohemia also plans to make use of the first floor of the tower for events and private dining as well as for community events.

The Bohemia team is looking to grow its team at the new café and bistro and has vacancies for chefs, servers and kitchen porters. For more information on the roles available, contact info@bohemiaalconburyweald.com

Don't forget to follow @BohemiaAlconburyWeald on social media for more updates from the team. Visit the website for more information, opening hours and menus:

www.bohemiaalconburyweald.co.uk



We are all about flavour and community, and the character of the Watch Office – the role it played, and the space left behind – is an amazing backdrop for us to expand the Bohemia offer into Alconbury Weald.

James Larman Bohemia



James and Ashley outside Bohemia in St Neots



About the Watch Office

The Grade 2 Listed Watch Office was built in 1940–41 as the first permanent Watch Office at RAF Alconbury. It was a standard first-generation design, constructed at the heart of the working Airfield when it served as a satellite station to RAF Wyton. The building was changed and developed over the war years and a first storey observation room was added to the single storey, pitched roof building, which included a watch office, operations room, teleprinter room and telephone exchange.

Careful restoration and refurbishment of the building was completed in May 2019 to ensure the Watch Office has a sustainable future at the heart of the first phase of Alconbury Weald. This year, the transformation began to adapt the space for modern dining, ensuring the works preserved the building's integrity so its history comes to life for those enjoying its new important role for Alconbury Weald.

Homes around the Weald

Since the first residents moved in nearly five years ago, Alconbury Weald has become home to more than 500 families. An overview of the homes completed, in construction and coming forward in Phase 1 are highlighted in the plan below.



HOUSING PARCELS

Housebuilder	Number of units	Status	Expected start date
A Hopkins Homes	128 units	Completed	—
B Morris Homes	165 units	158 units completed	—
C Campbell Buchanan George	62 units	In planning	—
D Civic Living	50 units	Completed	—
E Hopkins Homes 2	189 units	On site, 44 units completed	—
F Crest Nicholson	192 units	On site, 123 units completed	—
G To be confirmed	56 units	In design	To be confirmed
H CALA	260 units	In planning	Spring 2022
I Redrow	200 units	On site, 195 units completed	—
J Redrow 2	246 units	In planning	Spring 2022
K Morris Homes 2	206 units	In planning	Summer 2022

The Education Campus

As part of the next stage of development at Alconbury Weald, the first phase of the Education Campus will be delivered. The Campus design is progressing well for these important facilities which will sit at the heart of the Alconbury Weald development.

Following the online consultation of the design proposals in July/August which was arranged by Morgan Sindall who are delivering the scheme on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council, the latest developed proposals will again be shared by Morgan Sindall in an Exhibition Event in The Club building (The Boulevard, Alconbury Weald, PE28 4XA) from 3.30pm to 6.30pm on Tuesday 14th September 2021.

At the event, the latest proposals will be displayed and the project team will be available to answer any questions you may have. You will also have the opportunity to provide any feedback on the proposals using the forms which will be provided. Should you be unable to attend the Event, the display will remain in The Club building until the 20th September along with the feedback forms to complete and submit in the box provided.

During the same period, the proposals will also be available to view and feedback online at <https://projects.www.morgansindallconstruction.com/AWEC>

Rebecca Britton said: “The Education Campus lies at the heart of the next part of development and has been designed to be at the centre of the whole of Alconbury Weald. Not only is education a fundamental part of the DNA of this new community, but the new facilities coming forward provide great potential for community activities, events and lifelong learning.

“We are really excited to see these plans coming forward and continue to work with Morgan Sindall and the County Council to deliver a Campus which will provide an inspiring place for all to learn.”



What next?

- 1 Education Campus
- 2 Heritage area
- 3 Runway Park
- 4 Country Park
- 5 Enterprise Campus – next phase
- 6 Future Railway Station and Transport Hub
- 7 Green Corridor Connections
- 8 Grange Farm – Phase 2
- 9 Phase 3
-  Proposed new location for Town Centre
-  Former proposed location for the Town Centre

The Big Picture

With the first phase at Alconbury Weald moving forward, the Urban&Civic team is looking at future phases of development. Phase 2 will see the start of a new 150 acre Country Park focussing on enhancing the ancient woodland and Ancient Monument of Prestley Wood as well as 1,500 homes, a community centre, football pitches and a Primary School on the Grange Farm area of the development. The team is also looking at the designs for Phase 3, which will see the Town Centre, a Runway Park in the middle of the development and the Heritage Area coming forward along with the next 2,000 homes.



