

LOWER SUNBURY RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION 2009 AUTUMN NEWSLETTER



www.losra.org

London Irish Planning Applications submitted - your objections needed

Please support local action groups to oppose these threats

As reported in previous newsletters, the expected Planning Applications from London Irish RFC have been submitted for a substantial housing development - for 194 houses, cottages and flats - on their ground in The Avenue, and for the development of a new Club headquarters and training centre on the site of Hazelwood Golf Course in Croysdale Avenue.

We have delayed our normal autumn newsletter to ensure that we circulated the news of this with full details of how to object.

This a potential "double-whammy" for Lower Sunbury residents, not only threatening a huge intrusion of new housing on what is currently Protected Urban Open Space, but also losing a valuable amenity in the golf course and completely suburbanising this attractive semi-rural area of Green Belt.

Action groups established

In order to mount the most effective possible opposition to these two major threats, LOSRA has decided, working in consultation with interested local residents, to use the technique that worked successfully in opposing the Chelsea FC and Englemere Homes developments.

This involves setting up two dedicated action groups to address each of the two proposed developments, both incorporating LOSRA Committee members and working in close harmony with the well-established LOSRA infrastructure to mount sustained and vocal campaigns and to mobilise residents in opposition.

SOLID & HAG

The group set up to focus effort on the London Irish development is called SOLID (Sunbury Opposes London Irish Development), and it is already working on a programme of activities to ensure a high level of awareness and objections.

If you would like to offer your assistance in whatever capacity - especially if you have specialist expertise that might be useful - please e-mail SOLID at losra-solid@live.co.uk.

The Hazelwood Action Group (HAG) which did such a sterling job in defeating the Chelsea FC proposal to establish their training facility there, has been reconstituted with many of the same people, whose experience and knowledge will be invaluable.

The LIRFC proposal

All the proposals have been displayed at exhibitions staged by LIRFC. If you were unable to get to these, you can see the full content of the exhibitions by going to the link on the LOSRA web site at www.losra.org. These show plans and artist impressions, with supporting text.

Key points are:

- The Avenue scheme involves a development comprising a total of 194 dwellings, with 24 4/5-bedroom houses, 66 2-bedroom cottages, and 90 1/2 bedroom apartments in two substantial blocks.
- The development covers the whole of the site, both north and south of the Virgin Active Club.
- It also envisages a care home for

the elderly.

- The proposal also includes a Health Centre to replace the existing one in Green Street.

-The Hazelwood scheme proposes 17 rugby pitches including a full-size floodlit artificial pitch, with several others also floodlit.

Our objections

There is not really enough space here to articulate our objections in detail, so a longer article incorporating suggested drafts of letters of objection will be posted on the LOSRA web site in the near future. However, the main issues to raise in your letter are:

- The Avenue plan involves development on Protected Urban Open Space, which the owners had previously undertaken, when the leisure centre was built, would not be developed further.
 - It involves two separate road exits on to The Avenue, introducing hundreds of cars on to a busy road which is used as a through route in rush hours.
 - Whilst a Sustainable Drainage System (Suds) has been incorporated within the outline plan, nothing has been done to understand the implications for sewage infrastructure in an area which already has serious drainage problems.
 - Spelthorne is many years ahead of its housing target and this site has not been included in any strategic plans for housing.
 - The development is not sustainable, in that it would place huge pressure on a local infrastructure which is already overstretched and under pressure
 - The development is out of character with the surrounding area, with the largest component of dwellings
- (Continued on Page 2)

Your letters of objection needed by 20th January

London Irish Plans (cont'd)

provided by two blocks of flats.

- Proposals for traffic management, with traffic lights at the top of The Avenue and other measures, indicate the level of the problems it would create.
- The Hazelwood scheme does not overcome any of the grounds on which the Planning Inspector rejected the Chelsea FC application on appeal.
- The scheme would change the character of the Green Belt, and lose a valuable amenity.

Write letters of objection

It is crucial that as many people as possible write to object to the proposal. London Irish will no doubt mobilise their membership to write in support of it. Remember, we need to write separate letters for each application.

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 web-site at www.spelthorne.gov.uk/environment_planning/planninghome/env_planning_details_applications.htm

Public Meeting

This is possibly the most important campaign we have fought for years, and it is important that we mobilise as much opposition as possible. **To this end, a public meeting will be held at Sunbury Manor School, Nursery Road, on 7th January at 7.30pm.** You may wish to delay your letter of objection until after attending the meeting as there will be ample time to do so, but whatever you decide, please be sure to write.

Further consultation on gravel extraction at Watersplash Farm and Aggregates Recycling Plans.

Surrey County Council has undertaken another round of consultation on two new documents relating to the Surrey Minerals Plan, namely the Draft Minerals Site Restoration Supplementary Planning Document and the Draft Aggregates Recycling Development Plan Document. Unfortunately, because of the timing of this newsletter, it is too late to ask for residents to make further responses to the consultation, as the closing date is the 18th December.

