

LOWER SUNBURY RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION 2011 AUTUMN NEWSLETTER



www.losra.org

Secretary of State rejects London Irish RFC appeal against refusal of planning applications

The Secretary of State has decided that the London Irish appeals should be dismissed and planning permission refused for the development of their grounds at The Avenue and Hazelwood Golf Course.

LOSRA's Chairman was first notified of the London Irish intentions to develop their Avenue site and Hazelwood Golf Club at a private meeting with the then Leader of the Council and Spelthorne's Deputy Chief Executive on 8th May 2009. The subsequent history of events has been exhaustively reported on our website, by newsletter and e-bulletins so will not be given a detailed description here. In summary, it was clear from the sheer scale and ambition of the proposed developments that they had the potential to change the character and open space provision of the Lower Sunbury area which LOSRA's mandate has always sought to protect from inappropriate development.

From the moment of the developer's first public exhibition at which 237 dwellings were initially proposed, the newly formed action groups, SOLID (Sunbury Opposes London Irish Developments) and HAG (Hazelwood Action Group) combined with LOSRA to oppose the applications. We were greatly encouraged by the unanimous refusal of both applications at the packed Planning Committee at Kempton Park Race Course but inevitably, London Irish appealed and, with LOSRA represented as

official third party, the application was heard at an eleven day public enquiry in June this year.

Because the applications involved development of the Green Belt (Hazelwood) and the construction of more than 150 dwellings (The Avenue), the Government appointed Inspector could not determine the matter himself but was required to send his report, with recommendations, to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government who would make the final decision. The full SoS's report together with that of the Planning Inspector may be viewed on the LOSRA Website: www.losra.org but in his Conclusions the SoS states:

"Overall, the Secretary of State considers that the Appeal A scheme [The Avenue] is not in accordance with the development plan and planning policy [The Council's own Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document], particularly with regard to the low proportion of affordable housing proposed, and should therefore be dismissed. Furthermore, although Appeal B [Hazelwood] would be acceptable in principle in planning terms, given the two appeals are inextricably linked financially, the Secretary of State concludes that it would not be capable of implementation on its own in accordance with planning obligations as they currently stand. In particular, he is not satisfied that there would be sufficient public benefit to justify

the development of green belt land. He therefore concludes that the Appeal B scheme as it currently stands should also be dismissed.

LOSRA has always argued that London Irish had the opportunity to have their grounds included in the Development Plan Document when it went through its Examination in Public and before the local plan was approved in February 2009. There is nothing in law to prevent a windfall application (i.e. one which was not included in the Local Plan) from being considered at appeal; but the fact that Spelthorne are already well ahead of their housing targets weighed against approval of a windfall application of this size.

LOSRA, together with SOLID and HAG, had campaigned tirelessly for over two years to oppose these most unwelcome developments and we are delighted by the Secretary of State's decision. This said, LOSRA is, and has always been, a friend to London Irish; and it brings us no pleasure to see these particular plans for relocation brought to an unhappy conclusion for the Club. Our argument has always been that the proposals did not satisfy local and national planning policy and were in any case wrong for Lower Sunbury especially as they would have resulted in a net loss of open space.

The Appeal decisions vindicate our position and send a clear message not only to London Irish but other would-be developers. The London Irish clearly will not go away—the Club's C chief Executive has made this clear.

Eco Park - Secretary of State refers application back to Surrey CC

The following is an extract from a letter received by LOSRA on 2nd December from the National Planning Casework Unit :

"The Secretary of State has carefully considered this case against call-in policy, as set out in the 1999 Caborn Statement. The policy makes it clear that the power to call in a case will only be used very selectively. The Government is committed to give more power to councils and communities to make their own decisions on planning issues, and believes planning decisions should be made at the local level wherever possible.

The Secretary of State has carefully considered the impact of the proposal, and the key policy issues which this case raises. In his opinion, the proposals do not: involve a conflict with national policies on important matters; have significant effects beyond their immediate locality; give rise to substantial regional or nation controversy; raise significant architectural and urban design issues; or involve the interests of national security or of Foreign Governments. Nor does he consider that there is any other sufficient reason to call the application in for his own determination. He has therefore decided the application should be determined at local level, and has not called it in. The decision as to whether to grant planning permis-

sion will therefore remain with Surrey County Council."

It goes without saying that we are staggered by this mystifying decision as we believe that at least two grounds for a Secretary of State's determination are satisfied, namely; that the application for the incinerator will have significant effects beyond its immediate locality; and that there are significant architectural and urban design issues.

