

LOWER SUNBURY RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION



www.losra.org

Campaigns by residents achieve positive outcomes for Environment Agency and Police College developments

Resident power, comprising LOSRA working alongside local project-specific campaign groups, has secured acceptable developments on two key sites in Lower Sunbury where dense over-bearing building plans were originally submitted and recommended by Spelthorne's planning officers.

The plans now likely to proceed on the Environment Agency site in Fordbridge Road and the former Police College on the corner of Thames Street and Green Street, involve housing design and densities of housing much more appropriate to their locations than the plans originally submitted and which had gone to appeal and public inquiries.

Both of these sites are "brownfield" sites, where there was never any possibility of preventing housing development, but where our objective was to ensure that plans were in character with the area and did not have a deleterious effect on the amenity of local residents.

The original plan submitted by Linden Homes was for 87 housing units, which would have had serious negative implications for neighbouring residents, who formed the Campaign Against Riverside Over-development to fight the application, working closely with LOSRA. The local residents invested considerable sums in engaging the services of a barrister to help defeat the plan when it went to appeal after being turned down by Spelthorne's planning committee, in defiance of the recommendation by

Spelthorne's planning officer. Regrettably, we are obliged to record that the performance of Spelthorne's planning officer working on this case was not up to the standard we would expect, involving at least one significant error that was noted by the Planning Inspector.

After that the developer Linden Homes worked closely with LOSRA and residents to ensure that a revised plan was acceptable. This plan (13/00153/FUL) has now been submitted by Linden Homes and the Environment Agency.

The scheme proposes 37 new houses and flats with associated access, parking, open space and landscaping; and a new workshop, compound and storage facility for the Environment Agency, following the demolition of all buildings and structures on site (except the substation).

The proposals include the following details:

- The workshop will be on the mainland alongside Willow Way with residential covering the majority of the site
- The density of the scheme will be 27 dwellings per hectare
- 43.2% two beds (flats at the front of the site), 24.3% three beds (houses), 8.2% 4 bed (houses), 24.3% 5 bed (houses) will be provided
- The houses will be 2/2.5 storeys
- A level of affordable housing will be in the flats at the front of the site.

LOSRA and the Campaign Against Riverside Over-development are very pleased to endorse this appli-

cation, and we hope this will see a satisfactory resolution to the matter.

As far as the Police College site is concerned, where Linden Homes is also the developer, once again a local group of residents opposed the original plan involving 44 units and a vehicle exit on to Green Street, which would have involved cars going all round the 'triangle' one-way system to get on to Thames Street. LOSRA worked with the group to oppose both this aspect and the density of housing, and persuaded Spelthorne's planning committee to reject the scheme. It went to appeal and was actually approved by the Inspector.

However, in the meantime, negotiations proceeded with Linden Homes to produce an alternative scheme, involving 28 units and a vehicle exit on to Thames Street, which they had originally said was not acceptable to Surrey County Council traffic officers, which turned out not to be the case.

After some deliberation over the affordable housing issue, Spelthorne's officers agreed that the new lower-density scheme was acceptable, and this was passed, and we now know that Linden Homes are going ahead with the new and preferable plan, which is a great relief to local people.

These outcomes are a testimony to how LOSRA, working with individual residents and local groups, is able to influence the way that Lower Sunbury's environment and townscape is being developed and managed, and we thank all those who have worked on and supported these campaigns.

Exhibition of plans for Watersplash Farm gravel working is on Fri. & Sat. 22nd & 23rd March

As advised in the last newsletter, Cemex have submitted plans to Surrey County Council for the excavation of gravel from Watersplash Farm, which borders Ford-bridge Road and Gaston Way in the Green Belt between Sunbury and Shepperton. This application will go before Surrey's planning committee at some stage in the next few months, although there are apparently a lot of processes that have to be gone through before this happens.

LOSRA and SSAGE (Sunbury & Shepperton Against Gravel Extraction) have been in regular contact with Cemex to ensure that residents' concerns about aspects of the potential working are taken into account in the plans, and to ensure that residents have the maximum opportunity to see the plans, understand their implications and talk to Cemex about them.