Town Centre: Hub location

As part of this work, the design team has started to look at the future role of the 'Town Centre' – the main hub at Alconbury Weald. As Alconbury Weald continues to grow, so does the need for more facilities and amenities to support the community. The central hub, the Town Centre, will include:

- Shops and cafés
- Health centre, dentist and pharmacy
- Community centre and library
- Gym
- Nurseries
- Space for Community Police liaison.

Critically, all these facilities also lie at the heart of key transport connections, including good cycle, walking and bus connections for residents and visitors at Alconbury Weald.

Over recent years, the role of a Town Centre has been subject to extensive review, as shopping and working patterns change. Learning from this and recent experiences during lockdowns, the design team believe there is a great opportunity to design a vibrant and dynamic hub that brings together a range of leisure activities and access to facilities within a relaxing setting, including parks and green spaces alongside shops and cafés.

In the original Outline Planning Application for Alconbury Weald, the Town Centre was due to be located to the northwest of the development (see map below). Now that the commercial space and homes are progressing, and the Education Campus is coming forward, there is a great opportunity to create a central area that connects heritage, learning, health provision and green space, with shops and amenities, to bring people together. It would also mean residents across the development will be just a short walk or cycle ride – or a stop or two by bus – away from Alconbury Weald's central hub.

We will be bringing forward exhibitions and events later this year to help us refine the plans for Key Phase 3 and especially the Town Centre. In the meantime, we would really like your initial thoughts on moving the hub focus into the heart of the development, to help us move onto the next stage of design work.

Please let us know your thoughts and comments by sending an email to info@alconbury-weald.co.uk by **20 September 2021**.



Summer of fun

Wild Weald: Exploring local wildlife

To get closer to the nature on our doorsteps, families took part in *Wild Weald* day in July hosted by naturalist and TV presenter Mike Dilger.

The day included an early morning search for the wildlife that paid a visit during the night, pond dipping in Carnaile Pond, a butterfly and bug hunt, and an evening bat walk. Children and adults on the morning session were delighted to find a grass snake as well as moths of all shapes and sizes, whilst the pond dippers discovered an interesting selection of water stick insects, pond skaters and newts. The bats were more elusive, but a couple were spotted later in the evening.

Mike Dilger said: "Thanks to everyone who took part for putting the 'wild' into the Weald. The day was blessed with the most wonderful weather as residents came out in their throngs for a spot of snake wrangling, moth trapping, pond-dipping, bug-spotting and bat watching. Keen to see the wildlife thriving just beyond their doorstep, attendances were really impressive for every event."

"I trust everyone from eight months to 80 years old went away having gained a deeper appreciation of the power of nature to excite and inspire."

For anyone who couldn't attend the Wild Weald events, you can find out some of the fascinating facts about the ecology of Alconbury Weald through the wayfinding installed in the development.

You can also listen to Mike's Wild Weald podcast – www.alconbury-weald.co.uk/podcast – and look out for future visits from our roving ecologist.

Wild Weald events were also supported by Alconbury Weald housebuilders Crest Nicholson and Hopkins Homes.



A special shout-out to all the younger nature detectives who came along and powered the whole weekend with their endless energy and enthusiasm!

Mike Dilger TV presenter



Pavilion launch

Family, friends and neighbours gathered to enjoy a fun weekend to celebrate the official opening of the Pavilion at Alconbury Weald in July. As part of the festivities, community groups and organisations provided free sessions in a range of sports and activities – including children's football, parent and baby pilates, bootcamp, yoga and tai chi – and Jonathan Djanogly MP performed the ribbon cutting for the new community space.



Picnic benches and deckchairs were also provided for those soaking up the action, catching up with friends, or enjoying the food and drink provided by some of the 'pop-up' food trucks, which have become a regular feature for Alconbury Weald residents.

Cycle Sunday promoted the active travel opportunities for new residents with Outspoken Cycles offering free trials of electric bikes, Bromptons and cargo bikes, while Alconbury Weald provided plenty of inspiration as the kick off for the St Ives Cycling Club Summer Road Race.

Jonathan Djanogly MP said: "I've watched Alconbury Weald transform from an old airfield to a vibrant and dynamic community, with landscaped green spaces and an abundance of play parks and facilities. It's wonderful to see so many people turn out to support the official opening of the Pavilion which is already a valued community asset, and to see the range of activities on offer. This is such a key milestone for the development: not just a community building, but a real asset to support building the new community."



