

LOWER SUNBURY RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION 2016 SPRING NEWSLETTER

Light at the end of a very long tunnel for Sunbury Health Centre



www.losra.org

Readers of our newsletter, and certainly all patients of Sunbury Health Centre, will be aware that there has been an ongoing struggle by the Practice staff and the Patient Participation Group (PPG), on which LOSRA is represented, to get the relevant authorities to recognise the fact that the current building is drastically unfit for purpose.

Constructed in the mid 70s, the building, owned by the NHS, was intended for a patient population of 6,000. Today, the Practice has over 18,000 patients and with the amount of extra house building being inflicted on Sunbury, this number could easily rise to 23,000 in the next few years. Based on NHS figures, the building is already 83% undersized for the patient population!

Many of us may well have been unaware that the Practice only has access to 45% of the building and that the rest of the building is rented out to Virgin Health Care who provide a range of medical services for patients. Their contract is up next year and North West Surrey Clinical Commissioning Group are currently working on a new contract to go out to tender in the near future. No doubt, this major change will only add to the complexities the Health Centre has to deal with!

Sunbury Health Centre Group Practice had a routine inspection in December 2015 by the Care Quality Commission and the report made a number of findings. The inspectors, who interviewed doctors, nurses, staff, the PPG and patients, found that patients were treated with 'compassion, dignity and respect'.

The Practice received a rating of 'good' in the sub categories of 'caring' and being 'well led'. However, it found that the Practice 'requires improvement' in the sub categories of safety, effectiveness, and responsiveness. Overall, the Practice was given a rating of 'Requires improvement'.

Considering the woefully under-resourced conditions the staff have to

work in, these ratings came as no surprise and the report noted that the Practice had worked hard to develop plans to address the issues but were dependent on the NHS providing adequate funding.

So where are we now?

The Practice, supported by the PPG, has made numerous funding applications to the NHS and instigated a continuous round of meetings with NHS England, NHS Properties, local councillors and the MP for Spelthorne. These efforts do at last seem to be paying off.

One successful application has secured NHS funding to revamp some areas of the Health Centre, including Reception and the Waiting Room. Bizarrely, considering they own the building, the NHS has only provided around 60% of the funding! Thankfully, Spelthorne Council has stepped in to make up the difference.

These works should begin in the next few weeks, and although the work will take place mainly out of hours, patients should be aware that there will inevitably be some disruption during this time.

This revamp will provide a re-designed Reception and a refreshed Waiting Room but of course does not address the problem of lack of adequate Consulting Rooms. The Practice now employs the recommended number of GPs for the patient population, but does not have enough rooms to put them in!

This is where the second phase of development will hopefully come into effect. The Practice is trying to get agreement and funding to place an additional two 'portacabins' in the grounds next to the building (not in the car park!). These, plus the existing one which will be vacated by Virgin, will be connected with the main building and fully equipped to provide five new consulting rooms.

This should provide a stop gap for the next two to three years, whilst the Practice and the PPG continue to push hard for a new building that will give the Practice modern facilities to provide the clinical care and other services for our large and diverse population.

At the time of writing, we can only be optimistic that the first phase of re-vamping areas of the existing building is going ahead. The adding of the additional portacabins is still dependent on obtaining the required NHS funding and the prospect of a complete new build is a long way off.

What we can be certain of is this – the GPs and staff of Sunbury Health Centre, working closely in partnership with the PPG, have made great strides in improving services for patients in very trying circumstances. More doctors and nurses have been employed, new computer systems are being developed, and on-line booking is available, as are repeat prescriptions.

Information about developments and challenges faced by SHC is now widely available through various means including a quarterly newsletter, a PPG website, published minutes of PPG 'Core' meetings and three 'Open' meetings a year to give all patients an open forum to discuss issues and help find solutions. One success that came from an Open meeting is that referral letters that used to take weeks are now turned around in a few days.

Yes, there are still difficulties in getting an appointment, partly caused by lack of physical space, partly caused by trying to get the balance right of how many appointments are released each day and partly caused by patients failing to attend appointments – 1,470 were not attended between October and December last year. In light of this, the Practice is currently developing a text service to remind patients of their appointments.

With all these changes and proposed developments to such an important aspect of residents' lives, we are delighted that the Practice has agreed to give the Keynote speech at our LoSRA AGM in June this year, which will be an opportunity for residents to get the full picture on future plans.

Air pollution becoming an issue of urgent local concern

You may have seen a story in the national newspapers about the environmental organisation threatening to take the Government to court over their inaction on air pollution in the light of levels of pollution laid down by EU directives constantly being exceeded in London and other cities. We thought it would be interesting to see where Spelthorne sits alongside these figures Client Earth is concerned about, especially in view of the commitment given at the Kempton Park meeting at London Irish a year ago by Roberto Tambini, Spelthorne's Chief Executive to treat the issue as a priority.

