

Autumn 06 Newsletter

## THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD?

### The Problem

In our summer newsletter, we discussed in detail what has gone wrong with our highways. To recap, the main points were:

- The Press had highlighted major abuses, with the contractor, Carillion, consequently agreeing to a refund / rebate of £1.8 million.
- Major reductions in Government grants to Surrey for highways improvements and maintenance.
- Deteriorating roads, as measured by the Government's accredited surveyor.
- A poorly drawn up contract.
- Months of delays for simple repairs, and an ever-increasing backlog.
- In the light of these revelations, the Leader of Surrey County Council, Councillor Skellett, accepted personal responsibility for getting the problems fixed.

### The Current Situation

We made a series of recommendations. We report on these and the *current position (in italics)*:

- The outcome of audits and investigations of the contract to be made public.  
*This has been agreed, once they are complete.*
- The partnership approach to the roads contract may work with the right contractor for complex engineering projects, but is not fit for purpose for basic road works. Carillion do not have open systems and effective management, and should go.  
*Because of the way the contract is drawn up, the County Council is not able – even if it wanted – to withdraw without very severe financial penalties. It may seem surprising, but there does not seem to have been a 'fundamental breach' of the contract. The Council's view is that the contract has worked for major road schemes, but acknowledges the problem with potholes and day-to-day work, and is negotiating improvements.*
- The management and supervision of the contract needs to be completely revised, with the whole process of planning, ordering, monitoring and paying for road works to be reviewed and changed. Efficiency, cost effectiveness and value for money needs to be demonstrated at all times.  
*This message seems to be getting through, but we wait to see the practical outcome.*
- Senior county officials should listen to their junior staff; they know what the problems are.  
*We suggested an anonymous survey, but this has not been carried out.*
- The number of council road stewards on the ground should be restored.  
*It seems to be agreed that the Council needs to direct and check the work undertaken, and that the road steward's job is unmanageable at present.*
- Local councillors and residents' associations should be able to influence priorities – they should not be set by contractors.  
*Again, there seems to be some recognition of this issue as far as minor fixes are concerned. However, too many of the priorities are set centrally by officials at their desks in Kingston, designed to meet Central Government themes and targets. We do not see any take up of our suggestion that the Boroughs be given back a role in maintenance work.*

**Overleaf, we summarise the situation and review progress in Tattenhams.**

## **THE ROADS - continued**

### **So Where Are We Now?**

The problems with the Highways are deep seated and not easily solved. There will never be enough cash available. We are marginally encouraged that the County finally accepts there is a problem, rather than a continued policy of denial.

On the ground – as it were – progress is being made with the long list of potholes we've submitted. In the last three months the larger ones (over 40mm - 1½ inches) have been filled in Picquets Way, The Drive, Great Tattenhams, Shawley Way, Chapel Way, Royal Drive, Chapel Way, Headley Drive, Garlichill Road, and Rosebushes. We now think more attention needs to be directed to fixing the trip hazards on the pavement.

Priorities for resurfacing and major patching schemes are set centrally by County Hall, and progress is slow. The major project people raise with us is Preston Lane – not actually in Tattenhams ward; this was promised for September, but at the time of writing is still outstanding. Hillside and Burgh Wood are our other local priorities.

## **EPSOM HOSPITAL UPDATE**

Residents have asked us to give them an update on the future of our local hospital. A number of changes have been reported through the local freesheets, but not everyone gets them, and a number of the reports are apparently contradictory. As best we can make out, the situation is as follows:

The local NHS plan for our area is set out in the report "*Better Health Care Closer to Home*". Its theme is that more treatment should be available through local doctor's surgeries and community hospitals, and that we don't need (and can't afford) so much treatment at General Hospitals. A single new, advanced, but smaller 'Critical Care Hospital' in Sutton was to replace Epsom and St Helier, with these two existing hospitals becoming part of a network of community hospitals.

Sutton was a compromise reached after extensive consultation, and is near to the centre of the patch. Its location in Belmont, whilst further for us than Epsom, seemed satisfactory. Patricia Hewitt, the Health Secretary, reversed the decision and said the hospital should go to St Helier, to the disadvantage of Surrey residents. Surrey and Reigate & Banstead Councils jointly launched a judicial challenge, and with evidence emerging that even her government advisers had urged Ms Hewitt to keep to Sutton, she has now backed down. She has blamed a convenient 'planning restriction' in St Helier; however, this was already a well-known issue, being one of the reasons that Sutton was chosen in the first place.

So what now? Some think that with funding issues increasing in the NHS, then Sutton is now dead. Ominously, the NHS project team has not put Sutton back on the agenda, but is studying the issue.

