

# LOWER SUNBURY RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

## 2015 SPRING NEWSLETTER



[www.losra.org](http://www.losra.org)

### Public meeting with Spelthorne on Kempton Park development leaves too many questions unanswered

Since our autumn newsletter, there has been a Public Meeting on the subject of the issue of whether there is, has never been, or will be in the future a proposal in existence for the development of housing on Green Belt at Kempton Park.

The meeting took place as a result of a commitment to local councillors made by Spelthorne's Chief Executive, Roberto Tambini and Council Leader Cllr. Robert Watts at the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee, where this issue has been raised on a regular basis.

It was held in order to clarify the Council's position on the matter for the benefit of residents, and to answer their questions. It took place at the new London Irish RFC facility at Hazelwood on 3rd February.

Not surprisingly, it was a packed house, with over 200 people present. It was attended on the platform by the Chief Executive, the Leader of the Council (Cllr. Robert Watts), the Cabinet member for Planning (Cllr. Vivienne Leighton), the Chief Planning Officer (John Brooks), and local councillors Tim Evans, Alfred Friday and Ian Harvey. There were also other officers and councillors in the audience, as well as Spelthorne MP Kwasi Kwarteng.

Members of the public had the opportunity to ask written questions in advance, to which the Council made written answers available to all attendees, and those who had asked questions were given the chance to ask supplementary questions after the Council had made their initial presentations.

There were statements by the Chief Executive and the Council Leader and a presentation by the Chief Planning Officer. What came out of these was as reassuring as it could have been, in that everything that was said reinforced the sacrosanct status of Green Belt, which under the current Local Plan effectively made it impossible for housing development on Green Belt at Kempton Park, or indeed anywhere else in

Spelthorne. In John Brooks' presentation, he stated: "*National policy says, in terms of Green Belt, the essential characteristics are their openness and permanence. It needs to be sustainable land that properly balances those things. Does housing trump Green Belt land? No. Having Green Belt means we won't be able to meet our planning needs, That's a fact. That's a reality we will face. Green Belt is there to restrain development and it's in our Green Belt policy to do that.*"

The Green Belt policy in Spelthorne's Local Plan states that "*The Green Belt shown on the proposals map will be permanent.*"

In discussing the issue of the proposed revision of the Local Plan, which we highlighted in our Autumn newsletter, Mr. Brooks explained that the process will probably take four years, and that any consideration of a planning application for housing development at Kempton Park in the meantime would take place under the existing Local Plan.

The pressure group Keep Kempton Green produced a superb document for distribution to people at the meeting which summarised key statements from the most relevant of the documents obtained under Freedom of Information requests in the form of a timeline. It is worth observing that all the Council representatives had copies of this and at no stage was any part of its content contested or refuted. You can read the KKG Timeline at [www.keepkemptongreen.com](http://www.keepkemptongreen.com) and search for 'timeline' - see how you think it stacks up with Spelthorne's restated policy.

All the documents from the meeting—the questions and answers and an audio recording of the proceedings—

are on the Spelthorne web site at <https://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/article/9372/Kempton-Park-public-meeting>

Supplementary questions were asked by Alan Doyle of KKG, LOSRA President Paul Watts and LOSRA Chairman Paul Thompson. All the proceedings are worth listening to, but in particular have a listen to the KKG and LOSRA questions and the Spelthorne answers in Part 1 and the start of Part 2. Listen in particular to a contribution from ex-Councillor Caroline Nichols at around 40' in Part One—it is astonishingly revealing and calls into question many Spelthorne pronouncements on the issue.

The overall impression from answers to all the questions at the meeting about what had been going on at the many meetings between SBC and Kempton Park was that we were somehow existing in parallel universes. Whatever was said at all the meetings with Kempton Park or in e-mails, it was all OK now because SBC had now confirmed Green Belt policy. It was asked why that could not have been stated in one meeting with Kempton Park and the conversation closed, but that was sidestepped.

Mr Tambini has made it clear he is happy to have a further meeting with LOSRA for us to ask what we think are the unanswered questions, which has not taken place, so we will comment no further at this stage. We think there is more that needs to be made public on this matter to explain what went on and address the specific and detailed background to the timeline documents.

