

LOWER SUNBURY RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

2022 SPRING NEWSLETTER



www.LOSRA.or

Local Plan reaches a crucial stage with threat of predatory Green Belt planning applications if Council fails to get it agreed

In the Summer 2021 LOSRA newsletter we told you about the delayed Local Plan. The Local Plan serves as an important framework against which planning decisions are made and the new Plan will set out how the borough will meet its housing, employment and infrastructure needs through to 2035.

The process for updating the Spelthorne local plan has been delayed by various factors including the pandemic and controversy over the proposals, especially the release of green belt. So where has it got to?

Throughout the latter part of 2021 the Council reviewed and discussed the policies and allocated sites through a series of meetings, especially via the Local Plan Task Group (LPTG).

A 'Vision' for Spelthorne

In 2021 the council appointed a planning expert to develop a vision to support the Local Plan. A draft vision was considered by the LPTG but it was only 'noted' and subsequently a motion to Full Council for the vision to be adopted into the Local Plan failed.

Housing need figures

A big challenge for the Local Plan is to show how to provide for the government's future housing figures, which exceed an additional 600 houses each year in Spelthorne. The government figures are calculated using a standard method which is applied across the whole country. Inevitably this is not a precise process and individual councils can reasonably make the case for different figures which reflect local circumstances.

The housing need figures should be treated as the start of a process of discussion between the council and government. It's reasonable to ask whether there has been enough pushback in Spelthorne. Spelthorne Council Members and officers have written to Kwasi Kwarteng MP and the Secretary of State

to put forward the case for lower housing figures, but this has so far proved unsuccessful.

Staines Development Framework

Whilst clearly outside Lower Sunbury, decisions about land use in Staines will have an influence on the overall Local Plan, such as the balance of development across the borough. Spelthorne council commissioned a masterplan for Staines, subsequently renamed the Staines Development Framework (SDF), which would be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document alongside the Local Plan.

The public was consulted on the SDF during 2021. Increasing densities in Staines provides an alternative to building on green belt across the borough including Lower Sunbury.

Potential controversy

However, increased building heights are a controversial issue in Staines and in the final Local Plan the council will need to reconcile this with residents' concerns about building on green belt elsewhere in the borough. The green belt was established in law to stop urban sprawl and that remains the case, while it also remains at risk. Many residents oppose building on green belt and over 6700 people have signed a petition to save the Spelthorne green belt.

Local Green Spaces

Between September and December last year, the council asked residents to submit green spaces to be considered for Local Green Space (LGS) status, arguing that this would provide greater protection than the existing Protected Urban Open Site (PUOS) status. LOSRA, along with Lower Sunbury residents, contributed to this process.

Across the borough there were submissions for 100 sites and the Council has recommended LGS status for most of these sites, including in Lower Sunbury. The Council says most of the

remaining sites are school playing fields covered by national school policy or private land which is publicly inaccessible.

Infrastructure Delivery Plan

There is also the issue of infrastructure needed to accommodate growth. This will be considered in an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), which will need to take account of transport, schools, healthcare and utilities. The IDP will take account of additional infrastructure needed, and where and how it is provided. The council is also considering the draft Surrey Minerals and Waste Plan and water and landscape infrastructure. Flood risk will also need to be considered, especially as climate change increasingly affects our weather system.

Crucial decision looming

In April it is expected that the Environment & Sustainability Committee will consider the draft Local Plan and the SDF, and will be asked to agree that consultation can commence on the final version of the Local Plan and SDF. If agreed, public consultation is likely to start in May and run for a minimum of four weeks.

This will be the version that the council seeks to adopt as the future framework for decision making on planning. Through the Summer council officers will collate the consultation feedback, finalise the draft Local Plan and then submit it to the Government Inspectorate for an Examination in Public by an independent inspector. We will keep you updated.

