



# THE REIGATE SOCIETY

The Civic Society for Reigate, Redhill and Merstham

Newsletter No. 94      September 2009

---

## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

It is sometimes useful to look backwards to judge whether or not any progress has been made in any ongoing situation. That being so I looked at what issues were being considered at this time last year to assess what had happened during the intervening 12 months. Not unexpectedly there were several issues under discussion which remain firmly in our thoughts now.

The most significant of these is probably the **Redhill Area Action Plan**. This does not seem to have progressed significantly during the past year and this is probably, in no small measure, due to the problems associated with devising an acceptable solution to the traffic problems which exist in the area. There is more detail about these matters in the Committee reports elsewhere in this Newsletter. Whatever the reasons may be for the delays in this planning process it seems certain that this is a subject which will continue to figure in many future issues of this newsletter.

At this time last year we had been involved also in discussions about the borough council's Recycling Blueprint. Nothing more had been heard of this initiative since some follow-up meetings last September until some further meetings were announced for this August / September. This apparent inertia has been due, in part, to the economic situation as any plans to enhance recycling rates are necessarily linked to the market prices of recycled materials. The value of these materials is now starting to firm up and it can be seen that the proposed plans can be envisaged as being self-financing in the not too distant future.

The proposals will include more doorstep collection of recyclables by the provision of additional stackable storage boxes and will be subject to a public consultation before their final approval and introduction. In the mean time a major reorganization of the collection of household waste will be introduced this autumn as a prelude to the eventual introduction of the approved full-scale scheme.

Another perennial issue having a serious impact

our area is that of parking. Within the last twelve months there has been a consultation on the subject of on-street parking which resulted in changes to the restrictions applying in many areas. In some places this has brought about an improvement but in many others there appears to be none and in some cases one could argue that the situation is actually worse. There may have been financial restrictions which prevented the implementation of many of the suggestions made during the consultation but one suspects that the changes as introduced show that degree of arrogance which is often reflected in some of the decisions made by the highway authority. This, combined with the government imposed limits on parking spaces associated with offices, and the threat of future charges for workplace parking do not augur well for the future.

Not only are our local roads cluttered with parked cars but their condition is atrocious. The many potholes are difficult to avoid because of the parked vehicles. Vehicles are all too frequently parked in a way that obstructs the pavement. Many lamp posts and road signs are renewed but the originals, be they damaged or obsolete, are not removed for many months. Perhaps the metal ones are just left in the hope that they will rust away but some are made of concrete where that approach would not work.

There is a website which makes complaining about many of these issues simple: [www.fixmystreet.com](http://www.fixmystreet.com). It is much easier to use than the SCC website and I commend its use. The more complaints received by the guilty authority, the more likely it is that some action will be taken. Give it a try.

On a more positive note Priory Park has been awarded Green Flag status following its restoration and enhancement. It certainly seems to be a popular place to visit with people travelling considerable distances to come and use the new facilities. At certain times it seems that it is a bit too popular and, perhaps, a little overcrowded. May be in time its usage will balance out with the facilities it offers.

Colin Burbidge

(01737) 245264

## SECRETARY'S NOTES

The Society's Annual General Meeting was held in Reigate Methodist Church in the High Street on 3<sup>rd</sup> July. Our President, Crispin Blunt MP, welcomed the forty members present. The existing Officers were re-elected: Colin Burbidge as Chairman, Claudia Payne as Vice Chairman, Charles Wragg as Hon Treasurer, and myself as Hon Secretary. Five members of the Council retired by rotation. Four had agreed to stand again: Barrie Clarke, John Cumberland, David Paxman, and Dennis Turner. They were re-elected. Raymond Fry had asked that his name should not be put forward and will therefore, after many useful years, no longer be on our Council. He will however continue as an active member on the Redhill Committee, so his services will not be lost to the Society. There were two further nominations: Ian Stronge who lives in Evesham Road and Sean Hawkins, who was until recently, the owner of the Ancient House. They were all proposed, seconded and unanimously voted on to the Council. Crispin Blunt said that he had one more year as our President before the Society's constitution required him to stand down. He mentioned how important the Society was to the Borough, and thanked those who devoted so much time on behalf of the residents. He then closed the meeting.