Readers will doubtless make up their own minds as to why, after the application had been deliberated for 5 months by the DCLG (Department of Communities and Local Government), it has taken so long to reach this decision. All the more puzzling when we consider that the Secretary of State had been made aware of the Advertising Standards Authority findings that SITA, the contractors, had misled the public in three important respects during their public consultation, namely

- The technology is not proven, as claimed by SITA. Shepperton would receive an untried, untested prototype gasification unit.

- The reference sites that SITA claim are "operating successfully with emissions falling within predicted levels" have been ruled as misleading, unsubstantiated and also fail on environmental claims,

as the quoted Dumfries site has suffered operational issues since inception and experiences emission breaches on an alarmingly regular basis.

- Drawings used to illustrate the Development have also been deemed to be misleading, as the true scale of the buildings and height of the planned 49 metre stack were not accurately depicted.

With this ASA ruling deeming SITA's publicity material to be flawed at a basic level, it must now be arguable that SITA's claims to have held satisfactory public consultations are themselves unsupportable.

The 'Eco Park' Contractors, SITA, have been shamed by the ASA for misleading Sunbury and Shepperton residents.

And they have been caught at it again. In Perth And Kinross in Scotland, addressing the Development Control Committee on a proposal for a gasification plant, which was granted, Anne-Marie Wilshaw of SITA said that *"We now put our name to this type of technology and have developed it elsewhere in the country, namely in Surrey. I would say, for SITA to actually put their name to that technology means we have every confidence in its safety and deliverability."* That, of course, was a straightforward untruth. It has not been developed in Surrey and campaigners in Scotland have asked for the approval to be rescinded.

That apart, we now have to assess the situation and consider the options relating to the Charlton Lane proposal. We will update you via the web site and e-bulletins.

Consultation on Aggregates Recycling proposals closes

As part of the long-running consultation into Surrey County Councils Minerals Plan, which threatens to make gravel extraction at Watersplash Farm a very real possibility in the foreseeable future, a period of consultation on Aggregates Recycling plans, which include proposals for a permanent plant at the Charlton Lane, and a temporary one at Watersplash Farm for the duration of the gravel working has just ended.

LOSRA and SSAGE (Sunbury & Shepperton Against Gravel Extraction) submitted objections to both proposals, not least the inappropriateness of having two plants so close to each other in the same area.

The plan recognises the challenges involved in mitigating the effects of noise around the Watersplash Farm site and that the increase in HGV traffic would require special management and de-

sign. In both cases we interpret these as recognition that the problems are in truth impossible to deal with effectively.

These issues of traffic and noise, along with dust management in an Air Quality Action Zone, and other questions involved in plants so close to relatively densely populated areas with a road system which is at times already impossibly congested, were highlighted in the submissions which we made.

This has been an incredibly-long, drawn-out and complex consultation which has lasted several years, but we will try to keep making sense of it.

Plans for housing development on Police College site viewed by residents at Arts Centre exhibition

The plans for housing development on the site of the former Police College at the junction of Green Street and Thames Street were on display at a recent exhibition at the Riverside Arts Centre staged by Linden Homes, who have bought the site.

Linden Homes is, of course, the company which put forward plans for the Environment Agency site, which were rejected on appeal by the Planning Inspector. They therefore know the capacity of local residents to fight unwelcome applications successfully, so they are keen to avoid a fight over this development and are trying to ensure that the plans they put in are likely to be acceptable to residents.

The draft plans (available at <http://www.losra.org/docs/LindenHomesSunburyPanels.pdf>) provide for 49 dwellings, mainly houses with small individual gardens in terraces in the main body of the site, with a feature apartment block in the prominent south-east corner of the site. The density is within that allowed in the Local Plan.

Primary concerns expressed by residents revolve around the proposed traffic exit from the site on to Green Street, and parking provision. The traffic exit has been placed where it is on the advice of Surrey County Council Highways Department, the responsible Highways Authority, who state that an exit on to Thames Street would be dangerously close to the junction with Green Street. It remains to be seen whether there is any kind of alternative which would satisfy the objections of the residents affected by the exit on to Green Street.

As a result of submissions by LOSRA's Chairman John Hirsh, parking provision was increased from 78 spaces to 93 spaces, and this satisfies the new standards required by Spelthorne's planning policies. We are aware that some residents think parking provision is inadequate but there are no planning grounds for arguing for increased provision, beyond the 93 proposed.

