

LOWER SUNBURY RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION 2010 SPRING NEWSLETTER



www.losra.org

Public meeting leaves residents sceptical about plan for “Eco Park” at Charlton Lane waste site

LOSRA arranged a public meeting, publicised via the website and e-bulletin, on Wednesday 17th March at the Riverside Arts Centre, to give residents an opportunity to hear from representatives of Surrey County Council about a proposal for the Charlton Lane Waste Transfer Station to be developed as an “Eco Park”.

The meeting was well-attended, and the presentation and subsequent question and answer session left many of those attending unconvinced about some of the claims made by for the scheme.

The presentation was made by Cllr. Dr. Lynne Hack, Surrey County Councillor for Redhill and portfolio holder for environmental services for SCC, Richard Parkinson, head of waste management for SCC, and Gareth Swain of Sita, the contractor for waste services in Surrey.

Full details of the proposal can be found on Surrey County Council’s website. You can link direct to the relevant page from the entry on the LOSRA website. However, to summarise the proposal, its main features are:

- The conversion of the existing waste transfer shed into a gasification plant, which will turn 60,000 tons of “black bag” household waste into gases by heating them in an oxygen-free environment. These gases would then be burnt to drive turbines to produce electricity to return to the grid, sufficient to power 6,000 homes
- The building of three anaerobic digestion tanks for composting 40,000 tons of food waste, again

producing gases which can be turned into electricity, providing the heat for the gasification plant or sufficient to power 4,000 homes.

- The introduction of a Materials Recycling Facility for sorting for re-use dry recyclables collected from residents.

- The development of an innovations Centre, for research into new technologies, and Visitor Centre.

The existing community recycling facility would remain. According to the Plan, the development would only require a modest increase in the amount of land used by the waste handling activities.

The plan incorporates a number of features which underline the attempt to present the Plan as having “green” credentials, which is evident from the use of the name “Eco Park” and its presentation as part of an initiative called “world class waste solutions”.

However, there are a number of issues about which residents and local Borough councillors asked questions, and where some uncertainty remained at the end of the meeting.

The plan involves the facility handling waste from other parts of Surrey - the boroughs of Runnymede and Elmbridge were identified as well as Spelthorne. However, SCC state that since fewer vehicle movements would be required to remove waste after gasification compared to the current waste transfer process, there would be an overall reduction in

the number of lorries going in and out of the site. However, no precise calculation has been done to support this claim.

There was huge concern about the impact on air quality. Some very well-informed and highly technical questions from professionally qualified people in the audience called into question the “green” claims made for the gasification process. It was clear that there would be emissions from the plant which could compromise air quality in the area, bearing in mind that this is already an air quality management area, with Sunbury Cross registering the highest level of pollution in Surrey.

What emerged is that this plan is still at the concept stage, and that there will be a programme of exhibitions during coming months for further consultation as aspects of the plan are firmed up prior to the likely submission of a planning application in late summer.

Questioners were concerned that there was insufficient hard information and detail available for adequate consultation, and it is to be hoped that SCC put some flesh on the bones in terms of numbers of vehicle movements, where the waste is coming from, and better explanation of the science involved, sooner rather than later.

We urge residents to take a close interest in this plan, and LOSRA will publicise exhibitions and consultations as details become available. There could be positive aspects to the plan, but we are always a bit suspicious when things are dressed up in this kind of “management speak” and marketing jargon, so the jury is out until the plan is supported by some hard data.

London Irish proposals to be considered by special Planning Committee at Kempton Park on April 27

Spelthorne Council has acceded to the request made by LOSRA and the action groups SOLID and HAG, and has agreed that the two planning applications submitted by London Irish Holdings will be heard at a dedicated special meeting of the Planning Committee.

This will take place at Kempton Park on Tuesday 27th April at 7pm in order to provide the opportunity for the large number of interested local residents to attend. We have no other details at this stage — we understand that there may be a requirement to register in advance to get a ticket to attend — so please make sure you check the website or register to receive e-bulletins in order to get details.

The attendance at the standing room only re-arranged public meeting at Sunbury Manor school provided ample evidence of the strength of feeling over the proposals, as does the number of letters of objection received by Spelthorne, currently approaching 1500, we understand.

London Irish were concerned enough by the coverage of the meeting in the Surrey Advertiser that the CEO of London Irish Holdings, Andy Martin, requested a right to reply in which he some-

what injudiciously called Hazelwood a “grotty old driving range” (see the LOSRA website for the full story on this). He also said that London Irish were “not going to do anything to screw the community”, a claim that residents might view with some puzzlement and scepticism.

As we always knew, this is a considerable battle, and the action groups are doing a sterling job in marshalling the opposition. If you have not already registered your opposition, please do so, as objections will still be accepted.

The application numbers to quote when writing are:

(For The Avenue) 09/00841/OUT

(For Hazelwood) 09/00842/OUT

Please either write a letter to Planning Control, Spelthorne Borough Council, Knowle Green, Staines, Middx. TW18 1XB, or file your objection via their website at www.spelthorne.gov.uk/environment_planning/planning_home/env_planning_details_applications.htm

Please try to attend the Planning Committee to ensure the members are in no doubt as to the level of local feeling.