Designed to be both a cricket pavilion and a community centre – drawing on a successful local model for community buildings – the Pavilion has a modern, airy feel with a community hall overlooking the cricket pitch, as well as a kitchen, toilets, players' lobby, club room, changing rooms and physiotherapy room.

Rachel Arnold, Communities and Partnerships for Urban&Civic, said: "The Pavilion opened back in April, but we weren't able to celebrate in the traditional Alconbury Weald style due to Covid restrictions. Now we're coming out of lockdown, albeit with a sense of caution to continue to protect each other, it is great to celebrate and showcase our first dedicated community space."

"A special thank you to all the community groups and organisations who got involved in the taster sessions – which have proved very popular – and to all those who bring the building to life every day of the week."

Anyone interested in hiring the community space or signing up to one of the many regular sports/activity sessions being held for adults and children can email: info@alconbury-weald.co.uk

Active New Communities

Netball comes to Alconbury Weald

Alconbury Weald has been designed with health and wellbeing at its core. It is also part of the Living Sport's *Active New Communities* initiative, which encourages people to make positive choices and take up sports and activities as they settle into their new home.

The latest sports group to be established is Alconbury Weald Netball Club. Active New Communities was approached by local residents last December to see if there was local interest in forming a netball team and a Facebook post generated over 40 expressions of interest. Lockdown restrictions put plans on hold, but interest was renewed in the Spring by Nicola, a Level 2 Netball Coach and B Award umpire, who had recently moved to Alconbury Weald.

To help get the club started, Active New Communities grant funded use of the primary school's courts for six weeks. Additional funding from Active New Communities and a grant from the Alconbury Weald Community Chest helped the club buy bibs, balls, first aid kit, ice packs and portable netball posts.

Nicola said: "We have 25 ladies on the books of different ages and abilities, some new to the game and others seasoned veterans. It is great to have a competitive sport that local ladies can enjoy and we're hoping the club will go from strength to strength."

This kick start has enabled the club to set up a six-week rolling programme and, if there is further interest, a second group could be established on another evening. Those wanting to join the waiting list should contact Nicola through the AlconburyWealdNetballGroup Facebook page.

Christine Spowell, Living Sport's Active New Communities, said: "The netball club is a really good example of local residents joining together to set up new activities with initial support and funding that will enable them to become self-funding."

"Another recent example at Alconbury Weald is the running club, which now meets twice a week on a Monday and Thursday."



Living Sport is one of a number of partners that Sport England is working with, and providing funding through the National Lottery, to help people to stay active – particularly those most vulnerable to dropping out of sports and fitness activities, such as women and girls.

Natalie Leigh-Brown, Community Development for Alconbury Weald, said: "Supporting healthy and active lifestyles at Alconbury Weald is a core part of my role and the Community Chest has been set up to help residents establish new sports and community projects. With Coronavirus restrictions lifting, we are hoping to have many more activities and events – from new and existing groups – that will bring together and benefit our thriving community."

Anyone interested in setting up new sporting activities can seek support and advice by emailing info@activenewcommunities.com

New or existing groups at Alconbury Weald can apply for a grant of up to £250 to help fund projects that will bring together and benefit the community. More information can be found at www.alconbury-weald.co.uk/news/community-chest-launched-at-alconbury-weald/

Summer Saturday

Our Summer Saturday on 14 August proved popular with family, friends and visitors enjoying the summer sun and a pop-up restaurant from Bohemia on Watch Office Green. Friends of ESCA also held a mini school fair in the Pavilion, with tea and coffee, ice lollies, cakes, face painting and games as well as kids' arts and crafts. Profits from the event were donated to the primary school.



Heritage Open Day

From midday on 11 September,
Watch Office Green

Alconbury Weald is rich in military heritage and has retained a selection of historic assets spanning its time as an airbase, which will be conserved and integrated into the new development.

On 11 September, as part of Heritage Open Days, Alconbury Weald will be hosting a range of wartime and Cold War themed activities: to help everyone explore the heritage around us.

The weekend will also see the launch of Bohemia in the Watch Office and will include a menu reminiscent of the period served in the refurbished World War II building.