There are two EU Directive Limits for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), the primary pollutant of concern. One is an ANNUAL MEAN of 40ug.m³, which can be measured by taking monthly averages from diffusion tubes (or from an automatic monitor). So at each location the diffusion tubes are replaced monthly and sent away for analysis to give a monthly average which is then converted to an annual mean over the year.

The annual means near Sunbury X over the last three years we have info for (2012, 2013 and 2014) are approximately as follows: The Parade 49/55/59ug.m³; Staines Rd west 42/46/50; Staines Rd East (top of the Avenue) 35/37/39; The Haven (near the A316 slip road at Costco) 37/40/40. We have no results yet for 2015, but it is noticeable that the pollution levels

have risen year on year over the last three years.

The second is a 1 HOUR MEAN - 200ug.m³ not to be exceeded more than 18 times a year, which is the limit Client Earth are most concerned about. The 1 hour means can only be measured by automatic monitors. We do not have any automatic monitors at Sunbury Cross, since Spelthorne Council decided they were too expensive and had them removed, so there are no current measurements at Sunbury X. How very convenient. The latest figures we can find, which we believe were taken in 2012 at the Haven site, indicated a maximum 1 hour mean of 142ug.m³, well within bounds, but extremely out of date.

Sunbury Cross is a 'hot spot' for pollution and overtook London Road, Staines this year as having the worst air pollution in Spelthorne, although our figures of around 60 are far exceeded by places such as 79 in Brentford and in the 80s in other parts of London.

This is a complex subject and it is not easy to make progress at a local level because it is a national government issue. However, Spelthorne have responsibility for air pollution and unusually the whole of the borough is a Designated Air Quality Management Area. This requires Spelthorne to produce annual air quality reports setting out actual levels of air pollution in the borough and importantly

an action plan for managing air pollution hot spots (where air pollution levels exceed the EA Directive Limits).

There is probably little Spelthorne can do to reduce the number of diesel vehicles, which are the main source of NO₂ pollution. However you would hope that they might say something about resisting developments that would result in additional traffic and hence increase the air pollution problem at Sunbury Cross. Also Spelthorne could try to put some pressure to try to get the London Low Emission Zone boundary moved further west to include Sunbury Cross.

We have been trying to open a dialogue with Spelthorne via the councillors who have held the relevant portfolio, but the changes within the council have made it easy for these approaches to be ducked. We have had a meeting with the environmental team, but they do not hold the purse strings for re-introducing the automatic monitors. We are proposing to contact the Chief Executive to find out what he has done to follow through on his promise made last year. Potential pressure on Green Belt as a result of the Local Plan Review, and likely proposals for housing on Kempton Park, all of which would increase pollution in the most polluted area of the Borough, make this a pressing issue.

Figures from Health England for 2010 (the most recent such survey) state that of 793 deaths of people aged over 25 in Spelthorne that year, 50 were directly attributable to air pollution. You would have thought that might focus some minds at Knowle Green, wouldn't you?

LOSRA and KKG meet with consultants regarding Kempton Park proposals

We were approached recently by Curtin & Co. a "community engagement company", who have been appointed by Redrow Ltd., the housebuilders who have an option of development at Kempton Park, to establish contact with local "stakeholders" who have an interest in the matter. At their invitation, LOSRA representatives met them last week, along with representatives of Keep Kempton Green and the Hampton Society.

In simple terms they were trying to get a better understanding of our objections to the possibility of building on Kempton Park and what, if anything, could be done to ameliorate any possible development. We began by outlining some of the history and how an atmosphere of distrust had built up between LOSRA and Spelthorne Borough Council.

They confirmed that they do not intend to submit any planning application

in the foreseeable future and will seek to influence the issue through the Local Plan revision process. They confirmed they will submit the site when invitations are invited by SBC for potential land for development.

Only if SBC decide, after a Green Belt review, to consider releasing Green Belt land will they then submit a formal application. They confirmed that they had had a pre-planning application meeting with SBC planning who had told them that as things stand, there will be no development on the land as it is Green Belt.

They stressed their desire to engage with residents and keep them informed at each significant stage of the process. With this in mind, they have designed a website which they will be making public shortly.

We did not go into our objections in detail, other than to repeat our opposition

in principle to Green Belt development, but we did highlight increased traffic on the A308 along its entire length from Hampton Court and beyond to Sunbury Cross and beyond as an overwhelming priority issue that would have to be solved before any other.

In the interests of transparency and openness, they were also asked to enable us to have sight of detailed accounts for the Jockey Club, and for access to the site by our environmental and ecological expert. They agreed to take both of these back to the Jockey Club.

