

LOWER SUNBURY RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION



2006 AUTUMN NEWSLETTER

PLANNING COMMITTEE TURNS DOWN LATEST GREEN STREET HOUSING PLAN

As many of you will know, during the summer the latest in a series of planning applications was submitted by developers to demolish two houses at the top end of Green Street and build a block of 10 flats along with 4 houses

Third application this year

This is becoming a very long-running saga. We defeated the plan for 40 dwellings in this location at a public inquiry two years ago, since when the existing permission for 11 houses, now called "Heritage Gate", has been built. The developers have subsequently targeted the two remaining houses. "Little Manor" and "Taranaki" with successive planning applications - this is the third to come before the Planning Committee this year.

These have been strongly opposed by LOSRA and the Green Street Action Group, a stance which has generally been supported by the local authorities. Spelthorne's planning officers have recommended refusal, and Surrey County Council's Highways officers objected to the first applications on safety grounds. The Planning Committee has duly refused the applications, citing the obvious grounds.

War of attrition

However, developers know that they can sometimes succeed by using attritional tactics, submitting successive slightly amended plans, and

hoping that residents will get "objection fatigue" and stop writing letters, and that officers and councillors will eventually capitulate.

Officers recommend approval

We could see the cracks appearing with this latest application. Surrey did not oppose the plan, citing the fact that the latest version provided facilities for dustcarts to turn inside the site (the danger of multiple exits on a dangerous corner appears not to bother them), and, more disturbingly, Spelthorne's planning officer recommended acceptance of the plan. We were baffled and concerned by this, because the revised plan had only tinkered with minor details, and was essentially the same plan.

Letters of objection

Given the circumstances, and especially since the plan was submitted in August when many residents would be away and might not spot the deadline for objections, we joined with GSAG to do a local newsletter delivery to urge people to write further letters of objection. The response was magnificent, and there were 314 letters of objection.

This was undoubtedly an important consideration in the Planning Committee's decision to turn down the application on the same grounds as previous

applications, namely "overdevelopment of the site, which would be detrimental to the street scene and out of character with the surrounding area."

No appeal yet

It remains to be seen whether Cliveden Properties, the developers, will appeal against this decision. The fact that the Planning Officer recommended granting permission often encourages developers to appeal, which is one reason we are so unhappy with the stance of the Planning Department in this case. We have taken the matter up with the Chief Planning Officer to try to ensure a properly robust attitude on applications to build on the sites of existing houses and gardens

Traffic issue

Another slightly disappointing aspect was that the planning committee seemed to be on the point of citing traffic danger and congestion as a reason for rejection, but for some reason backed off at the last minute. It would have helped our cause if they had supported our view on the Green Street traffic issue.

Many thanks to all those who responded so rapidly in writing letters of objection - it really is of vital importance, especially in demonstrating to councillors that they have full support from the community in rejecting these plans, and in sending a signal to developers that they will encounter strong opposition every step of the way.

SUNBURY AREA FORUM **Tues. 24th October 7.00 p.m.** **at St. Paul's School**

The next Area Forum takes place at St. Paul's School on Tuesday 24th October at 7.00p.m.. The Area Forums are held by Spelthorne Council to provide an opportunity for residents to ask questions about local issues.

These Forums are currently held only twice a year in each part of the Borough, so if there is anything about which you are concerned, this is your chance to ask about it. Unfortunately, because of the timing of the meeting and our newsletter, we were not able to give you more notice - it is generally better if you ask your question in writing in advance of the meeting to ensure that it gets answered by someone who knows about the specific subject.

We are trying to persuade Spelthorne that these meetings should be more frequent and that residents should be able to set at least part of the Agenda. One thing that will help us succeed in this is if the Forum is well-attended and the Council knows that Sunbury residents regard them as important, so please attend if you can.

(Apologies if this newsletter arrives too late to give you notice of the Forum - it is scheduled for delivery over the weekend of 21st/22nd, but we can't always guarantee that distributors are available to do this in every road.)

Horse chestnuts attacked by leaf miner larvae

As you will have noticed, all the horse chestnut trees in the area have been attacked by leaf miners, larvae of the *Caeraria ohridella* moth, originating from the Mediterranean. Apparently it will not kill the trees, and the perceived wisdom is that the moths will not survive the winter if the dead leaves are thoroughly composted. Presumably burning would also work.

If in doubt, there is a wealth of information from various internet sources - if you Google any of the references noted above, you will find all you need to know. Maybe a decent cold winter will get rid of the little beggars.

Policing : Residents hit by new spate of vandalism and anti-social behaviour

With the warm weather during the summer came a spate of problems caused by groups of aggressive and unruly youngsters in various parts of Lower Sunbury.

The Green Street/Church Street area was particularly badly affected, with damage to cars and threats to residents. A group of local residents drummed up support for a letter to Surrey Police, as a result of which extra patrols have recently been targeted on Lower Sunbury.