Results of Spelthorne Planning Review published

Independent planning consultants Trevor Roberts Associates (TRA) were asked to carry out a root and branch review of Spelthorne Council's planning department at the end of last year. A copy of the full report can be found at: http://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/planning_report.pdf

They were asked to look at particular issues including the structure of the services, its flexibility and fitness to improve quality of service, communication with councillors and customers and staff development.

While the report commends the Council for its good practices and processes, it notes that there is room for improvement.

The next step is to consider prioritising the recommendations and decide how and when they will happen. Some will be relatively easy to do – improving communications and the website and, if possible having additional staff to provide the necessary level of support.

Council Leader John Packman commented: “*Significant change will be required at all levels in the team to make the recommended improvements which our residents are entitled to receive.. This will require flexibility and a positive response from the planning team and full commitment to improving the way we work. Clearly, the users of the planning service must have confidence in what we do and we must be sure to clarify what the planning service can – and very importantly – cannot do. We shall be working hard to implement these improvements as soon as we can in all our interests*”.

For fuller details, there is an article on the LOSRA website. LOSRA made submissions to the consultants preparing the report, highlighting what we believed were shortcomings in the planning department, so we hope that Spelthorne will take this opportunity to implement the necessary changes to improve the quality of the planning process and the service the department provides.

Sunbury Cross road markings

LOSRA has contacted the various authorities about the lane markings at Sunbury Cross, which are badly faded and which can cause confusion, especially for those unfamiliar with the roundabout, and can therefore create the potential for accidents.

Surrey County Council eventually admitted that they are responsible for this, and indeed we were able to refer to correspondence from two or three years ago in which SCC advised that they would undertake the renewal of the markings as soon as they have funds.

Caroline Nicholls, our local County Councillor, is going to pursue the matter, and we are also approaching the local police officer responsible for road safety, as the local authorities generally take advice from the Police fairly seriously. We will update this via the website as things proceed.

Environment Agency application for Wheatley's Eyot development rejected

Following a sustained community campaign, Elmbridge Planning Committee have unanimously refused an application by the Environment Agency to develop green belt land on Wheatley's Eyot.

In a long and comprehensive planning hearing on 22nd February, one after another councillor declared serious concerns and opposition to what they were being asked to approve, ultimately dismissing the application as being wholly inappropriate in the Green Belt and harmful to the riverside environment.

The decision was reached despite the application having been recommended for approval by the Planning Officer, who claimed incredibly, and to the dismay of a packed public gallery, that "The EA could do just what it chooses in the flood plain" Wrong.

Spelthorne presents planning application for Hawke Park path

Following the consultation during the autumn, Spelthorne Council have presented a planning application for the implementation of the scheme to create a pedestrian/cycle path along the length of Hawke Park, formerly the TP26 Linear Park, from Oakington Drive across Lower Sunbury to Green Street.

There has been considerable discussion among residents' groups involved, namely LOSRA and Friends of Sunbury Park, about some aspects of the plan. One particular issue of note has been the choice of surface for the path. FoSP recommended the use of Breedon gravel, which has a more rural feel, but Spelthorne, based on Surrey County Council's standard practice, have chosen a surface called Fibretec, a tarmac/glass fibre base with gravel on top. The latter is claimed to be a lower maintenance surface.

The discussion is still proceeding, and we have asked that the planning application is not heard until everyone has more

detailed information about the costs and maintenance implications of the two types of surface.

The Council has taken into account many comments made during the consultation about the route of the path and the nature of the landscaping. However, FoSP and LOSRA are concerned that, after 40 years of fighting for this area of land, which was originally earmarked for a by-pass road, and has had housing proposals turned down, we don't end up with a suburbanised park with a mini-road along it, so we are paying close attention to the details.

Details of the application can be found on the Spelthorne website at http://phoenix.spelthorne.gov.uk/PublicAccess/tdc/DcApplication/application_detailview.aspx?caseno=KXD4B8PB00E00.

The official closing date for comments has passed, but if you wish to make any contribution to the debate, we are sure your comments will still be accepted

Environment Agency says Rivermead Island creek is not their responsibility

Bad press seems to be following the Environment Agency at the moment. Two attempts by volunteers to clear the creek which separates Rivermead Island from Thames Street have failed to check the growth of aquatic weed congestion and it has become clear that the job will only be completed with the use of dredging equipment.

The Environment Agency has made its position very clear. It does not see the work as being its responsibility as the creek is not part of the main river. This is a hair-splitting distinction which does them no credit at all. Given that the Council's responsibility ends at the river bank at Thames Street, it would seem that the creek falls into a no-mans land; the liability for which would presumably have to be determined in a court of law.

Undeterred, LOSRA is progressing the possibility of obtaining a grant under a scheme for environmental improvements sponsored by the British Airports Authority. Patience is required on this one.