The design of the development is "Georgian vernacular" which the

architects believe fits in with the local surroundings. There is a school of thought which says that this was an opportunity to design something bold and modern rather than a pastiche of centuries-old design, but apparently people generally like the mock Georgian style and it's easier to sell and cheaper to build than something with a bit more individuality.

The scale of the buildings has been reduced in comparison with the Police College and the terraces oriented to provide better sight lines to the river for residents north of the site, and also to open up views of the Church cupola.

With the caveats of traffic movement and parking, the draft plans have not raised too many contentious issues. We are expecting a Planning Application to be submitted fairly immediately, although Linden Homes are aware that the submission of plans just before Christmas is never popular but hope to have overcome this problem by alerting visitors at their well-advertised exhibition. If the submission date is of concern to you, please keep your eye on the web site and the e-bulletins as we will naturally advise you as soon as plans are submitted.

LOSRA submits substantial response to National Planning Policy Framework Consultation

Earlier in the autumn, we urged residents to make themselves aware of the Government's new National Planning Policy Framework document which had been published for consultation, and to submit their own views and objections.

Whatever one's political persuasions, anyone who has concerns about the threat of untrammelled development on Green Belt and open countryside as well as urban open spaces should be acutely alarmed about the contents and thrust of this document.

It has been written by people with a vested interest in minimising the extent to which ordinary people can resist development, and to facilitate an assumption in favour of development in the majority of cases. The government has no mandate for this,

and to the objective eye it appears to be an example of opportunist cronyism driven by the Treasury.

LOSRA has submitted a detailed and closely argued paper setting out our objections to the assumptions, arguments and proposals in the Framework. That document is far too long and substantial to even begin to summarise here. It runs to eighteen pages, but it makes for very interesting but also quite disturbing reading.

If you have not seen it, we urge you to do so, because it demonstrates how the Government is quite overtly and unashamedly proposing to curtail the ways in which residents can object to and resist development. The Framework accuses people like us who

want to resist inappropriate development of "nihilistic selfishness" and of conducting "a left-wing smear campaign". That means all of you who resisted the London Irish developments or the Linden Homes development on the EA site. Dangerous stuff indeed.

You can find links to our response on the web site at <http://www.losra.org/index.php?start=16>. If you haven't read the NPPF, you really should. It can be downloaded at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/draftframework>

It remains to be seen what will happen with the consultation. There are big guns lined up against it, like the National Trust, and many of the Government's natural supporters in the shires think it's a step too far. We've done as much as we can, and we await the outcome with more than a deal of trepidation.

“Carols in the Meadow” and Lower Sunbury Business Community Christmas Fair Thursday 15th December

The Friends of Sunbury Park, under whose auspices the “Carols In The Meadow” event is held, and Lower Sunbury Business Community have decided to experiment this year by holding the Carols on the same evening as the LSBC’s Christmas Fair in Avenue Parade.

We are hoping that the synergy of the two events happening on the same evening will ensure a good attendance and an atmospheric seasonal occasion for the village.

The Carols In The Meadow will, as usual, place in Orchard Meadow at 6.30pm, with carol singing led by the Salvation Army Band. Mulled wine will be available, served by the Churches Together group, and Father Christmas will make an appearance with goodies for the children.

The local shops in Avenue Parade will be participating in the Christmas Fair between 5pm and 9pm and there will be stalls of various kinds along the Parade offering seasonal fare and gift opportunities.

It should be an enjoyable occasion and a chance for the Village to get together to celebrate Christmas.

THE LOSRA COMMITTEE

David Banks	38 Kenton Avenue	789652
Pamela Cabannes-Barrall	4 Forge Mews	761131
Elleke Carling	3 Croysdale Avenue	882726
Ziz Coltart (Treasurer & Membership Secretary)		
	161 The Avenue	782277
Tessa Cook	125 The Avenue	700264
Don Cunningham	2 Parkwood Grove	889033
Colleen Cuthbert (Secretary)	8 Maryland Way	783606
Peter Francis	Linden Lodge, Woodlands Drive	770661
Jenny Grant	Riverbank, The Creek	780682
John Hirsh (Chairman)	21 School Walk	781363
George Rushbrook		788471
Matt Thomas	7 Nursery Road	
Paul Watts (President)	87 The Avenue	788449
Chris Wills		
David Woods	47 Sunna Gardens	786806

Clearance work done by EA in Rivermead Island creek after LOSRA campaigns for action

LOSRA representatives have been in constant contact with the Environment Agency and Spelthorne Council during the year about the state of the creek which runs alongside Rivermead Island and Swan’s rest island, and which performs a useful function in carrying flood water when the river is high.