There will also be a range of activities on Watch Office Green including:

- The Umbrella Big Band (midday–2pm), a display of military vehicles from the Second World War period and a range of events including displays, artefacts, costumes, board games and Lindy Hop dancers (3–5pm);
- At 6pm, Michael Monk from Stukeleys Heritage Group and his wife Ann will read from the published recollections of Margaret Faulkner and John Lovell, who lived close to the airfield during World War II and provide a fascinating insight into what life was like in the 1940s;
- At 7pm, the Airfield Research Group, whose headquarters are at Alconbury Weald, will showcase various artefacts uncovered at RAF Alconbury and share interesting facts on some of the listed buildings at Alconbury Weald at a talk in the Pavilion.

As part of the Heritage Open Day, pre-booked guided tours will give a fascinating insight into one of Alconbury Weald's other listed buildings – the Cold War military bunker and avionics building, which was designed to survive a nuclear attack. The Grade II listed building was completed in 1989, as tensions between the West and the Soviet Union thawed. It was one of the largest and most sophisticated building of its kind in the UK and was built to process intelligence data collected by the TR1 reconnaissance aircraft.

Spaces on the tour are limited and tickets have been snapped up. If you couldn't get a ticket but would like to attend a future tour of the bunker and avionics building, please register an interest by emailing info@alconbury-weald.co.uk.

Rebecca Britton from Urban&Civic said: "The military past of Alconbury Weald has shaped the legacy of the land we inherited, and the design of the development incorporates both echoes of the airfield's evolution, through key footprints, views and features, as well as the listed buildings. All of these will come together as the development rolls out into a Heritage Trail as well as a specific Cold War Heritage Area that will tell the unique story of this place's role in intelligence gathering at some of the most frightening periods of our history."

Heritage Open Days is England's largest festival of history and culture, bringing together over 2,000 local people and organisations, and thousands of volunteers. Every year in September, places across the country throw open their doors to celebrate their heritage, community and history. It's your chance to see hidden places and try out new experiences.



The Heritage Open Days are a fantastic way to give people an insight into the past and we are looking forward to sharing some of Alconbury Weald's hidden gems with our residents and local communities.

Rebecca Britton Communications, Communities & Partnerships, Urban&Civic

For the Autumn

Outdoor Cinema

From 7pm on 17/18 September,
Watch Office Green
Film starts around 8pm
Friday: Top Gun
Saturday: School of Rock

Join us at Alconbury Weald for an evening of cinematic magic with classic films, live music, food, drink, garden games, twinkly fairy lights and bucket loads of atmosphere!

Catch up with friends over a drink whilst taking in the pre-film entertainment. Or simply sink into a deckchair and relax before the film begins at nightfall.

Book a deckchair or bring your own home comforts, just remember to wrap up warm and bring a blanket or two to snuggle under for movie-time.

Out of consideration for residents living near Watch Office Green, the event will be operated with the use of LED headphones that will be provided by Star and Mouse Productions, who are running the event. You must buy a ticket to receive the headphones and enjoy the film.

Rachel Arnold said: "We're keeping the vintage feel with the 1980s American flying ace action drama on Friday night, and hoping Saturday's feel-good family movie provides some top entertainment on Watch Office Green."



Library Launch

10am–4pm on Saturday,
2 October

The community library will re-open in its new home on the ground floor of The Club on Saturday 2 October.

We have a programme of family activities taking place to support the launch including:

10am	Baby Rhymetime
10.30am	Toddler Rhymetime
11am	Craft activities
1pm	Lion learners story time session. Meet some of the animals from the stories!
2pm	An introduction to the digital library service.

Or you can just pop in to see what books we have available to borrow.

Natalie Leigh-Brown said: "We were all geared up to launch the library at the start of lockdown, and since then the book bags project has been keeping people connected to their favourite reads. It is great that at last we will have a chance to open the library properly, as part of a refurbished space on the ground floor of the Club, which will also see information about the development as part of a general one-stop shop for information, advice and books.

"We have been working with Cambridgeshire Libraries for a long time, to plan the best services for Alconbury Weald, and we are really looking forward to the opening. We will be looking for views on the sort of activities residents want to see in the library and are also interested in hearing from volunteers who want to be part of the team."

The Council's community connector van will be available all day, with information and practical support in a range of areas including community activities and opportunities.

For cinema and library event tickets, go to [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk) and search for 'Alconbury Weald'.

Comedy Night: SOLD OUT

7–10pm on Saturday 2 October

A night of live stand-up comedy with a fully stocked licensed bar is coming to Alconbury Weald's new Pavilion. Tickets sold quickly and we're looking to put on another event soon.



Rebecca Britton

Communications, Communities
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