After the meeting Paul Cleaver, a beekeeper from the Reigate Beekeepers Association, gave us an insight into local beekeeping activities and the national problems causing the decline of bees. The Reigate Association is one of eight divisions in Surrey. It is by far the largest with 130 active members. It was started in 1917 and by 1943 had 242 members. During the war, the supplementary supplies of sugar, in addition to the normal rations, probably persuaded some to join its ranks. The present Association supports the local beekeepers and provides a winter course for beginners. It is represented at local shows, at the Reigate Farmers' Market on the fourth Friday of the month and at the local Annual Honey Show which this year will be held on 3<sup>rd</sup> October in the Priory School gym. There is a new Association apiary being developed in about 2 acres near Beare Green, though the present one near Mickleham will still be retained for meetings and training purposes. Paul talked of the present decline of the bee population. This, he said, was not a new problem, as back in 1920 90% of the bees were lost to the Isle of Wight disease. There seemed to be no single reason for the losses, but there were many factors such as the varroa mite which moves from bee to bee and weakens them, and nosema and other viruses.

There had been an EU grant of £4million of which £2million was passed onto the National Bee Unit for research and help to the country's beekeepers. However this seemed to have been subsumed into the £10 million research into pollination. Paul suggested that anyone who had the space and who wished to have a hive in their garden could either look after it themselves or allow another beekeeper to do so. Any further information could be obtained from the Hon. Secretary of the Association, Jaqui Essen (01342 842244).

Heritage Open Days this year are to be over 10<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> September. Twenty two venues and events are publicised in the brochure which was once again organised by the Society. The Undercroft will be opened on the Saturday and manned by volunteers from the Society.

The Members' Evening will be held at the Woodhatch Centre on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> October at 8pm. As usual there will be drinks and a finger buffet, followed by the presentation of the Society's Annual Awards. The evening will be rounded off with a talk by Martin Higgins on "Betchworth Castle Past and Future". Betchworth Castle is one of the county's least known 'castles'. Martin recently purchased the ruins from Mole Valley District Council and plans to consolidate the remains and make them freely available to the public.

Always popular, this evening is frequently oversubscribed, as we are limited in numbers. If you wish to attend please fill in the form at the back of this newsletter; enclose a cheque for £10 (the same as the past two years) and a stamped addressed envelope and return it to **John Angel**, who will be collating the names as I will be away over the first two weeks in September.

There are two Open Meetings later on in the year. On 5<sup>th</sup> November Nigel Davenport will be talking about "News from Surrey Wildlife Trust". This will be at Holmesdale School in Alma Road, Reigate. Nigel is the Chief Executive of Surrey Wildlife Trust which this year celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The Trust now manages 80 nature reserves covering over 4,000 hectares of Surrey's countryside. We return to the Priory School for the 10<sup>th</sup> December meeting. Dennis Turner will be talking about "**The origins of Reigate and Tandridge Priors**"

All these Open Meetings start at 8.15pm and are given on your Programme cards. Details of these and much more can also be seen on the Society's web site [www.reigatesociety.org.uk](http://www.reigatesociety.org.uk)

**Michael Hellings**

**(01737) 245342**

**Email: [mandmhellings@talktalk.net](mailto:mandmhellings@talktalk.net)**

## REGISTRAR'S NOTES

We continue to recruit new members, and since the last Newsletter we have been pleased to welcome: -

**Mr & Mrs G Fraser**

**Mr & Mrs C Keable**

BUT that puts me on my hobby-horse again! Only 4 new members in four months! The average I have welcomed in recent Newsletters is between 8 & 10. Please do some recruiting for me; I can handle any number that you can throw at me.

In the last Newsletter I reported that a number of members had not paid their subscriptions for the last year (2008-09). I now have to tell you that I

am sending out formal reminders to approximately 60 members that have not paid. If you are one of them, please pay up. We don't want to lose you.

If you have ANY QUERY about your subscription payments – please RING ME. I can tell you straight away when you last paid. Please DON'T ring the treasurer. He only has to call me, as I keep the membership records. Similarly, if you change your address, please let me know, so that I can send Newsletters, etc. to the correct address. Thank you.

John Angel

(01737) 242672

## TREASURER'S NOTES

Let me remind you that the ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS are due from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 and the MINIMUM RATES are as follows:

Individual Members	£5
Family Members	£8
Corporate Members	£25

For those still not paying by Banker's Order,

please complete the Subscription Payment Form on page 8 of this Newsletter, and return it with your cheque (or cash) to me at the address shown.