We are grateful to Spelthorne for organising the meeting and coming into the lion's den to face the public questioning, and are naturally pleased that there is now no equivocation about the Council's attitude towards a possible proposal for housing at Kempton Park.

# The 'EcoPark' incinerator saga rumbles on as new stumbling blocks emerge

The saga of the pointless, unwanted, expensive and unnecessary incinerator, masquerading as an economically viable waste gasifier at the so-called EcoPark rumbles on with Surrey County Council and SITA ploughing ahead and desperately trying to deal with every successive stumbling block, while everyone else knows it simply won't and can't work.

The planning permission that Surrey County Council gave itself for the construction of an incinerator at the Charlton Lane Community Recycling Centre is to be re-considered by the SCC Cabinet on grounds of affordability and value for money. At the Surrey County Council (SCC) Cabinet meeting held on the 24th February it was said that planning delays (for which our campaigners combining with SATEP may justifiably claim credit!) have resulted in revisions to pricing.

A revised price and construction timetable were received from SITA's contractor M+W in late 2014. These are being evaluated by SITA and SCC officers together with external advisors. To allow for further assessment to it is proposed that a further report and updated value for money analysis should go to Cabinet in April. Cllr. Furey (acting Cabinet member for Environment and Planning) confirmed that the evaluation of each option would include the 'whole life cost' of construction, operation and maintenance.

LOSRA campaign member Brian Catt addressed the Cabinet stating that the Eco Park is "now an avoidable mistake"

based on it being an expensive disposal of waste, having minimal energy recovery and "a very high risk of failure".

He added: "*In the light of these clear facts, especially that the Eco Park is low volume expensive disposal, and not yet begun, can the County assure its councillors that officers' value study will include the better available opportunities for the County to realise best practice in treating our dry waste?*"

LOSRA member Peter Crews asked what options will be considered in the review. Cllr. Furey said that it would be either amending the existing waste contract or terminating the waste contract and achieving recycling and landfill diversion improvements without new infrastructure by securing alternative technology.

Peter concluded: "*Finally, do you agree the value for money assessment completely misses the point as it is based on the [erroneous] assumption that Surrey must build an incinerator?*" The Leader, David Hodge said their questions would be answered after the meeting.

However, the report made on 24th Feb. failed to advise the Cabinet that following a meeting of SITA and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in December, at which regulation and guideline shortfalls in the current design were highlighted, the contractor has been obliged to revise their design, which it is anticipated will not be complete until later this year.

The sad truth is that the value for money assessment will never see the light

of day because SCC will only discuss it in private, under the excuse of protecting commercially confidential information. If the value for money assessment was done correctly, the EcoPark would be stopped immediately for one simple reason – the proposed incinerator process will not work for any sustained period. To date attempts to gasify municipal waste have not been carried out successfully anywhere in the world because the fuel content is too variable.

The facts which SCC are choosing to ignore include; their first choice of gasification after repeated failure is now completely discredited, they have been unable to find a single site which they could visit to witness the process on our behalf, there is a long bibliography on the problems of gasification of municipal waste, their contractor persistently refuses or is unable when challenged to answer technical questions and they cannot find an independent consultant who will vouch for the success of the process.

Meanwhile DEFRA reports that high incidents of pollution at Anaerobic Digestion sites remain a 'serious concern'. with proportionately more serious pollution incidents than any other waste treatment sector it regulates.

The proposed incinerator is a large, expensive and potentially dangerous experiment being carried out on the residents of Spelthorne. However, SCC officers were pleased to report that progress is being made and the trees shielding the public footpath from the Charlton Lane waste station have been removed ahead of the nesting season!

## Sunbury Health Centre PPG Open Meeting discusses future plans and improvements

Sunbury Health Centre held its second 'Open Meeting' on 9th February. This meeting, organised by the Patient Participation Group (PPG), was an event for patients to come along and hear an update from the doctors and staff on the developments taking place at Sunbury Health Centre, as well as an opportunity to discuss the many challenges facing this heavily oversubscribed Practice.