As we noted in the last newsletter, if there is some kind of impasse and the Plan is not approved swiftly, there is a real danger that developers will put in opportunist planning applications for various sites, including green belt like Kempton Park, and use the fact that the Borough does not have a current Plan to get their applications approved on appeal. The recent approval of a high-rise development by Inland Homes in Staines by the Planning Inspector at an appeal inquiry is evidence that this is a real and very worrying possibility.

Appeal for Foot & Cycle Bridge Funding fails - for the moment

Those interested in the progress of our campaign for the construction of a foot/cycle bridge connecting Lower Sunbury to Walton will be aware of our recent application to YFS (Your Fund Surrey) to bring the campaign to fruition. The YFS holds a fund of £100 million to be spent over the five years from November 2020.

It was therefore disappointing to receive the following from the YFS Project advisor: *"Regrettably, your ideas submission has been assessed against the criteria and requirements for the fund and unfortunately does not meet the requirements to be shortlisted to progress to the full submission stage...."*

All does not appear to be lost, as the advisor continues: *"However, whilst this project is not suitable for YFS at this time, the Lower Sunbury Crossing has been added by SCC to the Surrey Infrastructure Plan which was reviewed at Cabinet on 26th October...."*

"The Lower Sunbury Crossing is designated a Category 2 project within the Surrey Infrastructure Plan Cabinet Report Annex 2 (pg198), noting that further feasibility work will be required and without a specific funding commitment at this time. I realise that this is not the information you would have wished to receive, but I hope that the above information is helpful and that we can work together regarding the feasibility of this project as an infrastructure project as we move forward".

This is obviously not what we wanted to hear but, importantly, although we did not achieve the funding we had hoped for from the YFS, we can at least celebrate the inclusion of the foot/cycle bridge in the Surrey Infrastructure Plan.

Despite the YFS refusal, we now learn that, to date, a mere 1% of the fund has been disbursed - a full 16 months since its inception. When the fund was launched it stated that it was anxious to attract projects which were *"the more wonderful and the bigger the better"* which describes our application perfectly. In the light of this revelation, we have again written to the Project Advisor asking her to reconsider our original application and we await her reply.

We understand that Spelthorne's planning officers have recently met senior officers from Elmbridge to discuss this further for the Boroughs' respective Infrastructure Delivery Plans (both councils are at a similar stage on their Local Plans) and following constructive dialogue Spelthorne and Elmbridge are due to meet Surrey County Council on 10 March to try and take this forward.

Are you thinking of having a Platinum Jubilee Street Party? Here are some useful tips.

As you no doubt will be aware, 2022 is the Queen's Platinum Jubilee year. As of 6 February 2022 Her Majesty The Queen has become the first British Monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee, marking 70 years of service to the people of the United Kingdom, the Realms and the Commonwealth. We will all be getting a four day Bank Holiday weekend Thursday 2 June to Sunday 5 June. So put the date in your diaries.

If you're thinking of organising a street party or an event you will need to submit an application via Spelthorne's website. If you need to apply for a road closure you normally should allow at least eight weeks before your event, so if you haven't done so already, time is of the essence! See the link below.

Perhaps you may like to organise an event involving The Big Lunch. This is an idea from the Eden Project to bring people together to meet, chat and have fun in their neighbourhoods, annually fundraising £8m for local causes they care about.

It's about sharing food and fun during the Jubilee bank holiday weekend of 2-5 June 2022, or throughout the Month of Community in June as we celebrate good causes across the UK. Great things happen when we all get together! For tips

Sunbury Ferry gearing up for the new season

Following on from the overwhelming success of the Sunbury Ferry's first season last year, the volunteers are keen to get going again. The 2022 season is due to start operating weekends and Bank Holidays from this Easter, 10.00am to 5.00pm.

In the meantime, you may see the ferry out and about, undertaking refresher training for the volunteer crew and skippers.

The community-run, not-for-profit ferry is a great way to explore the Walton bank, part of the Thames National Trail, and was a great hit with families, cyclists and dog walkers last summer, despite the often inclement weather!