We can understand that there are those that might see this as consorting with the enemy, but we need to gather as much information as we can along the road of fighting any possibility of development, and as long as we don't give away anything that's not already thoroughly in the public domain can see no harm in having a dialogue.

Our primary immediate priority, as noted in the last newsletter, is to influence the Local Plan Review to retain Green Belt designation for key sites.

Change in rules at Charlton Lane recycling centre means residents must pay for disposal of DIY waste

We were staggered a few weeks ago when one of our committee was told by operatives at Charlton Lane Community Recycling Centre that he could only bring material that was the equivalent of a car boot load, because anyone bringing more was assumed to be a commercial operator trying to avoid paying the charges which builders and the like have to do. We complained, but it seems from the advice we have had from Surrey County Council's Waste Operations Group Manager, Richard Parkinson, that what we were told was now Council policy. Here's what he wrote to us:

"As you will probably be aware, Surrey County Council makes policy and then we ask SITA to implement it SITA's employees are working under the instruction of Surrey County Council in this respect.

Firstly I would like to clarify that Surrey householders may bring their own household waste to the Community Recycling Centre free of charge. There is no restriction on the amount that you can bring or how it is transported. The waste will be accepted whether it is in a car, van or trailer, although residents bringing waste to the site in vans or trailers will need to obtain a permit from the county council. Therefore in the context of your e-mail below, residents may bring as many bags of leaves from their homes as they

like as leaves are considered to be household waste.

There are however certain types of waste that don't fall within the definition of household waste. Waste produced by construction and DIY projects in the home including improvements, alterations or repairs and from excavations, are classified as industrial waste and the county council is not obliged to accept these materials free of charge. Examples of these types of waste include kitchen and bathroom fittings, doors, windows, timber, fencing and sheds, rubble, soil, paving slabs and plaster.

Anyone wishing to dispose of these types of materials, whether a household-er or a trader, must pay the appropriate charge and this can only be done at a transfer station where facilities exist to weigh the waste and apply the appropriate charge.

To assist the public with small amounts of this type of waste, Surrey County Council has, for the past 20 years, adopted a policy that allows householders to bring small amounts of construction waste in their car, free of charge. Over the past few years the quantity of construction and DIY waste that is brought to our sites has increased significantly, and we have also identified that traders are using large cars to

transport this waste to avoid payment. The council can no longer bear the cost of dealing with this waste and in April 2016 we will introduce charges for certain types of construction waste even if brought in a car.

Prior to the introduction of these changes we have tried to better define what constitutes a 'small' amount of construction waste in order to make things clearer for both the residents and site staff. We published information on our website which advised residents that we would consider 'small' amounts to be that which would fit within the boot of a car with the seats up and we asked our contractor's staff to communicate this to residents at the recycling centres.

Having listened to our residents we realise that we did not give enough prior notice of this definition before implementation and therefore we have instructed our contractor to relax these restrictions until we have undertaken further communication with our residents. We will provide further information in March 2016 on the charges that will be applied for this type of waste from April. I hope this clarifies the situation."

So we are now going to have to pay again for a service we are already paying for via our Council Tax at a facility which is being reduced in size and convenience because of the "EcoPark" incinerator project. Surrey seem to be busily trying to prove that they know absolutely the wrong way to deal with every aspect of the services they are supposed to provide.

Planning application submitted for Old Nursery site in Fordbridge Road

The development company Heronslea has submitted a planning application to build 16 houses on the site of the former Homewood Nurseries in Fordbridge Road.

The application is highly speculative, as the site is Green Belt. Heronslea has desperately tried to present a case that it is a brownfield site, but the fact is, quite simply, that only buildings consistent with an acceptable Green Belt use are allowed on Green Belt land, and housing is not an acceptable use of Green Belt land.

On this basis, the application should be summarily refused, but it is important that residents register objections, just so that nobody is in a position to argue that people don't care, so what's the harm in having housing there.

The application was still open for receipt of objections as we go to press—it might have closed by the time you get this, but it's worth having a look on the Spelthorne web site. The application reference is 15/01423/FUL

Latest update on "EcoPark" progress

We have just received the March update on the EcoPark from Suez/Sita. Here's what the plans for March include:

- The layout of the Community Recycling Centre will be altered as work begins to remove the transfer station building;
- The parking spaces in front of the building and the containers adjacent to it will be unavailable for safety reasons.
- The containers at the rear of the site will come back into use, and the site will continue to accept the full range of materials, with a reduced number of containers.
- Waiting times may be affected by these changes, particularly at busy times. Staff will work to minimise disruption and will be on hand to assist site users.

Inexorably, the site is becoming less convenient for the public to use and it will only get worse.