It's well known that the current building was intended for a patient population of approximately 6000 - with nearly 19,000 patients currently registered at the Practice, resources are being stretched to the limit. This came to a head just before Christmas when the national press and media highlighted the cramped conditions and difficulties faced by doctors, staff and patients.

The Practice and the PPG have been

persistent in their efforts to engage NHS England in a dialogue about the need for urgent improvements to Sunbury Health Centre. Progress to a viable solution has been frustratingly slow. Although the media attention was intrusive, it has at least brought the issue to the attention of a wider audience.

Keen to get patients' opinions and ideas, at the time of going to press, the Practice and the PPG are analysing the results of a comprehensive patient survey that took place during a 'snapshot' fortnight in January/February. Results are posted on the websites, [sunburyhealthcentre.co.uk](http://sunburyhealthcentre.co.uk) and [sunburyhealthcentre-ppg.com](http://sunburyhealthcentre-ppg.com).

In an average month, the Practice provides 6000 face-to-face appointments and 2000 clinical telephone calls to patients. Dealing with such a high volume of

patients in the current building is a logistical nightmare. The Practice is constantly reviewing and developing the appointments system and has engaged the support of the Primary Health Care Foundation to help make further improvements.

Determined to drive improvements forward, the Practice has now appointed a Strategic Business Manager to lead on getting Sunbury a Health Centre that we can all be proud of, in a building that matches the excellent clinical care currently being provided by doctors and staff under very trying conditions.

The subject of the Health Centre was raised at the Public Meeting about Kempston Park when issues relating to infrastructure were raised. Spelthorne's MP got involved and the possibility was discussed of finding a site for a satellite practice where a smaller group of doctors could be located a mile or two away to help relieve the pressure. Clearly also the housing developments already under way are going to make life even harder.

## Your chance to take part in consultation into draft Statement of Community Involvement in Local Plan review

In our last newsletter, we explained that Spelthorne Council is looking to review its Local Plan, and that one of the key aspects of this was the stated intention to increase the housing target by 250%. Also a possible review of the status of land currently in the Green Belt could provide a context in which Green Belt land such as Kempton Park could come under pressure.

Spelthorne are statutorily obliged to involve the community in the review process, and have to produce a Statement of Community Involvement which sets out how and when the Council intends to involve people, businesses and organisations in the planning process. The SCI includes how stakeholders will be involved in the review of the Local Plan, preparation of other planning documents and evidence base studies as well as the determination of planning applications.

We are naturally very concerned that this is framed so that we have as much access to the process and are able to make contributions and influence it as much as possible.

The Council has prepared a draft SCI which updates the current version adopted in 2006. This ensures that the Council takes account of changes to planning legislation and guidance since the current SCI was adopted. A link to the 2006 SCI can be found at the end of this article.

The Council is now seeking views on the draft Statement of Community Involvement over a four week period from Friday 27 February 2015 to Monday 30 March 2015. We will be making our submissions but it will help if as many people as possible contribute their views to em-

phasise to the Council that residents want as much as possible of the review process to take account of their views.

The draft SCI is also available to view at the Council Offices in Knowle Green during normal opening hours. Copies of the draft SCI can be made available in large print, Braille or another language on request. Please contact the Council on 01784 446345 or alternatively email Planning Policy if this is required.

Comments on the draft SCI can be submitted by using the online form or by downloading and completing the comments form on the Council Website. Copies of the comments form are also available at the Council Offices during normal opening times.

Comments forms can be returned either by email or by post to:  
Planning Policy & Implementation,  
Spelthorne Borough Council, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames, Surrey TW18 1XB

Comments must reach the Council no later than Monday 30 March 2015. Please note that comments cannot be treated as confidential and will be made publicly available on the Council's website either in full or in summary. Whilst the names of those responding and their comments will be made publicly available, personal details such as addresses or contact details will not.

Following consultation the Council will consider all of the comments made and whether any changes are required to the draft SCI. The SCI is scheduled to be adopted in Summer 2015.