To that end, the plans will be available on public display at the Holiday Inn Hotel in Felix Lane, Shepperton, on Friday 22nd March from 1p.m. to 8 p.m., and on Saturday 23rd March from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.. We tried to organise for the display to take place in a more resident-friendly location like Halliford Village Hall, which might have been more accessible for those without cars, but unfortunately the Hall was not available for the continuous times needed on any weekends that might have been suitable, and we needed to get it done sooner rather than later. We hope that those who are interested will be able

to get there.

As we have already made clear, the main part of the consultation over gravel sites to be worked in Spelthorne has already taken place over several years, and LOSRA and SSAGE worked hard to keep Watersplash Farm from moving to the top of the list, but as other sites have been worked, it became harder to resist the process and it now seems pretty certain that the site will be worked.

However, there are a lot of issues to be addressed in how the working is managed, how the lorry movements in and out of the site are managed, and how the subsequent restoration of the site to farmland and publicly-accessible walks and nature reserve areas will be done. One resident has raised the important issue of what materials will be used for infilling if the site is to be restored to farmland with drainage comparable to that of gravel deposits, and there are many other details which can be looked at which will help to minimise the impact on residents.

Lorries and traffic is obviously going to be one of the thorniest points, and an ideal solution may be hard to find. However, we know that the people at Cemex are approachable and keen to work with residents, so please come to the exhibition and talk to them. The plans are online at www.cemexcommunities.co.uk in the "Shepperton" section, so please have a look at them there if you are unable to get to the exhibition.

Elmbridge plough on regardless with riverside 'sports hub' and Stompond Lane development

In February Elmbridge Council announced it would be progressing plans for the proposed Sports Stadium complex on Green Belt at Waterside Drive funded by the sale of the football and athletics clubs' current site at Stompond Lane as a development site for housing.

Over 150 protesters gathered at the Civic Centre in Esher for the Full Council Meeting on Wednesday 27th February, representing an alliance of interested parties: residents affected by Waterside Drive proposals, including LOSRA Committee members, residents affected by Stompond Lane proposals and supporters of Walton & Hersham Football Club (WHFC) who have played at Stompond Lane for 80 years. A double decker bus arrived carrying WHFC fans calling for the council to "Save Stompond Lane" as councillors arrived.

The public gallery was packed beyond its standing room capacity and extra committee rooms were opened to accommodate the crowd. The turnout took Council officials by surprise, with comments made by the Mayor, Cllr Janet Turner, Cllr Chris Sadler.

Cllr Stuart Selleck called for a further amendment to the Stompond Lane development proposal for an "appropriate period of consultation with the public and relevant stakeholders be held in close proximity to the Stompond Lane sports ground". Council leader, John O'Reilly agreed to a 'significant period of consultation prior to the planning application for Stompond Lane...

with a reasonable expectation that, as part of that consultation, amendments will be made and taken on board'.

LOSRA will be calling for a similar consultation process to be held with Sunbury residents before a detailed Planning submission is drawn up for the complex at Waterside Drive. The scheme submitted last year was poorly designed, and there was no input sought from Spelthorne representatives.

Last year Elmbridge officers and councillors repeatedly assured us that Waterside Drive and Stompond Lane were not linked, in order to allay suspicions of local residents. Now they admit that the sale of Stompond Lane will finance the new £6m sports hub adjacent to Xcel, and have even denied that they ever concealed the fact. Had this fact been made clear at the time, there would have been a broader opposition, and the impact of the proposed sports hub on Sunbury village might have been properly considered.

The land at Waterside Drive is in the Green Belt. The proposal is for an athletics track, a grandstand, the main football pitch and three practice pitches which will stretch from the Xcel building along behind the Weir Pub. The view from the Conservation Area in Sunbury will be ruined by the very visible 28 floodlights, set 8 metres high, on top of the bund. With two football clubs in the same league sharing facilities, residents will suffer noise and light pollution every Saturday and Wednesday in season. The floodlit practice pitches will be in use most days and the noise, amplified by the water of the Thames, will be constant.

EcoPark plan in disarray as Surrey and SITA concede over incinerator, and footpath move goes to inquiry

Following Spelthorne Council's application for Judicial Review, Surrey County Council and SITA Surrey Ltd have confirmed to the High Court that they will not build the disputed incinerator at the Eco Park at Charlton Lane.