LOSRA poses key questions at meeting of Spelthorne Council

Following the article on the website, Lower Sunbury residents packed the public gallery at the February 25th meeting of Spelthorne Council to hear LOSRA Committee members and others ask a series of questions designed to clarify key issues which affect the context for current important planning applications and other matters.

They related to Spelthorne's intentions regarding exceeding housing targets, statements made by a councillor and prospective parliamentary candidate about development on Green Belt and Protected Urban Open Space, sports facilities for older people, air quality strategies and "garden grabbing" development proposals.

There is not enough space to report the details here, but the full text of the questions and answers is on the LOSRA website in the list of news items. Some of the answers are fairly bland and anodyne, but they help to confirm and clarify various aspects of Council policy which we can refer to in framing our approach in resisting inappropriate planning applications and other proposals.

LOSRA is intent on maintaining its profile with Spelthorne Council's elected members and officers with responsible scrutiny of their actions and strategies to protect residents' interests.

LOSRA website traffic setting new records

'Lost pets' service added

Prompted no doubt by the level of interest in the London Irish issue, the number of visitors to the LOSRA website hit a new high in January, with 180,000 hits. It settled back to 120,000 in February, but this is still a significant increase over previous months, which had seen a steady month-on-month growth.

It shows that the site, which now includes a news feed of stories of local interest as well as LOSRA-specific articles, is now the first port of call for anyone seeking information on matters affecting Lower Sunbury.

We have identified another useful service which the website can provide. We often see unofficial notices and posters placed around the village and the Park asking for news of a pet which has been lost. However, we also know that people are wary of doing this as the fact that they need to include their contact details can encourage those who steal pets, and then look for posters advertising a reward.

If you have lost a pet, or found one that appears to be lost, e-mail the details to the website, and we will post a news item with a description, so that confidential contact can be made via the site. We think it could be a useful service that ensures the widest circulation of appeals.

THE LOSRA COMMITTEE

David Banks	38 Kenton Avenue	789652
Pamela Cabannes-Barrall	4 Forge Mews	761131
Elleker Carling	3 Croysdale Avenue	88272
Don Cunningham	2 Parkwood Grove	889033
Colleen Cuthbert (Secretary)	8 Maryland Way	783606
Peter Francis	Linden Lodge, Woodlands Drive	770661
Cathie French	173 French Street	789157
Roger Harding (Treasurer)	Sunmead Cottage, Green Street	782744
John Hirsh (Chairman)	21 School Walk	781363
Ian Robinson	33 Kingsmead Avenue	783774
George Rushbrook		788471
Patrick Smith	6 Maryland Way	783683
Matt Thomas	7 Nursery Road	787709
Paul Watts (President)	87 The Avenue	788449
Chris Wills		
David Woods	47 Sunna Gardens	786806

Come to the Sunbury Cricket Club Open Day Sunday 18th April

As always, LOSRA is happy to support and publicise local organisations that are an important part of our community, so at the start of a new season it's the turn of our excellent local cricket club which offers top quality coaching to colts as well as competitive and social cricket for adults at all standards.

For those who may not be aware, Sunbury Cricket Club, tucked discreetly off the Lower Hampton Road between Harfield Road and Kenton Avenue, is one of the largest and most vibrant cricket clubs in the South East. It fields four Saturday senior sides, all playing in the top Divisions of their respective leagues of the Surrey Championship and two or three senior XIs in cup, league and friendly matches on Sundays.

The strength of the Colts and Senior sides can be measured by the fact that the 1st XI can call on five former Sunbury colts now playing for county 1st and 2nd XIs. The Club boasts one of the most attractive club grounds in the country and the wicket has recently been assessed as of international standard. Non playing members can enjoy the benefits of a large Clubhouse and a licensed bar offering competitive prices and a full time steward, and you can see some high quality cricket on summer weekend afternoons.

The Club very much welcomes new members, including adults, colts and non playing members. Subscriptions start at £50 for adult playing members and the same for junior colts which includes family membership. Non playing membership is available at £10 per household.

The Club is holding an Open Day on Sunday 18th April. Prospective adult playing members and non playing members are invited to attend from noon to enjoy the facilities of the clubhouse. Colts aged between 5 and 17 (on 1st September 2009) are invited to attend with their kit between 2pm and 4pm to join in the practice and coaching sessions which will be in full swing. They must however be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

For further details see the Club website at www.sunburycricket.co.uk or contact the Honorary Secretary, Penny Hughes, at secretary@sunburycricket.co.uk.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

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 website or dropping your subscription in to one of our two collection points using the tear-off slip below. You can deliver it to either of the following shops : 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 pay by credit card using PayPal by visiting our website at www.losra.org. As advised in our previous newsletters, the subscription increased to £5.00 from the beginning of January 2008.

Please find enclosed my annual subscription of £5.00 for family membership of the Lower Sunbury Residents' Association for the calendar year 2010. In addition, I would like to make a donation of £..... (SPR10)

Name:..... Address :

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