It has been choked with weeds which reduces river flow and inhibits the potential of the watercourse as a wildlife habitat. The Environment Agency eventually recognised that this was their responsibility and a working party undertook substantial work to clear the pernicious weed and other vegetation to open up the stream.

It looks a lot better now, although we suspect that, because the lack of water flow has caused silt to be deposited, some dredging of the upstream section may be needed. However, in the short term the situation is much improved, and if we do have high water conditions during the winter, it is to be hoped that the creek will cope with the extra water more effectively.

Old Hamptonians Amateur Dramatic Society recreate classic “Hancock” episodes at Riverside Arts Centre 12th-17th December

There’s an opportunity to see six classic episodes of “Hancock”, written of course by local personalities Ray Galton and Alan Simpson, recreated on stage at the Riverside Arts Centre by Old Hamptonians Amateur Dramatic Society from 12th-17th December.

On Monday 12th, Wednesday 14th and Friday 16th at 7.45 and on Saturday matinee at 2.45 they will perform “A Sunday Afternoon At Home”, “Hancock’s Happy Christmas” and “The Lift”, and on Tuesday 13th, Thursday 15th and Saturday 17th at 7.45 they will do “Wild Man Of The Woods”, “Department Store Santa” and “The Reunion Party”.

Tickets are £10, and are available from Mr Bernard Wigginton on 0208 979 4596. This is the first time that OHADS have performed at RAC, so we hope residents will support the shows and enjoy an entertaining festive night out.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

If you have not paid your subscription for this year, could you please help us by paying your subscription either by credit card using the secure PayPal facility on our website at www.losra.org or by dropping your subscription in to one of our two collection points using the tear-off slip below. You can deliver it to either of the following shops : Skinners Newsagents/Post office in Avenue Parade; Twirltour Travel in Green Street. Our thanks to these businesses for their help in providing this service. As advised in our previous newsletters, the subscription increased to £5.00 from the beginning of January 2008.

Please find enclosed my annual subscription of £5.00 for family membership of the Lower Sunbury Residents’ Association for the calendar year 2011. In addition, I would like to make a donation of £..... (AUT11)

Name:..... Address :

..... Tel. no. : E-mail address.....

Why You Should Be A LOSRA Member

What is LOSRA?

LOSRA is an amenity group dedicated to maintaining and improving the quality of life in Lower Sunbury, and in particular, to maintaining the area's unique character and environment. Its primary aims are:

- To stimulate public consciousness and appreciation of the appearance and character of Lower Sunbury.
- Continued maintenance and enhancement of the Lower Sunbury Conservation Area.
- Ensure that housing development enhances, or at least maintains, the character of the area.
- Prevent development which increases housing density inappropriately.
- Prevent development which involves demolishing good houses and inappropriate building on domestic gardens.
- The preservation and extension of Green Belt and public open spaces, and protection of the local environment.
- Support the development of village commercial life and public services, consistent with environmental objectives.
- To press for appropriate traffic management or exclusion measures.
- Maintain and enhance the strong sense of community and social cohesion in Lower Sunbury.
- To work with other amenity organisations in support of the Association's aims

Some of LOSRA'S achievements

TP26 & Hawke Park - The issue on which the Association was founded was the proposal back in the 1930s to build a by-pass through the main residential area of Lower Sunbury. The proposed scheme, known as TP26, was finally abandoned and it is now the landmark linear Hawke Park and is a valued asset for residents.

Hazelwood Golf Course - Working with Hazelwood Action Group to fight a lengthy campaign and public inquiry, LOSRA successfully opposed Chelsea FC's plan to build their academy and training centre on our local golf course, which would have suburbanised this valuable area of Green belt and lost a valued local facility.

Conservation Area Plan - In the early '90s, LOSRA lobbied for a proper plan for the Lower Sunbury Conservation Area, producing its own substantial draft plan, which ensured that Spelthorne Council delivered a plan of similar substance and quality. The plan sets out guidelines and controls for development in the Conservation Area.

Rivermead Island issues - LOSRA successfully opposed plans to build a Skiff Club and car park on Rivermead Island, and promoted plans to return the Island to green space by demolishing the obsolete outdoor swimming pool to be replaced by an indoor pool at Sunbury Manor School Leisure Centre.