However, SSAGE (Sunbury and Shepperton Against Gravel Extraction) and LOSRA have worked together on a response to the consultation.

The bits that concern us are outline plans for restoration of Watersplash Farm after extraction takes place there (it is already on the list of preferred sites). Our

view is that the proposal is a bit of fudge, providing for an area of public nature reserve space in the middle of the site following the line of the River Ash, with the remainder of the infilled land returned to agriculture.

There must be questions marks about the viability of remotely managed agriculture on infilled land in maybe 20 years time – it is currently Grade 1 agricultural land. A coherent plan for a complete public access nature reserve open space would be a more sensible option.

The proposals for Aggregates Recycling involve the possible location of recycling plants for hard core and other such materials. They suggest either or both of a permanent plant at the existing Charlton Road recycling site, or a temporary plant located at Watersplash Farm for the duration of the gravel working there.

The issues are fairly complex, but

Victory for residents as Housing plan for Environment Agency site is rejected by Spelthorne Planning Committee

At a special meeting of Spelthorne's Planning Committee in the Council Chamber at Knowle Green on Wednesday 25th November, the plans submitted by Linden Homes to build 88 houses and flats on the Environment Agency site in Fordbridge Road were rejected.

Among the the grounds on which they were refused were that the plan constituted over-development, contrary to Policy EN1 of the Local Development Framework, that the development would be out of character with the riverside location, and that there was inadequate provision of open space. There are a number of other practical issues involved in the potential development, which were never adequately addressed by the applicants.

The local residents in the immediate area are to be congratulated on the well-organised and sustained campaign of opposition to the scheme. The leader of the opposition group, Jonathan Webster, made an excellent submission to the meeting, supported by contributions from local councillors.

As this is a brownfield site, it is to be expected that there will be a another application, but at least this decision has laid down some markers as to what standards an application needs to meet.

the basic proposal is that aggregates waste is brought by truck to the proposed plants and the recovered aggregates taken away along with the worked gravel, while the remaining inert waste is used for infilling sites being worked.

The obvious downsides of this are the additional lorry movements involved, and the noise and dust pollution from the crushing and recycling process. Both of these would be serious issues at Watersplash Farm, given its location close to residential areas and probably simultaneous work to rebuild Walton Bridge. It is also doubtful whether there is capacity for such a plant at Charlton Lane, or whether this is an appropriate location for such a plant.

There is not room for all the issues and arguments to be set out in this newsletter, or indeed for the links to the documents on the Surrey CC web site. These links, along with the proposed SSAGE and LOSRA responses will be available on the LOSRA web site at www.losra.org and those interested in the subject can get more detailed information there.

Fourth planning application for 72 The Avenue rejected

The Public Gallery at the Planning Committee was once again packed with local residents who had come to hear the fourth, and hopefully the last, application to develop No.72 The Avenue.

Cheers greeted the unanimous decision of the Committee to refuse the application. It was held that the proposed development would have a poor relationship with the neighbouring property and cause an adverse loss of amenity. In particular, Plot 1 would have a dominating and enclosing impact on the adjacent property with a resulting loss of outlook.

Additionally, it was held that the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the setting of the adjacent Hawke Park, and would appear out of keeping with the street scene. These grounds for refusal, self-evident though they are, will not go away; and it can only be hoped that the owners and their agents realise the futility of submitting further, similarly inappropriate, applications for this site. Thanks are due to all those residents who have continued to lodge objections.

Triple success for Riverside Arts Centre groups in 2009 Spelthorne & Runnymede Drama Festival

Theatre groups based at the Riverside Arts Centre won three awards at the recent 2009 Spelthorne & Runnymede Drama Festival, which was held over a week of performances at the Arts Centre.

- The Riverside Youth Theatre won the Youth Award in the 16 - 21 age group for "Playing from the heart" by Charles Way, directed by Gill Lambourn.

- Shepperton Players won the Best New Play award for "God Bless America" written by Geoff Buckingham.

- RAC Chairman Eric Champion won the Adjudicator's Award for his performance in "God Bless America".

Public meeting is last chance to challenge Environment Agency over flood strategy

Riverside Arts Centre Tuesday 12th January

Many residents have been deeply dissatisfied with the lack of publicity given to the consultation arrangements for the Lower Thames Flood Strategy.

Thanks to representations made by one of our members, The LTS Project Manager for the Environment Agency, Mr Graham Piper, has agreed to address a public meeting and to answer questions from residents.

The hazards of flooding have been all too evident in recent weeks and this public meeting will be the last opportunity to face the principal authority responsible for flood management in Lower Sunbury. **The meeting will be held at the Riverside Arts Centre on Tuesday 19th January at 7.30pm.** Tea and coffee will be available.