In order to avoid further public expenditure on a costly Judicial Review, Spelthorne Council suggested that the County Council and SITA should give the Court a clear written statement that they would not implement that part of the permit which relates to the disputed gasifier.

Leader of the Council Robert Watts said: "This is an important concession which the Council has won from the Environment Agency, Surrey County Council and SITA. Despite all the explanations which the Environment Agency gave to us, we were still concerned for the safety of our residents. Our legal advice was clear that the permit would potentially allow pollution in excess of that which was legal under European Law. As a new permit is about to be negotiated for a new design of technology, it was important to make this point and stand up for the best interests of Spelthorne residents. We will be fully involved in the negotiation of any new permit to make sure that any new design does not have the same issues which have dogged this application and the failed incinerator at Dargavel in Scotland."

SITA and the County Council have confirmed that they intend to apply for a variation to the existing permit to allow for a new design of incinerator. The Borough Council will be consulted as part of the process and will be assessing the permit application to make sure it complies with European Law.

Readers of our web site will be aware that LOSRA, in conjunction with SATEP (Shepperton Against the Eco Park), has fought a long and hard battle against the installation of an incinerator of unproven technology in the centre of a populated area. We have together spent £8400 in legal fees and countless hours examining the hundreds of pages of technical specification so that we were able to challenge this project on sound scientific grounds; and to ask questions of SITA which

Update awaited on hydro power scheme for River Thames at Lower Sunbury

There have been no developments on the proposal for a hydro-power generation scheme which would, in our and other people's view, have a serious impact on Sunbury Lock Island and the backwater at Lower Sunbury.

However, it seems that the Environment Agency, having identified potential sites for such schemes, are backtracking on their support for them; the EA itself objected to the hydropower planning application at Goring, which was withdrawn in February. Government attitudes to funding for such schemes, on which they depend for financial viability, also appear to be moving against the use of public money to subsidise the investment in them.

For what it would achieve in terms of output, the impact on the environment would be ludicrously disproportionate, and even those who are supporters of green energy initiatives can see no justification for such an overbearing plan to be imposed on a quiet recreational backwater with important wildlife resources.

Concerns about river safety have been raised by a recent accident at Sunbury Weir in which a St George's College pupil was swept down river after their boat was broken in two after hitting Sunbury Weir. The EA is consulting on "river flow and water abstraction standards for hydropower" until the 2nd April. See our website for more information.

were never satisfactorily answered.

We are very grateful for the support of the Planning Office and Legal Services Department of Spelthorne Borough Council without which the challenge to the Environment Agency permit would not have been affordable or even possible. It must however be emphasised that this success represents a 'round one' victory only and we await a further application by Surrey County Council. There is still a long way to go, Surrey and SITA are still desperately trying to proceed all for monetary reasons. The technology simply does not exist at this stage to do what they want to do at the site and the plans are unravelling along with the credibility of both Surrey County Council and SITA.

And that's not all! The current Municipal Transfer Station is too small to accommodate the proposed Community Recycling Centre, Gasification Plant and Anaerobic Digester. These facilities will require an extension north into 'Green Belt' land. This in turn will require the existing Footpath No. 70 to be relocated further north. The proposed route will take the path through a marshy area, which will require the construction of a causeway to permit year round access.

In addition to the unsuitable location, objectors have also raised concerns as to the safety of Footpath users, with respect to the Footpath's proximity to the Anaerobic Digester Flare and the potential hazards arising from toxic and explosive gases which the 'Eco Park' will produce.

To resolve these matters the Planning Inspectorate has called for a Public Inquiry, which will be held in Spelthorne Borough Council Chambers on Wednesday 3-4 April, commencing at 10.00 am.

Sunbury Embroidery Gallery needs volunteers

The Sunbury Embroidery project has now been open for well over six years, and has become an important and much-loved feature of local life, and not only is the café a regular haunt for many local people, but visitors come from all over the area and indeed the world, to see the Embroidery.

However, as time has gone on, people who originally volunteered to work in the Café and Gallery have moved on or feel they have done enough, but the project still depends on having a regular group of volunteers to do a morning or afternoon occasionally to help serve in the Café or man the reception desk in the Gallery.

