

Autumn 07 Newsletter

## **SOUTH EAST PLAN – NEW DEMANDS TO INCREASE DEVELOPMENT**

The South East Plan Inspectors' Report on Housing Numbers has recommended an increase of 10% in new builds across the South East from 28,900 to 32,000 dwellings per annum. However, for Surrey County, the inspectors have recommended double that number – 20%.

One of the areas identified for the volume of extra housing within Surrey is the “London fringe”, which obviously includes Tattenhams. We expect that Reigate, Redhill and the “A23 corridor” will also come up for attention, and ominously, the inspectors suggest building on parts of the green belt.

Surrey has built consistently above the existing Structure Plan commitment, as developers come forward with infill and back garden developments, which are on top of the major sites identified by local councils. Councils will not be allowed to anticipate such “windfalls” – by far the largest type of development in our area – in developing their strategies.

Leaders of councils across Surrey have “cautiously accepted” the planned increase in the number, but “expressed concern that a disproportionate share of this increase is earmarked for Surrey, even though its capacity for further development is highly constrained compared to other parts of the south east.”

The leaders also called on the government to confirm that adequate funding for the necessary infrastructure would be forthcoming. The Inspectors praised the research and analysis provided by Surrey on the issues of infrastructure capacity and costings, but they have nevertheless agreed to further growth, without properly considering where the money to underpin public services is to come from. The sums across the South East are truly staggering – an estimated £89 billion in transport, schools, hospitals, social care and flood defences / water resources. Council tax on the new properties will support the additional running costs, but will not be enough to meet the capital set up costs.

Days later there were suggestions that the Government will ignore the Inspectors' report and impose even higher housing targets. It was said the Plan was based on national policy before the change in Prime Minister, and it is known that the Treasury had already been looking for a radical increase.

### **AUTUMN MEETING**

**The Residents' Association Autumn Meeting will be held  
at Shawley Community Primary School  
on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2007 at 8.00pm.**

**Local GP Dr Peter Stott  
will speak on**

**DEVELOPMENTS IN LOCAL HEALTHCARE**

# FROM THE CHAIRMAN



## **Autumn Meeting**

As mentioned on the front page, we have re-introduced our Residents' Association Autumn Meeting. It will be held at Shawley Community Primary School, Shawley Way, on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2007 at 8.00pm when Dr Peter Stott G.P. will speak on *Developments in Local Healthcare*.

Please note that this is a chance to find out and ask questions about what is happening outside of Epsom Hospital. It's not that we don't think that what is happening in Epsom and St Helier is not important, but we would like to focus on changes in primary care – in our local surgeries and clinics.

After a short break for refreshment the second half of the meeting will be a members' open forum. We also hope that our local police will be represented at the meeting.

## **One-in-Six Post Offices to Close**

In January 2008 it is expected that an official six-week consultation will start in our area to decide which of our local post offices will be included in the Government's mandatory closure programme. The Government's target is to close 2,500 post offices nationwide. The Tattenham Corner Post Office and those in Nork and Tadworth are clearly at risk. The Post Office is arguing that fewer people are using their branches because traditional services, including pensions and benefits payments are available on-line or directly through banks. It is aiming for 95% of the urban population to be within one mile of their nearest branch.

Postwatch is asking for details of local customer needs and special circumstances to be provided to them. We will be arguing that the poor bus service to Epsom Town Centre, the relatively high level of elderly residents, plus the relatively low level of car ownership in the Preston area are reasons to keep our local post offices open.

## **Yellow Lines and White Lines**

The County Council has now implemented the majority of the new yellow line parking restrictions which were approved earlier in the year. We know that some residents were disappointed that the restrictions did not go far enough, and others felt that they went too far. In general, the parking problem had to be severe and long-standing, and to present a significant danger for a yellow line to be agreed. Suggested restrictions which moved the problem from one street, or part of a street, to another were not actioned.

The County Council is now reviewing restrictions in Reigate and Redhill, and will not be revisiting our area again for the next few years. However, the Council will consider the alternative of 'white line' advisory markings in areas which have problems, particularly to discourage parking too close to junctions and bends and to prevent parking in front of residents' driveways. These restrictions are advisory and do not have legal backing, but they are simpler to implement and do often reduce the problem. If you have any problems of this sort, then please write to Margaret Trevelyan, East Area Transportation Service, Surrey County Council, Bay Tree Avenue, Kingston Road, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 7SY. It is best if you are able to provide evidence that the problem is serious and continuing – for example photographs.