In the meantime, the Hospital Board has stated that 'clinical quality and patient safety is of paramount importance and they could not continue to provide services on both sites.' 'You cannot provide everything everywhere.' So from October 2006, all emergency surgery is being transferred to St Helier and all planned inpatient surgery to Epsom. The Hospital is at pains to point out that the Accident & Emergency unit at Epsom remains open, and that only a relatively small number of patients a day will go directly to or be transferred to St Helier.

The next battle is lining up on the issue of maternity services, with the suggestion that the department – save for a small midwife led unit for straightforward births – will also be moved there.

Residents are right to be concerned in the absence of a believable long term plan, that we might be on a slippery slope where services are gradually restricted and withdrawn, and Epsom loses the critical mass to remain a hospital. We also note that little appears to be happening in promoting and developing the 'local care closer to home' theme. Where are the additional services in local day surgeries and health centres offsetting our need to go to hospital? The local NHS is keeping rather quiet on this.

## **FROM THE CHAIRMAN**



### **Volunteers Required**

The Residents' Association is currently without a regular minutes secretary and we are looking for a volunteer to record our monthly meetings (first Mondays) held at Epsom Downs Community Primary School (the new name for Merland Rise School) between 8pm and 10pm. Give me a call (01737 – 351572). We would also welcome anyone who wishes to join the committee in a more general role.

### **Tattenham Corner Car Park**

It's over six months since charges were introduced for parking, for stays of over three hours. The charges were meant to release spaces for local residents when shopping, following a number of complaints. However, the level of charges, at £3.50 a day, has resulted in almost all the commuters moving to on street parking, as the R.A. warned it would. The problem has been exacerbated by the railway company responding with charges for its own car park, albeit at a lower £2 daily rate.

The Council is unwilling to go back to the previous free arrangement, as shoppers would again be disadvantaged. We have therefore suggested segregating the car park, with enough spaces to meet short-term needs and the balance for long-term parking at a much reduced rate. The Council has accepted this, and is likely to mark off the car park into separate sections and levy a £1 fee for a full day. We will wait and see if this is low enough to fill up the car park again. Implementation is unlikely until the New Year, because the change needs to be legally notified and advertised.

We have asked the Council to approach the railway company to also reduce their charges.

### **Tattenham Recreation Ground – Upgraded Children's Playground**

The recently refurbished playground for under thirteens deserves a visit by young families. Strong modern facilities have been installed on a soft surface. It is situated next to the allotment area and the easiest access is via the Tattenham Way car park.

### **Speed Checks**

Surrey Police carried out speed checks in Great Tattenhams at the end of August and issued fixed penalty fines to drivers exceeding the 30 mph limit. We are told that since the introduction of new motorway assistance units, the traffic police are able to spend more time on local roads.

In our last newsletter, we discussed the possibility of a Community Speedwatch scheme, for residents to target speeding motorists. A small group in Great Tattenhams is keen to take this forward, but there needs to be at least six people for a viable scheme. If you are interested, please contact me.

### **Junk Mail**

If every household in Surrey receives just one piece of unwanted Direct Mail a day, that's over 150 million pieces each year! Think of the waste generated, let alone the nuisance to yourself.

- To reduce unwanted addressed mail, you can register to be removed from mailing lists. Call 0845 – 703 – 4599, or write to Mailing Preference Service, Freepost 22, London W1E 7EZ.
- To avoid unwanted un-addressed mail write to Door to Door Customer Service, Room 130, Wheatstone House, Wheatstone Road, Swindon SN3 5JW.

### **Hedges and Bonfires**

The seasonal problem of hedge reduction and what to do with the cuttings is with us. Please make sure that your front garden hedge is not likely to poke some passer-by in the eye! When you have cut the vegetation do consider shredding and composting or using the Council's compost bags (now available at the library at £2 for ten bags), rather than having a "burn-up". Bonfires do pollute the air – especially if the material is green, and can be a real problem for neighbours.

*John Butcher*

# PARKING UPDATE

## **Yellow Lines**

The Council has been reviewing local parking restrictions, and we've been able to feed in many of the requests for yellow lines sent to the Residents' Association over the last few years. The review has focussed around the shops at Tattenham Corner, where the Borough's introduction of parking charges has exacerbated the situation. (See the Chairman's Report for some positive news on this.)