The electric powered ferry takes adult passengers at £2.00 each way and bikes at £1.00 each way. Children under 11 years old and dogs travel free.

The target start date at Easter will be dependent on weather and river conditions, so please keep an eye on the ferry's website and Facebook page for the latest information. www.sunburyferry.co.uk

and ideas on hosting your own Big Lunch event visit the Eden Project's Big Jubilee Lunch website. For more information, see the link below.

Most Big Lunch parties will be private, involving immediate neighbours only. Some, however, will be public affairs, where anyone can attend. Please see below a link to the Big Lunch map to find local public parties. If you have big ideas for your own party, you may consider applying for some funding. For more details, see link below.

However you intend to celebrate this wonderful occasion, please stay safe, drink responsibly, take your litter home and consider others in terms of noise and access.

To apply for a licence/road closure in Spelthorne: <https://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/article/17061/Street-parties-and-outdoor-public-events>

Information on setting up a Platinum Jubilee party: <https://platinumjubilee.gov.uk/get-involved-with-the-platinum-jubilee/>

The Big Lunch information and to sign up to your free pack: <https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/the-big-jubilee-lunch>

Big Lunch map for public parties: <https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/pop-your-big-lunch-on-the-map>

Grant funding information: <https://platinumjubilee.gov.uk/funding/>

Resident fined for breach of Tree Preservation Order

A resident of The Avenue was recently prosecuted by Spelthorne and fined £1,500 for cutting the roots of the historic horse chestnut tree, which is subject to a TPO, in their front garden, presumably to damage it.

LOSRA has been campaigning for some time for TPOs to be properly enforced, not only in The Avenue, but elsewhere in Lower Sunbury, and both LOSRA and Friends of Sunbury Park are increasingly observing cases where felling or drastic work is taking place on trees, especially in Hawke Parke, without permission from the Council.

Residents should be aware that they risk prosecution and fines if they breach the terms of TPOs on trees which are in their gardens or on public land.

Worried about your Gas or Electricity Bill ? We may be able to help

Sunbury Fuel Allotment Trust, a small local charity, has partnered with our friends at The Foodbank and is able to make small grants to local residents in Lower Sunbury (TW16) who are struggling with their fuel bills.

To find out more please email in confidence: Fr. Andrew Downes, Vicar of St Mary's on Vicar@stmarys-sunbury.org

Planning application for iconic Thames Street site attracts strong opposition

In February a planning application was received by Spelthorne Council for No.72 Thames Street, once the site of Clark's ferry house. More than 35 objections (and only one letter of support) have been received by the Council. The reason for the concern is clear: what is proposed is the effective replacement of No.72 with a hugely increased scale of building which would materially affect the views to and from King's Lawn, which it borders, as well as the approach to this iconic section of Thames Street.

A particularly striking element of this planning application is that it makes no reference to the property's history as the location of the Clark's ferry house, which operated there for more than a century and long predates Wilson's ferry that used to operate at the other end of King's Lawn. Following bomb damage during the Second World War, the ferry house was eventually replaced by a modest, but sympathetic, two storey property of which only one floor was above road level, i.e. very much like its predecessor in terms of volume.

It is believed that this design was adopted in order to preserve the view of (and from) the neighbouring No.70 - the 18th century house, with its handsome wisteria on the west side, that bookends the long terrace of period houses which is such a splendid feature of Lower Sunbury. By retaining the modest height of its predecessor, No.72 today presents a suitably graduated approach both to and from King's Lawn and the terrace that starts at No.70.

The Sunbury and Shepperton Local

History Society has made clear its objection to the proposal and states that it "... will have a substantial negative effect on the Lower Sunbury Conservation Area. The current open aspect of the eastern end of King's Lawn will now be closed off by a three/four storey wall. ... If this kind of development is allowed on the riverbank and in the conservation area, it will create a very unfortunate precedent. [We] urge Spelthorne Council to reject the application."