## **Derby Day Parking**

There was a disappointing lack of action towards race goers who ignored the 'No Waiting' cones in roads where residents had removed their own vehicles to comply with the temporary regulations. Our follow up has shown that there is a contradiction on this issue. Police say it is the job of local traffic attendants now employed by the Borough Council to enforce these restrictions. The Council says it doesn't have the necessary legal powers to enforce the restrictions. We don't know who is right, but we do promise to have this clarified for next year.

## **Flower Tubs**

These were welcomed by most people when, assisted by the Committee, Cllr Bray installed and planted the tubs at Tattenham Corner. Initially there was some vandalism. Hopefully this has settled down and we will continue to maintain the tubs with seasonal flowers.

## **The Bench by the Library**

Sadly vandals also attacked the bench which was a gift from a French round table group. Since no authority would accept liability for repairs it was restored by R.A. Committee members.

*John Butcher*

## **LOCAL COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN (LCAP)**

### **PLEASE COMPLETE THE ENCLOSED FORM**

The Community Liaison team from Reigate & Banstead Borough Council is working with your councillors to develop a Local Community Action Plan for the Tattenhams and Nork areas.

Your input is essential to this process and the Community Liaison team are keen to speak to and involve as many local residents as possible and a form for you to submit your comments is enclosed with this newsletter.

The form can either be sent directly to the Community Liaison Officer, whose details are on the form, or it can be dropped into the one of four local venues listed on the form. Alternatively, you can submit your comments online at [www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/nork-tattenhams.htm](http://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/nork-tattenhams.htm)

### **Neighbourhood Panel**

We have pointed out before that Tattenhams is not well served by the new police panels which are being set up, with a panel in Banstead Village for Banstead and Nork and a separate one in Preston. It is now planned to have a panel for the Nork and Tattenhams area, dealing not just with Police matters, but also with local councillors and council officers to address broader issues, such as those emerging from the LCAP. We hope to provide further details in the next Newsletter and our Noticeboards.

## **AFTER THE FLOODS**

Surrey County Council has pledged £1 million to begin to deal with the problem of flooding. Although many areas of the country suffered much worse than Surrey, there were a number of local issues.

There is inconsistency in cleaning highways gulleys; the policy is to clean every one once a year, and problem areas more frequently. The reporting of gulleys cleaned, and the thoroughness of the service has been suspect, as has been follow up and dealing with blocked gulleys which require further investigation and a 'dig out'. Procedures have been tightened up and there has been a change of contractors. Other problems are cars parked over gulleys, hindering cleaning, and new buildings and driveways which prevent water naturally soaking into the ground.

In our part of the County, where the ground is chalk, surplus water on the roads does not flow into the main drains, but rather into soakaways, and over time these do become full, and need re-boring or other attention.

A database has been established of known problems, reported by Highways engineers, local councillors, residents' associations etc. Priority is being given to addressing flooding which presents a risk to life / safety or which causes the flooding of homes. The good news is that the problem in Downland Way has come out as a high priority and will be fixed this year.

We have logged the new problems reported to us in Shawley Crescent, Great Tattenhams and Merland Rise; if you know of others, please let Councillor Nick Harrison know (contact details on last page).

# **IT'S OFFICIAL – NO NEW HOSPITAL**

## **No New General Hospital**

The “*Better Healthcare Closer to Home*” project team has now confirmed what everybody had been expecting for at least six months. There will be no new hospital at either Sutton or St Helier (a new hospital in Epsom or elsewhere in Surrey having been ruled out a long time ago). It is too expensive, and “the margin of unaffordability is such that there is no prospect of bridging the gap.”

## **Full Steam ahead at St Helier**

Meanwhile Samantha Jones, new Chief Executive at Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust, has launched a £150,000 paint job at St Helier. And the project team is looking at a mixed new build and refurbishment option at St Helier, although they ominously say there is still an affordability gap, but “it is much less than other options we have looked at”. They say they are “concentrating on coming up with the right solution for improving St Helier hospital”. This includes £1.45 million to upgrade women and children’s services; the development of a local care centre on the site, including a re-designed A&E department, and a new ward block.

## **Surrey**

Meanwhile, the Surrey Primary Care Trust (PCT) has agreed to go to public consultation on its “*Fit for the Future*” programme, which will look at “acute commissioning intentions”. They deny that this is about closing an A&E or an acute hospital, but rather focusing on how acute services are delivered across most of the County. However, except for certain specialities, this excludes looking at the healthcare requirements of those of us in Epsom and Banstead.

## **Healthcare London**

Because the future of Epsom Hospital and the services it offers seems irretrievably linked with the future of healthcare in London, there will be no formal consultation on any changes at Epsom hospital. The NHS in London is focusing on London-wide proposals “*A Framework for Action*” (where do they get all these names from?), but steps will be taken “to ensure that the views of Surrey residents, in particular those around the Epsom area, are heard in regard to London’s healthcare services.”