The basic approach taken has been to recommend some limited restrictions in locations that are particularly dangerous, and also to assist disabled access. The review has not recommended wholesale extension of 'no parking' zones to the streets near to the station, as this would merely move commuters to new streets, rather than reduce total parking. Major expansion of yellow lines would also be negative for residents and the viability of local shops. The proposals are as follows:

### No waiting at any time (double yellow)

- Tattenham Crescent: Extension of zone on the southern side from Royal Drive to the Borough boundary. (The Epsom & Ewell Committee has also been asked to extend this restriction.) The bus stop on the opposite side is also to be properly marked up to prevent parking on it.
- Tattenham Crescent: Adjacent to the dropped crossing opposite No. 25.
- Tattenham Crescent: On the bend adjacent to Nos. 73/75, for approximately 30 metres.
- Downland Way: Extension of zone on the northern side to the junction with Downland Close.
- Merland Rise: On the western side, opposite the Merland Rise Primary School's rear access for approximately 50 metres. (This may be reduced to a school hours only restriction.)
- St Leonard's Road: Around the junctions with Chetwode Road and Chapel Way for approximately 15 metres.
- Waterer Gardens: Around the turning radii of the junction of the A240 Reigate Road and Waterer Gardens for a distance of 65 metres.
- Tattenham Way: On both sides of the road, from the junction with Reigate Road, eastwards to a point being the boundary between Nos. 103/105 Tattenham Way

### Two hour waiting limit

- Tattenham Crescent: In the parking bay approximately 35 metres long on the northern side, opposite the service road and shops.

### No waiting 8:30 am – 10:30 am (single yellow)

- Royal Drive: On the eastern side, extension of the zone south and south-eastwards for approximately 100 metres.

### Reduction of no waiting at any time (double yellow)

- Great Tattenhams: reduction of the restriction on the south-eastern side by approximately 12 metres.

## **Disabled Parking Bays**

As part of this review, we are pleased that the disabled bays at Tattenham Corner are to be moved to more logical positions to help disabled drivers get in and out. The one near to the post office is to be moved to the end of the line, and the one in the service road will also be moved to the end of the line, adjacent to the Co-op. In addition, a new one will be installed outside the Tattenhams Health Centre.

## **What to do if you Disagree with the Proposals**

The changes will be advertised, and the Council will also be writing to householders next to the restricted areas, giving them the opportunity to comment. These comments will all go to the Local Committee for consideration. If you want further information at the present time, please contact Nick Harrison (01737 – 215405). Formal comments in due course should be sent to Margaret Trevelyan, East Area Transportation Service, Surrey County Council, Bay Tree Avenue, Kingston Road, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 7SY. Because of the way the legal process works, it is not possible to suggest additional restrictions at this stage, but specific proposals can be reduced or withdrawn altogether.

## COULD YOU BE A SCHOOL GOVERNOR?

There are over 6,300 governor posts in Surrey's 411 maintained schools. With most governors serving a four-year term of office, there are always vacancies in our schools. Governors are appointed from the parents and staff at the school, but there are also 'community governor' roles available to those outside who have an interest in volunteering.

To be a governor in Surrey is about making a difference. Governors can help schools in the challenge to drive standards higher. They do this by:

- Agreeing the aims and objectives for the school.
- Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- Agreeing the priorities and setting the school's budget each year.
- Agreeing targets for pupil achievement.
- Reviewing performance.
- Ensuring accountability for the school to parents and the community.
- Participating in staff appointments.

The role of the school governor is to bring the experience, life skills and ordinary common sense of non-experts, to the expert task of running a school.

Most schools appoint a Link Governor who co-ordinates training and development for governors, and makes new governors feel welcome and ensures that they are made aware of training opportunities. All new governors are encouraged to attend induction training courses to develop an understanding of the governor's role.

If you are interested, please contact Nick Harrison (01737 – 215405) for more details.

## PLANNING MATTERS

**Great Tattenhams Methodist Church Site:** Many of you will be aware that this site is vacant, following the move of the congregation down the road to combine to form the United Church of St Marks. The Council has granted outline permission for the erection of 20 x 2 bed flats, with parking hidden away behind the buildings. The flats are in small separate blocks, matching the appearance of the semi-detached houses in Chapel Way. This is an unusual landmark site and it was important that the design recognised this and did not set unacceptable precedents for elsewhere in the road.

The existing trees on the site have been largely retained, and before permission was granted the Church was required to advertise for organisations to come forward with alternative community uses on the site; none were forthcoming. The Church intends to provide additional community facilities at the St Marks site.

**26 – 29 Beech Grove:** An application for 5 detached, 4 semi-detached, and 10 terraced houses has been granted by the Government Inspector on appeal, after it was turned down by the Borough Council. 4 detached houses will be replaced. Local residents had written 199 letters of objection.

The inspector ruled that the impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area was acceptable, viewed from the front of the site in Beech Grove. He took no account of the change in character of the area brought about by the development itself. The large beech tree in the middle of the site is to be retained as a central feature, but many of the other trees have or will be removed. As far as the impact on the living conditions of nearby residents, one of the main reasons the Council turned it down, he felt there would be 'no material harm.' – a debatable point.