As LOSRA has written in its objection to this application, it is difficult to see how the proposal satisfies the Council's Policy EN6: Conservation Areas, Historic Landscapes, Parks and Gardens, in which it is stated that "*The Council will seek to preserve and enhance the character of conservation areas by: (b) requiring the retention of buildings, trees and other features, including open spaces, views and vistas, which are important to the character of the area. ...*"

Of course some will argue that the existing house at No.72 (unfortunately affected by the floods in early 2014) is tired and in need of replacement. This may well be true, but what is being proposed seems to have little support - and for good reason.

A smaller, more sensitive, replacement would be another matter and it is to be hoped that such will be the outcome. In any event, we understand that one of our local Councillors, Helen Harvey, has "called in" the application to ensure that any future re-development of this important and sensitive site will be decided by a full Planning Committee meeting.

LOSRA opposes proposed new 19m high 5G telecommunications mast in Thames Street

Early in December 2021, LOSRA was included in a pre-application consultation on a proposed new 5G mast in Thames Street.

Amongst several other concerns was the fact that the agent of the applicant (C.K.Hutchison Networks (UK) Ltd.) stated, in the submitted Site Detail Sheet, that '*As per the extract of the Spelthorne Borough Council Plan we note that this site is not located within a designated Conservation Area.*'

Since this was patently incorrect, LOSRA sent a lengthy email to the agents pointing this out and making a number of additional points and queries about the proposal. No reply was received and the agent continued with a formal application to Spelthorne BC Planning on the 13 January 2022.

This application still maintained that the proposed site, on the pavement close to the boundary between Dax Court and Rivermead House, was not within the Conservation Area and thus qualified as 'permitted development'.

It is worth stating here that the eastern edge of the Conservation Area in this location, as shown on Spelthorne BC's own detailed map, extends as far as the boundary of Beauclerc Primary School to the east and crosses Thames Street to meet the Thames. The proposed mast site is therefore more than 150m inside the Conservation Area.

Since the application was made, there have been 324 letters of representation from concerned residents, objecting to the proposal not just on its unwarranted presence within a cherished Conservation

Apps Court Farm: more big weekend events planned

Elmbridge Council recently considered a Licensing Application for events at Apps Court Farm, across the river in Walton close to Sunbury Lock, ranging from wrestling matches to music festivals.

The original application was for up to 29 events a year with a capacity for up to 50,000 attendees. Supplementary permission was also sought to sell food and drinks through the night to 5a.m., with a mention of camping, so it was clear that weekend events were on the agenda.

Although within Elmbridge, the proposed sound stage is very close to the river and Lower Sunbury. The original application sought to set limits on noise that were not only outside the parameters set out in the Code of Practice for outside events but also argued that the same levels set for "urban stadiums" should apply. This was clearly inappropriate.

The event that took place in September 2021 provided a taster for these events and caused a serious noise nuisance to a large area of Lower Sunbury. Many complaints were made to both Elmbridge and Spelthorne Councils. LOSRA and many individual Sunbury residents raised objections to the outline application.

The application hearing, at which Spelthorne Council was represented, went on for several hours and permission was eventually granted after the applicants agreed to a lower noise limits and no more than five major events a year.

The event organisers have stated that they will work with the local community in an effort to reduce any problems and Spelthorne officers will monitor future events to ensure that there is no nuisance caused. Spelthorne Council have an out of hours helpline for any noise issues.

Area, but also on the basis of its ugly, towering appearance, its closeness to residential properties and a primary school, and the impact of its associated cabinets on limited pavement space adjacent to a busy road.

There may also be the possibility of interference between the 5G transmissions from the mast and the electronic systems of the many helicopters flying along and across the river at Sunbury every day.

The target determination date for this application is 10th March 2022. Given the incorrect statements in the submission and the number and extent of objections that have been made, it is surely unthinkable that permission should be granted for this sensitive river-side Conservation Area site.