The economics of running the project mean that it's impossible to cover all its staffing needs with paid employees, and volunteer help is essential. It's a very rewarding and pleasant place to work, so if you are a regular customer there, and would like to help, please make yourself known to one of the staff when you visit the café or give them a call on 01932 788101.

LOSRA Summer Garden Party to be held again on Sunday June 16th

You may remember that last June LOSRA held a Garden Party in the grounds of The Old Vicarage in Church Street opposite St. Mary's Church at the kind invitation of Mr. & Mrs. Heslop, who live there, who offered to make it available for a fund-raising event as a "Thank-you" for LOSRA's work on behalf of the community.

Mr. & Mrs. Heslop have generously repeated their invitation this year, and having had such a successful event last year, which was enjoyed by a large number of people, we are going to repeat the exercise this year, on Sunday 16th June from noon until 5pm. This is Fathers' Day, of course, so maybe families can use it as part of a day out to celebrate the occasion.

As with last year, there will be a variety of food on offer, a bar serving bucks fizz and a variety of other drinks, tea and coffee, various stalls with different goodies for sale, 'live' jazz and classical music, and the opportunity for boat trips from King's Lawn just opposite, which proved very popular last year.

There will be more publicity nearer the time, but please put the date in your diary. With the expenditure we are finding ourselves occasionally having to make these days on legal advice and representation, the opportunity for extra fund-raising through events like this is very welcome.

THE LOSRA COMMITTEE

David Banks	38 Kenton Avenue	789652
Pamela Cabannes-Barrall	4 Forge Mews	761131
Elleke Carling	3 Croysdale Avenue	882726
Ziz Coltart (Treasurer)	4 Academy Court, Fordbridge Rd.	765067
Tessa Cook	125 The Avenue	700264
Don Cunningham	2 Parkwood Grove	889033
Colleen Cuthbert (Secretary)	8 Maryland Way	783606
Peter Francis	Linden Lodge, Woodlands Drive	770661
Jenny Grant	Riverbank, The Creek	780682
John Hirsh (Chairman)		07515 637474
George Rushbrook	8 Meadows End	788471
Matt Thomas	7 Nursery Road	
Muriel Wallsgrove	Weir End, Parke Rd,	770236
Paul Watts (President)	87 The Avenue	788449
David Woods	47 Sunna Gardens	786806

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Please find enclosed my annual subscription of for family membership of the Lower Sunbury Residents' Association for the calendar year 2013. In addition, I would like to make a donation of £..... (SPR13)
Name:..... Address :
..... Tel. no. : E-mail address.....

FRIENDS OF SUNBURY PARK

Cattle grazing in Sunbury Park?

We mentioned in the last newsletter that the possibility of a small number of cattle being grazed in Sunbury park as part of the biodiversity regime was under review by Spelthorne Council. A number of concerned residents attended the meeting of Friends of Sunbury Park in December, where we learnt that the idea was very much part of the Council's plan as a cost-effective way to manage the grassland, because mowing is both impractical and expensive.

Many dog-walkers were concerned about the implications, but there was quite a divergence of views with others generally in favour. As previously mentioned, the plan is that a pen will be brought into the Park for a weekend with a few of the cattle, and a small exhibition, to introduce residents to the idea. The cattle are small Belted Galloways, well used to people and dogs, and funding would be available to provide the enhanced fencing etc. which would obviously be needed

There is a meeting of Friends of Sunbury Park on Tuesday 5th March, after we go to press, at which we may find out more, so watch the web site for details of a proposed exhibition and introductory weekend.

Volunteers needed for Sunbury Neighbours

Sunbury Neighbours are looking for additional Drivers and Duty Officers will offer their help to continue this long established Volunteer Help scheme. Sunbury Neighbours organise car journeys for people unable to access their own or public transport for visits to local Doctors, Hospitals, shopping needs, Day Centres, Hairdressers and other local trips. Please ring John on 01932 784432 or David on 01932 787290 for an informal chat. We look forward to your call. We apologise if you have put your name forward previously but received no reply. This will have been due to the Sunbury Neighbours contact suffering a period of ill-health and hospitalisation, so do please try again.