## **Maternity and Children’s Services**

Following strong pressure from some of the professionals, and from the public and local councils, the Epsom and St Helier Trust have held back from a formal decision to move the majority of maternity and paediatric services to St Helier. In a statement, they have said that all “have agreed to work together to develop options for changes to maternity and paediatrics on both sites, in an open and transparent way with staff, patients and members of the public”.

## **Local Care Centres**

Again, proposals for local care centres at the St Helier end of the patch, including St Helier itself, plus the Nelson, Wilson and Wallington moving forward to the business case. And, possibly of interest to Tattenhams residents, are new community services on the Sutton site, in conjunction with the Royal Marsden Hospital. But what about the rest of Surrey? Nothing at all.

## **So Where Does all this Leave Us?**

The observations we make are:

- The experts appear to have little better idea than the rest of us on how to move forward.
- Why continuously study and consult on so many options? Why consult with the public if the NHS doesn’t like the answers it gets back?
- People don’t want to lose what they know and understand, based on doubtful promises about the long term, which are unlikely to be delivered. Show us some local examples of improvements in services so we can trust what is being said. Show us where these major schemes have worked successfully in other parts of the country.
- Detach Epsom from St Helier and repatriate it to Surrey. We will always get second best if the Surrey PCT asks London to take care of our needs; London has too many issues to tackle to worry about a leafy part of Surrey.

# **TREE PROTECTION ORDERS (TPO's)**

## **Spare that Tree**

We have commented previously about the man with the chain saw arriving a few days or weeks before a planning application for a new development. Trees which contribute to the neighbourhood and the environment, and which take many decades to grow, can be firewood within a couple of hours.

If a tree without a tree protection order (TPO) is felled, then that is the end of the matter. If there is a TPO in place, then chopping it down is a criminal offence, which can incur a very substantial fine.

Surrey is the most wooded county in England, and with our large gardens and the increasing pressure for development, it is not surprising that the number of new TPO's in Reigate & Banstead has tripled over the last few years. The Council makes many more TPO's than other neighbouring authorities. Despite all this, there is a growing backlog of requests.

## **What Trees should be Protected?**

Government guidance is set out in the leaflet "Tree Protection Orders – A Guide to the Law and Good Practice" (published in March 2000). The key principle is that "a TPO can only be justified by the qualities of the tree in question, not by opposition to the development which might take its place." However, thwarting development proposals while not the aim, might be a side effect in some cases.

The Council is suggesting that it formalises the criteria for selecting a tree for a TPO, as follows:

- **Visibility:** The tree must be clearly visible from public vantage points (roads, footpaths etc).
- **Individual Impact:** The tree must make a significant contribution to the local environment – for example, in terms of size and form (is it a 'good specimen?'); whether it performs an important screening function; its rarity value; its future potential to make a significant contribution (a dead, dying or dangerous tree is unlikely to be suitable).
- **Wider Impact:** The tree must make an appropriate contribution to its wider setting and other trees in the vicinity.

## **Identifying TPO Priorities on a Risk Basis**

The Council is suggesting that its workload is based on priorities as follows:

- **Priority One:** Sites where planning permission has been refused on tree protection grounds or there are reasonable grounds to believe that tree contractors have been engaged to carry out works that have not been subject to prior discussion and agreement.
- **Priority Two:** Sites where professional assessment suggests that trees may be worthy of protection and a planning application has been received, or the Council is carrying out an investigation into unauthorised development.
- **Priority Three:** Trees close to listed buildings or in conservation areas and historic gardens.
- **Priority Four:** All other cases.

Note that the Council is proposing to exclude sites where developers are understood to be making speculative enquiries e.g. by flyers from Priority One for action.

## **Local Code of Conduct**

The Council is consulting on whether a local code of conduct to clarify what is reasonable behaviour on the part of developers and the Council itself would be helpful. The Council feels that this may allow all parties to have greater confidence that tree issues would be dealt with fairly. The Council would commit to dealing with tree issues following the criteria set out above, and in return developers would be asked to commit to stop pre-emptive felling and use their influence to persuade landowners to do the same.

## **Your Councillors' Views**

Your councillors have responded to the consultation by expressing concern that the Council's proposals do not fully follow best practice laid out in the Government's guidance and that to be effective, the Code of Conduct must have teeth, and sanctions should follow if it is broken.