Protecting the Green Belt - Lower Sunbury's individual identity as a community is reinforced by its geographical delineation by the River Thames and the key areas of Green Belt to the west, north and east. LOSRA has consistently campaigned for the integrity of the Green Belt in our area to be protected, performing as it does a classic function of separating suburban areas and preventing the amorphous sprawl of development. This has involved opposing every housing or development proposal which would change the character of the Green Belt - a substantial commitment since the Association's foundation

Orchard Meadow village green - LOSRA consistently campaigned for Orchard Meadow to be acquired as a village green in opposition to the owner's plans to build houses there. The idea was supported by successive planning inspectors at public inquiries and was eventually adopted by Spelthorne Borough Council. The Meadow is now a much admired feature of the village.

Fighting "garden grabbing" - LOSRA has consistently and successfully opposed planning applications which involve building on domestic gardens or demolishing existing good houses, supporting residents affected by such schemes both at Planning Committee and public inquiries. New Planning Guidelines taking gardens out of "brownfield" designation will make this task easier.

Airport helicopter link - In the days before the M25, Sunbury was plagued by the incessant noise of the Heathrow-Gatwick helicopter link. LOSRA fought this at a lengthy public inquiry securing a ruling that the link would end when the M25 was completed. The Association successfully pressed for this to be implemented in the face of airline and BAA opposition.

Shaping Local Strategic Plans - LOSRA's involvement in local planning goes beyond the tactical campaigning on individual planning applications. Spelthorne Borough Council and Surrey County Council produce wide-ranging strategic plans every few years, and LOSRA invariably contributes to the debate by making pro-active submissions, opposing inappropriate policies and proposals, and appearing at public inquiries to directly persuade Inspectors on important issues.

Ongoing Issues: London Irish, Eco Park, over development, Police College, Environment Agency Land

How LOSRA works

Committee: an elected committee of 15 people meets monthly to address current issues

Web Site: The LOSRA web site and associated e-bulletins have become a vital source of up-to-date information for residents

Newsletter: LOSRA delivers a printed newsletter to over 3,500 homes in Lower Sunbury three times a year, plus tactical project-related bulletins

Finances: The Association is financed by a £5 voluntary subscription for household membership, web site sponsors and individual donations

LOSRA maintains close liaison with Spelthorne Borough Council and Surrey County Council, lobbying councillors and officers on key issues.

LOSRA attends important meetings, Council meetings and Planning Committee meetings, and participates in consultative and liaison groups.

LOSRA represents the residents' case at Public Inquiries.

How can you help?

Please pay your subscription via the website, by standing order or at one of the locations overleaf. Volunteer to deliver our newsletters in your area.

Write letters of objection on key issues when support is asked for. Visit www.losra.org, frequently

LOWER SUNBURY RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION



LOSRA Membership for 2012

We have introduced the convenient option to pay by Standing Order (see the second slip below). This will save you the trouble of renewing each year as it will automatically be done for you until you request it to be stopped. Once we see that your Standing Order has gone through, we will confirm it. We hope this will make the process easier for everyone.

The annual subscription is still £5 per household. For payment by cheque or cash, please drop into Skinners, Twirltour or 161 The Avenue, or, of course, via Paypal on the website www.losra.org. There is also the option of Life Membership of £100. If you set up your own standing order using internet banking please put your postcode and house number as the reference.

If you are not sure that you are up to date with your payments or you need further information about membership, please contact Ziz Coltart, Membership Secretary, on 01932 782277 or by email zizc@hotmail.com and we will be pleased to advise. Thank you very much for your continued support.

Membership payment slip 2012 for **CHEQUES OR CASH**

I wish to pay the annual subscription to LOSRA for £5.00 per household and a donation for £..... (please enter amount, if you would like to make a voluntary donation)

Name/s.

Address

.....Post Code.....

email

Telephone..... Date

Please make cheques payable to LOSRA. Forward to: Ziz Coltart, Membership Secretary, 161 The Avenue, Sunbury on Thames TW16 5EH, or to Skinners or Twirltour. We will confirm receipt.

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Instructions to your Bank or Building Society to Pay by **STANDING ORDER**

To the manager.....

Bank/Building Society

Address of your bank

.....Postcode.....

Name of account holder (s):

Please make payments to LOSRA at Barclays Bank, Account number: 90581194 Sort Code: 20 4673 detailed below and debit from my/our account:

Your bank account number:

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Your sort code:

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Annual membership **£5.00**: D D M M Y Y

To be paid on the

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 then on 1st January annually

Reference: **LOSRA**

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(Please fill with up to three digits of your house number or house name - this will appear on your bank statement)

Signature (s):

Please send this portion to your bank or building society - **DO NOT SEND TO LOSRA**
Bank, please confirm to : The Treasurer 161 The Avenue Sunbury on Thames TW16 5EH