Congratulations to the winners on their success. It never ceases to amaze us how many people who live in Sunbury are unaware of the variety and quality of the entertainment that's on offer at the Arts Centre, and the range and high standard of facilities and crafts it offers.

You can get full information about the Festival wins, and RAC activities, affiliated groups and the various productions and events on their web site which is at www.riversidearts.co.uk, which has a link to their quarterly newsletter The Centre. The RAC is a huge asset to the village, and more people should take advantage of what it has to offer.

Harfield Road housing proposal goes to appeal

The latest application to build a 4-bedroom house in the back garden of 28 Harfield Road has been rejected by Spelthorne's Planning Committee, but the applicants have again taken it to appeal.

Thanks are due to those residents who have consistently written to object to these proposals, which are completely inappropriate, and it is to be hoped that Inspector agrees.

Confusion over Plans for TP26/Hawke Park

A confusing situation emerged recently when Spelthorne announced that they would be lodging a planning application for the pedestrian/cycle path and landscaping of Hawke Park, formerly the TP26 Linear Park, and then promptly withdrew it, without advising residents who turned up at Knowle Green to look at the plans.

This was discussed with Council officials at the recent meeting of the Friends of Sunbury Park, when it emerged that Spelthorne are proposing to use a standard (and naturally lower cost) tarmac-based material for the path, rather than the Breedon Gravel, the preferred high quality natural material which LOSRA and FoSP have consistently requested be used.

There were also a number of other proposals and possible variations from what had previously been discussed. LOSRA and FoSP have asked that no planning application is lodged before final plans have been put forward for further consultation.

Spelthorne do not have resources to check on what developers build

After questioning Spelthorne's Planning Officer about instances of developers flouting the details of planning permissions, it emerges that Spelthorne do not have the resources to check such issues once building takes place. We will return to this in more detail in the next issue, but the lesson is that if you think a developer is building something that wasn't what they got permission for, check it, and don't be afraid to question and complain.

Lower Sunbury Business Community web site launched Christmas Market initiative repeated

The Lower Sunbury Business Community has launched its own web site. The address is www.losbc.org, and the site carries full details of members, current news and promotions. Hopefully, it will encourage residents to make more use of local shops and services, and keep the commercial life of the village active and prosperous.

The first event it promoted was the Christmas Market, which took place in Avenue Parade on Sunday 13th December—unfortunately the timing of this newsletter meant it was too late to help promote it and too early to report on it before we went to press.

Following the success of the Summer Market LOSBC teamed up once again with the Arts & Crafts Market whose traders offer their unique selection of hand made products.

The fun-filled family day offered over 25 stalls offering festive gifts and fine foods, a carol singing concert by the St. Mary's church choir, festive tunes from the Salvation Army, and the cast of the Manor Players in their pantomime costumes were intending to be amongst the crowds on the parade.

It's a marvellous addition to the Sunbury Christmas calendar, so we trust that it went well and was as well attended as it deserves to be, and no doubt there will be reports of it on the LOSBC web site.

THE LOSRA COMMITTEE

| | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------|
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Please find enclosed my annual subscription of £5.00 for family membership of the Lower Sunbury Residents' Association for the calendar year 2009. In addition, I would like to make a donation of £..... (AUT09)

Name:..... Address:

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

FRIENDS OF SUNBURY PARK

Carols in the Meadow

The event which has rapidly become a fixture of the Lower Sunbury Christmas season, Carols in the Meadow, was arranged once more this year by Friends of Sunbury Park.

Unfortunately, as with the Christmas Market, the timing of this newsletter meant it was too late to help promote it and too early to report on it before we went to press. However, barring some kind of disaster or appalling weather, we trust that it went ahead as planned and was as well-attended as ever.

Thanks are due to the Salvation Army Band for providing the music to accompany the community carol-singing, the local Churches Together group for serving mulled wine, Riverside Youth Theatre for the lighting, and most notably to FoSP Chairman Gerry Ceaser for his efforts in organising the event once again.

Please pay your 2009 LOSRA subscriptions

Funds will be needed to fight the battles we are facing

As we approach the end of the year, LOSRA finds itself facing some of the most formidable challenges since its foundation 42 years ago. If we are to succeed in meeting these challenges, it is imperative that our funding is adequate for the tasks ahead. Only a small proportion of Lower Sunbury residents currently pay a subscription to LOSRA, although we have always provided the same service to those who are not members or have never subscribed. There are now just two weeks in which to forward your 2009 subscription if you have not already done so. You can pay your subscription on the LOSRA web site at www.losra.org - just click on the 'Subscribe' button and pay safely and securely online via PayPal. You do not need to have a PayPal account to pay via PayPal and all major credit/debit cards are accepted. Alternatively, use the slip below to deliver your subs to one of local shops who help us by collecting them.