For full details and access to all relevant links, click here: <https://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/SCI>

## The Ridings: new planning application received and appeal against first plan refusal adjourned until June

In time-honoured fashion Cala Homes lodged notice of an appeal against the decision to refuse their application for 17 dwellings on the site of the former tennis courts at St. Paul's School in The Ridings, just off Green Street just before Christmas, days before the deadline.

On the 19th December they also submitted a new planning application for the site, providing for 25 dwellings, but comprising smaller 2 and 3 bedroom houses rather than the large 3-storey houses in the initial plan, along with 2-bedroom flats, another familiar ploy.

They are hoping that having smaller units will address the primary grounds on

which the first plan was refused.

The appeal began but was adjourned until June, presumably awaiting the outcome of the Planning Committee consideration of the second plan, which is scheduled for 23rd March

We have been obliged to make a complaint about the fact that the applicant claimed to have involved LOSRA in a full consultation process regarding the planning applications. They did no such thing, and we have made this clear.

You can still just about lodge a last-minute objection if you do it on-line at [www.spelthorne.gov.uk](http://www.spelthorne.gov.uk). The application reference is 21/02189/FUL

## Feasibility study into Thames cycle/footbridge to be published in time for public consultation exhibitions in April

Our 2014 Autumn and Spring newsletters described in some detail our efforts to re-ignite an initiative which was originally proposed by the Thames Overways Projects (TOPS) in 1999, but which, for a variety of reasons, lost its momentum. Moreover, the TOPS study embraced a much longer reach of the Thames and was not confined to a Lower Sunbury/Thames Path connection.

It was for this reason that we decided to commission a feasibility study by the design engineers, Ramboll UK. The rationale and terms of reference have already been widely reported and are fully described in the earlier newsletters which may be viewed by visiting the LOSRA website: [www.losra.org](http://www.losra.org) and clicking the 'Newsletters' option on the top of the Home Page.

We are delighted to announce that the Feasibility Report on the construction of a cycle/footbridge has now been completed which allows us to progress to the next stage of public consultation on its findings.

**To this end, we have booked three exhibition events at the Riverside Arts Centre, 57 -59, Thames Street:**  
**Sat. Apr. 11 in the Studio 11am-1pm**  
**Wed. Apr. 15 in Main Hall 7-11pm**  
**Sat. Apr. 25 in the Studio 2-4pm**

The report in its entirety will be published on the Website well before the first of these dates to allow visitors to familiarise themselves with its content beforehand.

Each event will be introduced by a LOSRA Committee member so it would be advisable to attend at the start times shown. It should be stressed that the consultation will be limited to possible site selections only. To have included design options for each site would have proved prohibitively expensive.

Feedback forms and ballot papers will be available at each event and a supply of ballot papers will also be made available at Skinners Post Office for those who have read the online report but are unable to attend any of the events.

This is a potentially exciting and important project and it is vital that residents buy into the process so that we know that what is eventually decided matches local people's aspirations and addresses their concerns.

## Planning application expected soon for intrusive Sports Hub on river opposite Lower Sunbury

We have written in the past about a proposed “Sports Hub” in Elbridge close to the bank of the Thames opposite Lower Sunbury. The complex includes an Athletics Stadium, four more football pitches, with two football clubs (including Walton & Hersham) moving to the site, a huge spectator stand and parking for an extra 250 cars and coaches. There will be 28 floodlight masts, which will look like a wind farm during the day, and spread light pollution from the Xcel building to the Weir Pub at night.

Our requests to be involved in the consultation process have been ignored, since we are not in Elmbridge, their “consultation exercise” was nothing more than an uninformative exhibition.

We are told by an Elmbridge Councillor that they were aiming to have the Application in by the end of February. Because it is a “major application” the target response date would be 13 weeks from the date of validation, i.e. roughly the end of May. The Administration have indicated that after planning permission is given – assuming it is given – then they would prepare the business case to go to Cabinet on July 8th with full Council debate on the proposals at the meeting on July 22nd. If they miss this meeting, the decision would be postponed until the Council meeting on Oct. 7th. That would eat into the construction timetable, as they hope the place will be ready for the start of the 2016 football season.

When the Planning Application goes in, we will post details on the web site, so that anyone interested or affected can make their objections.