**Charles Wragg**

**(01737) 210640**

**Email: [charles.wragg@ntlworld.com](mailto:charles.wragg@ntlworld.com)**

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### REDHILL

**Chairman: Gerry Moss**

**(01737) 765508**

The saga of the Redhill Action Plan continues: slowly.

There are no prizes for recognising that the major problem associated with the town is traffic. Much of the presently proposed plan has been built round the concept of "living streets", the removal of the three roundabouts and reordering priorities to enforce travel by Public transport. Yet this third attempt has reached the Preferred Option stage only to find that the proposals for the roads are unacceptable not only to the Reigate Society but also to the Borough and Surrey Councils.

One wonders what terms of reference resulted in and the appointment of such very expensive consultants only to achieve an impasse, at the third attempt. The question now is not what further slippages one may expect in the time table but whether a line will be drawn and a fourth attempt mounted, no doubt once more on the shaky foundations of the past.

Following the Reigate Society's response last February the Authority did not appoint independent road consultants as suggested by the Society but traffic studies have been undertaken by SCC. We are promised a meeting when those studies are complete but we are still waiting for that. Your report was also circulated to all Councillors and our local MP but apart from some muted appreciation nothing further has been heard. Steering an oil tanker or even an iceberg would be easier than generating action

from our local authority.

Delay, of course, can be a political tactic, especially when trying to resist government demands for increased housing, but one would expect the time gained to be used to produce a workable plan rather than ill considered good intentions founded on fallacy and clothed in jargon.

Meanwhile we have had the diversion of the Tesco application for planning permission for a large food store on the Reading Arch site. The principle behind the identification of transport hubs as the place for further housing and commercial development is to allow this to happen with the least increase in car movement with its accompanying pollution. This proposal would undermine this policy by

encouraging the spread of shops up Brighton Road instead of confining them to the town centre. It would also encourage shoppers to come and go by car without bothering with the rest of the towns retail "offer". But then why would a predatory retailer be concerned with the future of the town?

There is a tired worn feeling about the process of regenerating Redhill. The need for a prosperous town is made out but there seems little conviction at any level that such an ambition is capable of realisation. Money is a problem but then it always was. What is missing is any kind of ambition or determination.

**Harry Ingram (Secretary)**

## **ARCHITECTURE & PLANNING**

**Chairman: Tom Godfrey (01737) 243590**

Over the past couple of years, the South East Plan has formed the backbone of these reports. You will probably be glad to hear that this will be the last episode since the Secretary of State has now finalised the Plan – until the next time!

She has reduced the total number of dwellings by 2026 in the Plan for Reigate and Banstead from 11,240 to 10,000 split as between 7,500 in the London Fringe and 2,500 in the Gatwick Sub Region (the boundary is a horizontal line somewhere between Earlswood and Salfords). The need for a review of the Green Belt in the Borough has also been confirmed.

So far as it goes, this is good news but it must be remembered that the original proposal was for 7740 dwellings resulting in an increase of almost a third!

This change in numbers has had an impact on the Borough's draft Core Strategy which was the subject of a pre-inquiry meeting by the Inspector appointed to consider this proposal. As the Core Strategy was based on housing figures that came from the Panel Report (i.e. 9240 dwellings) the Borough was told to go away and revise the Strategy so that the Inquiry due to be held late summer has been deferred until December 2009 following a further round of consultations.

Similarly, the Redhill Area Action Plan (RAAP) has also been delayed and we are currently waiting for Surrey County Council's revised look at the road strategy when the Preferred Options will be revisited. The provisional date for a hearing is set for December 2010.

However, Tesco has, as anticipated, jumped the gun by submitting a planning application for a store on the Reading Arch Road site. This is not the site identified in the RAAP for a foodstore which is proposed on the south side of Cromwell Road which is obviously well located for the Town Centre. To this extent, the Tesco proposal is premature until the assessment of the Town Centre proposals contained in the Plan has been considered at the hearing in December 2010.

Tesco proposes a store of 5841 sq.m. (3127sq.m. trading), an energy centre, parking for 330 cars and 26 flats. In laymen's terms this is nearly 63,000 sq.ft with a shop floor of over 33,500 sq.ft.

As a comparison, the shop floor areas at Sainsbury at Redhill, Morrison's in Reigate and Asda at Burgh Heath are all less than 30,000 sq.ft. Tesco already has two larger stores at Hookwood of 72,500 sq.ft (of which nearly 36,000 sq.ft, is for food ) and Purley of over 60,000 sq.ft. (of which nearly 36,000 sq.ft. is again for food). The first is within 15 minutes drive and the second about half an hour away.