**Oatfield Road:** The Council has turned down two back garden developments; one was taken to appeal and again refused.

**50 – 54 Brighton Road:** The previous application for 12 flats, 2 semi's and 4 detached houses, having been withdrawn, a new application for 6 terraced, 2 semi's and 3 detached houses has popped up. A number of concerns remain, including the cramped nature of the development and the extent of hardstanding.

# **COMMUNITY PLAN FOR REIGATE & BANSTEAD 2020**

You will have received a purported consultation document on this topic with your electoral registration form. This sets out such targets as a *'Healthy Environment'*, *'Neighbourhoods for the Future'*, *'Vibrant Communities'*, and *'The Right Services in the Right Places'*. Residents have asked how anyone could respond "no" to such a bright future? Who would wish for *'The Wrong Services in the Wrong Places'*!

In an attempt to provide some extra detail, we've set out below the specific aims in two of the Council's Action Plans for the next three years.

## **Caring for our Local Environment**

1. ***Improve waste management and reduce reliance on landfill*** - by recycling 40% of waste, providing one 'bring site' for every 800 properties, and quadrupling the amount of green waste to 16%. This will take us into the top quarter performance for all councils.
2. ***Enhance the street scene*** – by a 10% improvement against the recognised 'cleanliness index', clearing 90% of graffiti within 7 days (offensive graffiti 2 days), removing 90% of abandoned vehicles within 10 days. Improved level of residents' satisfaction, as measured through the annual survey, from 59% to 68%. A second part of this action plan is to implement new arrangements and achieve a positive improvement in residents' satisfaction with highway maintenance in the Borough. (*Our Comment: a difficult target, to say the least*)
3. ***Tackle traffic congestion*** – by agreed mechanisms to tackle traffic in the Borough. (*Our Comment: not very specific*)
4. ***Protect local character and heritage through the planning process*** – by adopting a Core Development Strategy that continues to protect the Green Belt.
5. ***Improve the physical environment and distinctive character of village centres and local shopping parades*** – by enhancing 15 village centres / shopping parades.
6. ***Promote appropriate sustainable energy initiatives*** – by firstly considering fully the incorporation of sustainable energy solutions in the delivery of all Council Services. Secondly, by ensuring that all new development, and at least 60% of conversions, generate a minimum of 10% of their energy needs from renewable sources. The objective is to ensure that 70% of new buildings (with over 1,000 sq metres floor space) have incorporated sustainable energy systems.

## **Regeneration and New Neighbourhoods**

North of the M25, the only area commanding attention is improvements to the physical environment of the Preston Housing Estate, to assist in tackling social problems. We have discussed the Preston Regeneration Plan in some detail in previous newsletters. The consultant's Masterplan was delivered a year late, and while it set out some ideas which have gained general consensus, there is a lack of clear agreement of the specifics and no work programme for moving this energetically forward. We are told that the detail is being worked out and that the financial support of the County and Borough Councils will be reconfirmed early in the New Year.

Other projects in this Action Plan include a similar programme in the sister housing estate in Merstham. In addition, work is focussed in Horley where 3,600 new houses are to be built. Other plans cover the regeneration of Redhill Town Centre – designated as a regional transport hub – and conversion of the former industrial sites and quarries to the north and east of Redhill to housing, together with related economic, environmental and recreational improvements.

These are all massive projects, being carried out simultaneously. Although much of the actual work is in the private sector, it must be questionable if the Council has the expertise and resources to undertake its leading role in so many projects, in the expected timescales.

In our next newsletter, we'll review the Council's possibly even more challenging Action Plans for **Self Reliant and Thriving Communities** and **Value for Money**.

## **Your Association Needs your Help**

The Tattenhams R A needs a  
**Minutes Secretary**

Surely there is someone "out there" who can afford to spend a couple of hours each month, taking the minutes at committee meetings.

and typing them ready for distribution?  
It is an important job, but not too onerous.

For information, please contact either  
Chairman John Butcher on 01737-351572  
Vice Chair John Edwards on 01737-211137

Without help the Association cannot function  
and therefore cannot represent **your** views.

## **EPSOM GRANDSTAND** **REDEVELOPMENT STARTS**

You've probably noticed that the demolition of the Rosebery Stand is now well underway. This will be replaced by a new Entrance Pavilion, which will be completed in time for the 2007 Derby.

The second phase will then see the demolition of the rest of the Grandstand and construction of a new Grandstand, to be completed in 2009.

The 2007 and 2008 Derbies will still be run at Epsom, but much of the other racing will be transferred elsewhere. The Queen's Stand will continue to be open for business throughout.

Part of the Tattenhams enclosure, next to the Rosebery stand will be used by the contractors, and the footpath across the building site, which goes through the tunnel under the course, will be closed temporarily for the project.