LOSRA Committee meets with Spelthorne MP Kwasi Kwarteng

LOSRA Officers and members of the LOSRA Committee recently met with the MP for Spelthorne, Kwasi Kwarteng, at Mr. Kwarteng's request to talk about local issues which were concerning us.

Given the naturally fairly limited time available, we prioritised the topics for discussion, so that we covered potential Kempton Park development and related Green Belt and Local Plan issues; Sunbury Health Centre; air pollution; the proposed pedestrian/cycle river crossing at Lower Sunbury.

As always, there were caveats about the extent to which an MP can exert any influence over local matters, but it was a useful opportunity to get access to our MP and make our views known, and he will no doubt be following through on the issues where he can.

The expectation is that we will have further meetings so that a regular point of contact is established, which can only be a positive thing.

Spelthorne Council votes to continue with Sunbury Park cattle grazing experiment in 2016

At the last Council meeting, Spelthorne decided to continue with the cattle grazing experiment in 2016, having considered the results of a public consultation following the first phase of the trials last autumn.

A review of public opinion from initial reaction to the cattle compared to a survey conducted after the two-month trial showed a marked shift in opinion from a 55/45 split against the scheme at the start to around 80/20 in favour at the end, with a fair number of specific letters or e-mails in favour from residents.

In the report to the Council, officers noted that £900 a year would be saved in costs of mowing, while the one-off investment of £2595 in a permanent water supply would be partly covered by covered by a subsidy from the DEFRA Higher Level Stewardship agreement under which the Council is able to improve bio-diversity at key sites. The cattle are supplied at no cost to the Council.

As we reported in the last newsletter, the plan would be for a slightly larger number of the same Aberdeen Angus heifers, maybe ten rather than 6, to arrive in April, staying for a period of 12-14 weeks through the early summer.

With more cows and a longer grazing period, the positive effects on the quality of the grassland and the biodiversity of both flora and fauna would gradually be felt, as envisaged by Surrey Wildlife Trust in their conservation management plan for the Park.

There are concerns from residents about access for wheelchair users, while there will undoubtedly also be some dog walkers who will simply not use the Park while the cows are there, which is of course a pity. Many residents, however, will be very pleased to see the cows come back.

THE LOSRA COMMITTEE

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Colleen Cuthbert (Secretary)	8 Maryland Way	783606
Iain Findlay (Treasurer)	58 Thames Street	783739
Peter Francis	Linden Lodge, Woodlands Drive	770661
Michelle Gillham	11 Montford Road	07989 868101
John Hirsh (Vice-Chairman)	21 School Walk	07515 637474
Neil Huntingford	Summer House, Wheatleys Ait	783761
Mark McCartney	2 Forge Mews, Forge Lane	07557 121844
Oliver Parr	Orchard House, Thames Street	765229
George Rushbrook	8 Meadows End	788471
Paul Thompson (Chairman)	12 Brackenwood	07788 107500
Paul Watts (President)	87 The Avenue	788449

Children's playground now installed in Orchard Meadow

The children's playground, about which there was controversy during last year, and caused some to-ing and fro-ing with some of the opponents to the scheme after our last newsletter, in which we wrote in favour of the project, has now been installed.

It occupies what we are sure most people would regard as a fairly small and unobtrusive spot in the Meadow, fairly close to the gate into Sunbury Park, and pretty much adjacent to the wall of the Park.

It comprises several fairly minimalist wooden play structures for climbing and other activities, which seem to blend into the environment quite nicely. We do not have any information or feedback as to whether or not they are being well used and provide a good play experience for children, as they only went in during early February.

It is to be hoped that now the playground is there and people can see what it entails, it proves to be popular and useful, and that it does not prove to be the source of further controversy, and does not cause any kind of nuisance for residents. We will no doubt find out soon enough on both counts.

Take part in Surrey County Council's Library Survey

Surrey are undertaking a survey of library users to ascertain satisfaction levels with the service. We are well aware that library services are being slashed across the country, with some places now relying totally on volunteer labour to keep libraries open.

We are equally well aware that Surrey are constantly looking for ways to save money, so it's absolutely vital that residents make it absolutely clear that the libraries provide an essential and valuable service at all levels within the community, so that no justification can be found for reducing or closing any libraries, and Sunbury's in particular.

To take part in the Survey, go to www.surveymonkey.com/s/surreylibraries. If you don't have a computer, then go to the library, and complete the survey either on their computer or using a paper form which is available.

Tony Crabb leaving the LOSRA Committee

Tony Crabb, long-time resident of The Avenue and a former Spelthorne councillor, has resigned from the LOSRA Committee as he is moving out of the area. We would like to thank Tony for his tireless work within the community over many years, and for his contribution to the Association during his time on the Committee. We are sad to see him go, but we wish him well in his new home.

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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 2016. In addition, I would like to make a donation of £..... (SPR16)

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