The question is why does Tesco need a store in

Redhill of this size except to take business from the existing stores. They are aiming to take about 20% of the total anticipated available turnover in the study area which goes from Betchworth to Godstone/Caterham and Banstead to Salfords from about 12½% of the floor space.

The scheme includes only 26 flats so that it does not make a proper contribution to the housing needed in the Town Centre where the site has a potential for at least 70 units. Tesco argue that it would not be economic to provide more because of the cost of reinforcing the foundations to take the additional load. This argument seems somewhat specious, since the whole store is being built on stilts so as to provide car parking which is a very expensive proposition.

This whole report for this Newsletter could be devoted to this project but suffice it to say that there are other objections such as:-

- Traffic generation (360 cars an hour on Saturdays)
- Poor location of amenity space (partially hidden behind sub-station - ideal for unsociable activities).
- Design problems (inconsistent relationship between housing and store).
- Impact on townscape.

As to other retail matters, there is good news despite the recession. There is an application by Wilkinsons, the hardware store (?), for signage on the Woolworth's store in Redhill and we have a new Carpetright shop in Reigate High Street, with other new openings pending in the High Street and Church Street.

Residential applications for larger developments are few and far between but there are two of note in Redhill. The first is on

part of the Sea Cadets premises on the corner of Hooley Lane and the second, and more contentious, is on land south of Nutfield Road for 93 dwellings and associated uses. This is, of course, Green Belt but clearly the owners are trying to get to the front of the queue when the threatened review of the Green Belt, as requested by the Secretary of State happens.

### **STOP PRESS.**

Members will have seen in the Surrey Mirror a report that indicates that the number of houses to be built in the Borough may increase from 10000 to 12500. This arises from a meeting of the Borough Councils Executive Committee on the 30<sup>th</sup> July 2009 when the Director of Development reported on the outcome of an Inspector's pre inquiry session last May.

The Inspector, appointed to consider the Core Strategy of the Council's Local Development Framework, suggested that since the Council's prime basis for evidence on the ability to meet the South East Plan's allocation of 10,000 dwellings was their Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), that the contents of that document should be tested.

The SHLAA indicates that within the urban area, there is a capacity for 12,500 dwellings. This comprises those houses built since 2006, outstanding planning consents and sites with potential for development before 2026. The first two elements outlined above, comprise about 30% of the 10,000 houses required and this has been achieved in the first 3 years of the Plan!

The Council emphasises that the testing of the higher figure does not commit them to plan for the higher figure and that even this could be achieved without the need for development in the Green Belt.

---

## **TRANSPORT**

**Acting Chairman: John Chittenden**

**(01737) 242328**

---

In considering the likely effect of the continuing and proposed population expansion within our and adjacent Districts, it is difficult to assess and evaluate all the known and the unknown

factors. However there are a few guide lines that need to be considered before an initial and provisional appraisal can be made.

1.0 During the 1930 - 1939 general expansion of greater London which resumed in the 1950 - 1974 period efforts were made to accommodate the need to travel and Dual Carriageways were provided with service roads, footways, and in some cases cycle tracks. Bypass schemes were also provided Examples: A24 Mickleham, A22

Caterham, A217 Banstead, etc.) but other routes were not improved and as a result we now have severe traffic problems in the Greater London area.

The human costs of Road Traffic Accidents in the Greater London area need to be considered and projected into any unplanned expansion of London transport systems into Surrey.

2.0 In Greater London the TRL study indicated that in the year reviewed the Police reported 44,500 personal injury accidents. However the Hospitals records indicate that they treated many more and the TRL reports that the Police figure needs to be increased to 68,500 persons injured on London's roads. The suggested reason being that some of those injured do not report their accident to the Police.

Approximately 30% of all accidents involved Two Wheeled Vehicles.

3.0 It is currently proposed that greater use be made of cycles as a means of transport. However several members of the Society have pointed out that the existing cycle lanes on the A25 and A23 are not safe and are discontinued where the road has a sub-standard width, in addition it is noted that sections of cycle lane are obstructed by parked vehicles and Bus Stands. In considering the proposed housing expansion scheme of

10,000 homes it has been suggested that a safe network of cycle / pedestrian routes be established between housing estates and the transport hub facilities.