### THE LOSRA COMMITTEE

Shirley Agar	87 Manor Lane	765517
Elleke Carling	3 Croysdale Avenue	882726
Tony Crabb	38 The Avenue	782083
Colleen Cuthbert (Secretary)	8 Maryland Way	783606
Iain Findlay (Treasurer)	58 Thames Street	783739
Peter Francis	Linden Lodge, Woodlands Drive	770661
John Hirsh (Deputy Chairman)	21 School Walk	07515 637474
Neil Huntingford	Summer House, Wheatleys Ait	783761
Oliver Parr	Orchard House, Thames Street	765229
George Rushbrook	8 Meadows End	788471
Paul Thompson (Chairman)	12 Brackewood	07788 107500
Paul Watts (President)	87 The Avenue	788449

## LOSRA now back on Twitter

After a long period of absence and following Web Site software upgrade we are pleased to announce that we are finally back on Twitter. Keep up to date with all the latest news by visiting our website: [www.losra.org](http://www.losra.org) and clicking 'Follow LOSRA on Twitter' on the right side of the Home Page.

## LOSRA needs new Committee Members

As you can see from the articles in the Newsletter LOSRA is always involved in important issues that affect the future of the area, and we always need people who are prepared to help with the work of fighting these campaigns and taking the message to residents, the Council and the media. After last year's Annual General Meeting, we still have space on the Committee for three more members, and further interested people can also be co-opted.

We know that pressures on people's time is increasing, but if you feel strongly enough about the things that we deal with, and have a few hours a month to attend the Committee meeting and undertake a few other jobs, as well as perhaps take on an issue that particularly interests you, please let Colleen Cuthbert, our Secretary, know, or contact LOSRA via the web site.

## Cattle grazing in Sunbury Park - Update

Here's the latest news on the proposal to graze cattle in Sunbury Park. Spelthorne have had an offer of cows to go into the Park but before proceeding they are ensuring the water supply is sustainable and they can resolve the issue with the previous kissing gates to ensure both disabled/elderly users of motorised scooters have access whilst also ensuring the cows will be secure. We will update you via the web site when we get more information.

## Please pay your 2015 subscriptions and sign up for LOSRA's e-bulletins

Just a reminder that we are well into a new calendar year and if you haven't paid your LOSRA subscription for 2015, please could you do so as soon as possible.

The calls on our finances are significant these days, as we increasingly find ourselves needing to take legal advice in complex and difficult planning and procedural matters, so your subscriptions are vital, quite apart from appeals for special donations.

The £5 membership, which has not changed for eight years, may be paid by the secure Paypal facility on the Home page of the Website. Please see the form below for other details of how to pay

With the pace of events also increasing, it's never easy to reach all residents all of the time. Currently, we attempt to do this via our web site, periodic newsletters, the pages of Sunbury Matters and by our e-bulletins. The e-bulletin service has been publicised in the past but we are not sure that everyone is aware of it or, if they are, how to go about receiving it. All you need to do is insert your e-mail address under 'Join our mailing list' in the top left hand corner of the Home Page of our web site at [www.losra.org](http://www.losra.org) and press 'Subscribe'

If you are already subscribed but have not received an e-bulletin recently, your contact details may have got lost when the new system was installed. To be sure, please enter your email address again.

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If you have not paid your subscription for this year, could you please help us by paying your subscription either by using the secure PayPal facility on our web site at [www.losra.org](http://www.losra.org) or dropping your subscription in to one of our two collection points using the tear-off slip below. You can deliver it to any of the following: Skinners Newsagents/Post Office in Avenue Parade; Twirltour Travel in Green Street. Our thanks to these businesses for their help in providing this service. You can also deliver it to Colleen Cuthbert (LOSRA Secretary) 8 Maryland Way. You can become Life Member at a cost of £100.

Please find enclosed my annual subscription of £5.00 for family membership of the Lower Sunbury Residents' Association for the calendar year 2015. In addition, I would like to make a donation of £..... (SPR15)

Name:..... Address : .....

.....Tel. no. : ..... E-mail address.....