Other hotspots included Rivermead Island, where large groups of people congregated during the warm evenings. There's obviously no problem as long as they behave reasonably, but there were incidents of motorbikes and scooters being ridden, plus general drunkenness and rowdiness with appalling quantities of litter being left. Other people have reported threatening behaviour from groups of youths in different parts of the village.

The important thing in all cases is

"REPORT IT". No matter how apparently trivial, it is vital that any incident of concern is reported. If the same incident is reported by two different people quickly, a patrol will be sent, and if a number of incidents in an area are logged, the Police will focus resources on the area concerned.

Apparently, after one Friday night of damage to cars in the Green St./ Church St. area, not one report had been made, presumably because residents thought it wasn't worth it and nothing would happen. Not true. We will only get something done if individuals report every problem and incident - if we don't, the police think everything's OK.

Telephone the Surrey Police call centre on 0845 1252222, and make sure that the operator gives you an incident number - it's worth storing that number on your mobile, so you can make a call the minute anything happens even if you are out and about.

Latest application for stables on Croysdale Avenue land rejected

During the summer, a further planning application was submitted by the owners of the land off Croysdale Avenue formerly used for car boot sales. You may remember that a wide tarmac road was laid around the site without permission and that an appeal against the enforcement notice for its removal was rejected by the Planning Inspector.

The landowners then submitted a plan for a stable block on the other side of the field, which entailed retention of the road. We naturally objected strongly, saying that the no applications should be considered until the enforcement notice was complied with.

This application was rejected, but in August a new plan was submitted, which was almost identical, but provided for the road to be reduced in width to 5 metres. Needless to say, we objected again on the same grounds. The plan was dealt with under delegated powers by the planning officer, and we are pleased to say that once again, the application was refused.

Albert Skinner on the mend

It was nice to see a personal note from Albert Skinner delivered with this week's papers, telling everyone he was hoping to be back in the shop soon. He has been unwell and has been having some rest and recuperation in Walton Hospital - it was typical that one of his main concerns was that the papers had continued to be delivered! We are sure everyone will echo our sentiments in wishing Albert well - we look forward to seeing him back around the village soon.

SSAGE

www.ssage.org.uk

**Sunbury and Shepperton
Against Gravel Extraction**

Representatives attend workshop

The latest round of consultations on the proposals for gravel extraction involved representatives of SSAGE, LOSRA and Green Street Action Group attending an all-day stakeholders workshop on Monday 16th October.

This is part of Surrey County Council's process of revision of the Draft Surrey Minerals Plan, in preparation for submission to the Secretary of State in June 2007.

Since this newsletter went to press before the workshop, we have no details to report, but can assure residents that every opportunity will be taken to put forward arguments against the extraction of gravel from Watersplash Farm.

Keep your eye on the SSAGE web site for further updates, and add your name to the e-mailing list.

Complaints about Kempton Park illuminated sign

LOSRA and Green Street Action Group met Spelthorne's Enforcement Officer to draw his attention to the illuminated animated sign outside Kempton Park on the basis that planning permission had not been applied for and it was dangerously distracting for traffic. The officer agreed, but the matter has gone to the Planning Inspectorate.

On the same subject LOSRA objected to the fact that Spelthorne were proposing to relinquish their powers under the "Areas of Advertising Control" provisions. These enable councils to stop advertising hoardings being indiscriminately erected. It is under these regulations that successful objections have been made against the signs by the M3 at Sunbury Cross. We could not understand why Spelthorne wished to relinquish control. The Inspector said he had never known a case where residents had had to make such representations.

The Inspector's report was due at the end of September, and it will be interesting to see the outcome.

Problems and progress for Sunbury pubs - Phoenix, Three Fishes and Magpie

There have been various happenings in recent weeks affecting three of Lower Sunbury's public houses.

In August, the Phoenix, which has fallen into a very sorry state of repair, giving a very poor impression in the Conservation Area, was flooded internally as a result of roof leaks during a heavy downpour.

There is planning permission in place for extensive refurbishment, but it appears that the leaseholder went into receivership, and the owners, Enterprise Inns, are seeking a new lessee. The refurbishment plans are in abeyance pending this situation being sorted out.

In September the Three Fishes suffered a fairly superficial fire as a result of roof repairs, but it damaged a chimney stack, which was summarily demolished and replaced with a chimney in modern yellow brick.

We brought this to the attention of Spelthorne Council, as the Three Fishes is a listed building - it is believed to be the oldest building in Sunbury. The Enforcement Officer paid a visit, and we

understand that discussions are under way for proper reinstatement of the chimney in an acceptable form.

Meanwhile, a group of Thames Street residents met with Greene King, owners of The Magpie, to discuss their plans for the pub, and were encouraged by what they heard. It is regarded as one of their elite sites (along with the Donkey at Marlow, The Grove in Surbiton, and Tide End in Teddington) and they intend to develop it as a high-quality, over-21, food-centred pub, with a more extensive and varied menu.