# **TATTENHAMS PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

**338 Fir Tree Road:** Although just across the boundary in Nork, many Tattenhams residents opposed the destruction of this distinctive thatched house, right on the edge of Epsom Downs. An application for a block of flats has been turned down twice by the Council, and has also failed twice on appeal. The refusal of the second planning inspector was very strong, and we doubt if a third application will come forward (but never say never).

**26 – 29 Beech Grove:** The developer got work under way before he had satisfied all of the detailed planning conditions, particularly agreement on how to look after the preserved specimen beech tree at the centre of the site during construction. Council Officers called a halt to the work for well over a month until the builder got his act together. The Council also took action when the builder started work too early in the morning, contravening the permitted hours.

**Upland Way Garage site:** Access to the site is proving difficult for Raven Housing Trust, which is causing problems for residents as work gets going. Raven had agreed additional parking and easing of the road at the corners, but this has dragged on. It would have made a lot of sense – and more economical for Raven – if they had done the work as the site was being mobilised. We have pursued this with Raven, who has blamed delays on the Highways Authority, but we have had access to papers which point to most of the hold-ups being at the Raven end.

**Great Tattenhams Methodist Church site:** The church obtained outline permission for 20 x 2 bed flats before the site was marketed. Once it was sold, as is frequently the case, the new developer had very different ideas on what he would like to do. The Council Officers have been reining back the design, size and scale to the original outline permission. Most concern has been about the extra 4 flats without adequate extra on-site parking. This may prove difficult to oppose, as government planning policy does not set a minimum number of required parking spaces.

**50 – 54 Brighton Road:** This developer has now lodged a third appeal after refusal by the Council. One of the critical factors is the out of character terraces of three storey houses right on the Brighton Road. Another appeal has already been lodged for a similar development further down the same road in Nork, which is likely to set a precedent for this one.

**South Tadworth Farm, Epsom Lane North:** This site is the farmhouse, yard and buildings immediately behind the Sparrowhawks scrap yard, on which it is proposed to erect 10 houses. (The scrap yard is to remain.) Access would be created by widening the footpath which runs from Epsom Lane North down under the railway arch. As we all know, the switchback is a fast road, where the speed limit is often ignored, and the access point is at the bottom of a dip. The Highways Authority has concerns about the dangers of emerging at this spot, and the inadequate sight lines are likely to be grounds for refusal.

**142 Brighton Road:** This application involves the demolition of a house and replacement by 5 houses on this site, which also incorporates neighbouring back gardens. The site is cramped and impinges on the historic Tangier Wood. The Council has refused an application for the second time.

**46 – 48 Waterer Gardens:** It is proposed to erect 9 so-called town houses on this corner site. We have had many contacts from residents, raising issues about loss of trees and boundary screening, overlooking, parking, drains and the number of new houses. Rather unusually the developer held a meeting with residents at which he acknowledged many of the issues and appeared to take at least some of the points on board. We wait to see what revisions, if any, he proposes.

**Asda Supermarket:** Now that a new road over Burgh Heath to Chetwode Road and the Preston estate is off the agenda, we are pressing for a decision on Asda's proposal to convert its exit into an entrance and exit, controlled by traffic lights. Although some residents are concerned about traffic holdups, many more of you have welcomed the removal of this dangerous exit, particularly turning right into the Reigate Road.

# **BITS AND PIECES**

## **Regional Assembly**

Sometimes you get what you ask for ...

The government's announcement of the abolition of the unloved regional assemblies, including the one for the South-East based in Guildford, has been widely welcomed. County and borough councils sent along representatives, but there were also a lot of government appointees, such as those from the big building firms.



However, the civil servants and related quangos are to be kept on, and there could well be less oversight of their activities than was previously the case.

## **Banstead Police Station**

In order to be more accessible, plans are underway to change the opening times of Banstead Police Station front office. It is currently open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

The plan is to open it from 8am to 4pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays (people could therefore call in early before work, and apparently not many people come between 4pm and 5pm), and to open it from 1pm to 9pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays (so people who work can call in the evening).

**Tattenhams RA is grateful for the financial support of local businesses in publishing this newsletter. We welcome new advertisers – an ideal way to make contact with our 3,100 residents on a quarterly basis. For details, contact John Butcher on 01737 – 351572.**

## **Banstead Combined Charities Christmas Event Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> October**

**Banstead Community Hall  
Park Road, Banstead**

Once again, about twenty-seven national and local charities will be getting together to sell their Christmas cards and gifts.

Doors open from 10:00am until 3:00pm and refreshments, including lunches, will be available throughout.

Helpers are voluntary and all proceeds go to the charities taking part. Last year, thanks to your generous support, £6,000 was raised.

For further information, please contact Michael Cartwright on 01737-350660

Free parking      Grand Raffle