Friends of Sunbury Park

Illustrated guides for birds and flowers available and others coming soon, plus a nestbox camera

The Friends of Sunbury Park are producing a range of informative booklets about the flora and fauna of Sunbury Park, Orchard Meadow and Hawke Parke, all with beautiful colour illustrations, which are on sale in the Embroidery Gallery and at Skinners Newsagents for £3.00 each.

There are currently guides about Birds and Flowers & Grasses already available, with others on Butterflies and Trees about to go to the printer. Further booklets about Fungi & Lichens, and the Flora Of The Walled Garden are in preparation to be printed follow during the summer.

These have been produced with the expert input of Dr. Phil Cribb, a Fellow of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, and a long-time local resident, who has supplied many of the photographs. LOSRA is delighted to have been able to fund the printing

of the Butterflies booklet. Former councillor Andrew Hirst has sponsored the printing of the Trees booklet.

These Guides are a marvellous aid in appreciating the wealth of plants and wildlife in the Park and a great way for families in particular to enhance their enjoyment of this invaluable local asset.

In addition, with funding from our local Surrey County Councillor, Buddhi Weerasinghe, FoSP are working with the Embroidery Gallery to install a nest-box in the Walled Garden with an integral camera which will beam 'live' footage to a screen in the Gallery so that users can see activity in the nest box. This will be a fascinating addition to ways we can enjoy the bird life.

The Friends are also pleased to report that a bench has been installed in Orchard Meadow in memory of former Mayor and Leader of the Council Gerry Ceaser and his wife Zandra Ceaser, who both did so much for the Friends of Sunbury Park.

Other important dates and details

The Spelthorne Natural History Society, which meets on the second Wednesday of every month at Charlton Village hall, has a new web site at www.snhociety.org.uk, where you can find full details of their activities, walks and meetings.

Sunbury Embroidery is kick-starting its fund-raising for the Gallery Redevelopment project once more and has a fund-raising Garden Party at Monksbridge on Sunday 4th June—more details to follow.

The **LOSRA Annual General Meeting** this year is on Wednesday 22nd June at 8pm at the Riverside Arts Centre - more detailed information in due course.

There are vacancies on the Committee for new members, so if you are interested in getting involved in our important amenity work, helping to protect and enhance the local environment and quality of life, please contact LOSRA via the web site or by telephone to our Chairman or Secretary.

THE LOSRA COMMITTEE

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Please help by paying your 2022 LOSRA subscription

It's great to be back with our first printed newsletter of 2022 to supplement our web site news service and e-bulletins, after another interruption by the most recent Covid issues.

The Committee is now meeting in-person again, and it's been business as usual behind the scenes, but with gaps between newsletters, and subscription-collecting opportunities like our Annual General Meeting, plus the Regatta and Christmas Fair, not happening, our paid-up membership has fallen off a bit.

Please help us by paying your 2022 subscription using one of the methods set out below. Many thanks.

LOSRA MEMBERSHIP FOR 2022 PAYMENT OPTIONS

By Standing Order

You may pay by setting up a standing order with your bank. Please make payments to Lower Sunbury Residents Association at Barclays Bank, Account number: 90581194 Sort Code: 20 46 73. Subsequent payments to be made on 1st January each year.

Please use LOSRA with your house number and post code as a reference.

By cheque or cash

The annual subscription is still just £5 per household and voluntary donations are always welcome. For payment by cheque or cash, please use the form below and deliver to Colleen Cuthbert, Membership Secretary, 8 Maryland Way TW16 6JHR or any other committee member as listed. Alternatively drop your payment into Skinners Newsagents/Post Office in Avenue Parade, or Twirltour Travel in Green Street. Please make cheques payable to Lower Sunbury Residents Association.

Via PayPal

This can be done on the web site at www.LOSRA.org

Life Membership

There is also the option of Life Membership of £100 with a one-off payment.

If you are not sure that you are up to date with your payments or you need further information about membership, please contact Colleen Cuthbert, Membership Secretary, on 01932 783606 or by email colleen.cuthbert@btinternet.com and we will be pleased to advise.

Thank you very much for your continued support.

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