They will be refurbishing the terrace in preparation for the smoking ban next year, enabling year-round use. And they will continue to adopt a zero-tolerance policy towards bad behaviour, both inside and outside the pub.

They are intending to finalise plans in November with a view to closing during January/February for the refurbishment to take place.

Residents were encouraged at the generally positive and sympathetic approach, and it is good that such a dialogue is taking place.

Benwell Centre maladministration complaint goes to Ombudsman

LOSRA has joined forces with other local groups to make a formal complaint about Spelthorne's handling of the issue of the proposed closure of the Benwell Centre and the general subject of changes to services for the elderly.

The complaints allege maladministration in the implementation of the consultation and decision-making process, resulting in a clear injustice to Sunbury residents. The dossier has been sent to the Local Government Ombudsman, and it will be a while before we get a judgement on the matter.

Meanwhile, of course, the Benwell Centre is due to close at the end of the year. We are not aware of any action having been taken to progress the proposal for a residential development of sheltered housing on the site incorporating a centre duplicating many of the functions of the current facility. It has been confirmed that the Citizen's Advice Bureau is moving to the Library, despite strong opposition from the Friends of Sunbury Library and others.

It's regrettable to have to say it, but it might be a salutary lesson for Spelthorne if the Ombudsman found against them.

Excellent attendance at AGM for 'Vision for Lower Sunbury' talk

More than 80 people came to the LOSRA AGM in June, where the Association's President, Paul Watts, made a presentation of the "Vision for Lower Sunbury" document, setting out LOSRA's aspirations for the area.

If you have not read it, it is available on the LOSRA web-site at www.losra.org.uk. The presentation prompted some discussions with local councillors who were there, as a result of which it has been agreed that we will aim to reinstate the regular meetings which LOSRA representatives used to have with the local ward councillors.

We are hopeful also that the new Spelthorne Chief Executive, Roberto Tambini, who has had a copy of the "Vision" document, will be able to attend the first of these meetings. Our aim is obviously to exert some influence over key strategic issues.

THE LOSRA COMMITTEE

Pamela Cabannes	4 Forge Mews	761131
Tony Cannings	90 Manor Lane	789750
Elleke Carling	3 Croysdale Avenue	882 726
Don Cunningham	2 Parkwood Grove	889033
Peter Francis	Linden Lodge, Woodlands Drive	770661
Cathie French	173 French Street	789157
Roger Harding	Sunmead Cottage, Green St.	782744
John Hirsh (Chairman)	21 School Walk	781363
Anne Nowicka	9 The Pines	885545
Mike Rigby (Treasurer)	26 Queensway TW16 6HB	789013
Patrick Smith	6 Maryland Way	
Pat Stone	Adelphi, Parke Road	
Paul Watts (President)	87 The Avenue TW16 5HZ	788449
Chris Wills	Mon Abri, Wheatleys Ait	780574
David Woods	47 Sunna Gardens	786806

Traffic and Church Street sewer works

The recent sewer works in Church Street and the related traffic diversions gave us an opportunity to do some informal traffic surveys to test the proportions of local and through traffic.

Surrey County Council's "experts" always contend that Green Street is paralysed at peak hours because of local traffic. Our counts of where cars have been coming from and going to at each end of the day would indicate that, alongside the school run phenomenon, through traffic is a major factor, as we have always contended.

Spelthorne's planning committee have recommended that, at long last, a proper traffic survey is done in Green Street, but our statistics will provide a useful contribution to future debates on the subject.

Please pay 2006 suscriptions if you haven't done so

We are coming to the end of our financial year, and although we have collected a healthy amount of subscriptions so far, our printing and other costs have gone up this year, and we need to get some more funds in if we are to avoid running at a loss this year.

Our subs have been at £2.00 a year for some time and we are considering whether an increase might be in order, but in the meantime, if you have not already paid your subscription for this year, please use the form at the bottom of this page and drop it off at one of the shops who collect for us.

We hope you think you get good value from the Association - if so, please let us have your £2.00 if you haven't already paid.

"Friends of Sunbury Park" install nestboxes in Park

Taking advantage of some funding from Spelthorne last financial year, the Friends of Sunbury Park purchased over 30 nestboxes for bats, owls, tree creepers and a variety of other species.

These have now been erected at suitable locations around the Park by Spelthorne's tree contractors under the guidance of FoSP members, so that the birds and bats have time to get used to them during the winter.

Let's hope they take a liking to them and we can see them in use next summer.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

If you have not already paid your subscription for this year, could you please help us by dropping your suscription in to one of our three collection points using the tear-off slip below. You can deliver it to any of the following local shops :Skinners in Avenue Parade; Londis in French Street, Twirltour Travel in Green Street. Our thanks to these businesses for their help in providing this service.

Please find enclosed my annual subscription of £2.00 for family membership of the Lower Sunbury Residents' Association for the calendar year 2006.

Name : Address :
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