4.0 In July the Society was in receipt of a letter from James E. Braithwaite CBE Chairman of the SOUTH EAST ENGLAND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (SEEDA) in response to the report "The Reigate Society and Transport". (pages 46&47.)

The Chairman states "That efficient transport networks are critical to the success of the region", "That £20m has been identified as being potentially available for investment in the Reigate/Redhill area, with that funding being available from 2014/15." Unfortunately this will not be sufficient for the Redhill/Reigate relief road/ bypass recommended in the Society's report and formulated after considering proposals for the restriction of traffic flows on the A23 /A25 as set out in the Redhill Town Centre Area Action Plan-Preferred Options

It is now a matter for the SCC and Reigate and Banstead to consider an application for additional funds for the long term provision of a safe, effective, efficient, and economic transport system.

---

## NATURAL AMENITIES

Chairman: Colin Burbidge

(01737) 245264

Since the last Newsletter the Society has become a member of the **Surrey Hills Society**. This should enable us to keep abreast of what is happening within the AONB area.

As mentioned in the Chairman's Notes, **Priory Park** has attained Green Flag status since it underwent its makeover. However there are still some issues which remain as far as the park's management is concerned.

- An aquatics planting scheme has been agreed for the lake and is being implemented by the Reigate Area Conservation Volunteers.

- The ingress of silt into the lake is not being prevented as the system installed to manage it has proved to be woefully inadequate. A redesign is promised but is yet to materialize.
- The future of the old stables remains shrouded in mystery.

There has been no further news on the application for the establishment of a right of way between Bell Street and Park Lane but it was always expected that this would take many months to pass through the system.

The Management Plan for **Earlswood Common** has now been distributed – eight months after it was supposed to be in operation.

---

## The Reigate Society

*President:* Crispin Blunt MP

*Chairman:* Colin Burbidge, MSc., C Eng., 16 Brokes Crescent, Reigate, RH2 9PS. Tel: 01737 245264

*Hon. Secretary:* Michael Hellings, 53 West Street, Reigate, RH2 9BZ. Tel: 01737 245342

*Hon. Treasurer:* Charles Wragg, 3 Weald Way, Reigate, RH2 7RG. Tel: 01737 210640

## CORPORATE MEMBERS

7

Note that all addresses are of Reigate town and all telephone numbers have the code 01737, unless otherwise stated.

	<b>Address</b>	<b>Business</b>
Bakers Radio Ltd	6 Western Parade, Prices lane RH2 8AU (240543 / 242322)	TV, Electrical Retailers
Care Unlimited	Chaldon Rise Mews, Rockshaw Road, Merstham RH1 3DE (645171 / 646266)	Care Homes
Care Homes of Distinction Ltd	Wray Park, 55 Alma Road RH2 0DN (242778)	Care Homes & Property Development
Crow Watkin	14 Bell Street RH2 7BE (245886)	Independent Estate Agents, Surveyors & Valuers
Dunottar School	High Trees Road, RH2 7EL (761945)	
East Surrey College	Claremont Road, Gatton Point, Redhill RH1 2JX (772611)	
Iain Johnston	4 Chart Lane (244160)	Podiatrist
Michael Jones & Associates	Crossway House, 8 London Road RH2 9HY (245610)	Engineering Consultants – Building Services
Keymex Ltd	59-61 Bell Street RH2 7AQ (240171)	Domestic Appliance Sales, Service & Repairs
Holmesdale Building Society	43 Church Street RH2 0AE (245716)	Your local Building Society for all your mortgage and investment needs
James Knight & Sons	8-10 Bell Street RH2 7BG (242195)	Drapers & Soft Furnishers
La Barbe Restaurant	71 Bell Street RH2 7AN (241966)	Restaurant & Outside Catering
Micklefield School	10 Somers Road RH2 9DU (242615 / 224211 / 224212)	Independent Preparatory School for boys and girls age 2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> to 11
Ormerods	Suite 4 Chapter House 33 London Road RH2 9HZ (0208 686 5000)	Solicitors
Reigate Priory Cricket Club	Park Lane, RH2 8JX (244477)	Cricket Club with senior & junior sections
Reigate Priory School	Bell Street RH2 7RL (245065 / 240229)	
Royal Alexandra & Albert School	Gatton Park, RH2 0TW (649050)	Boarding school for boys and girls ages 7 to 18
Stanton Construction	1 Castlefield Road RH2 0SA (227430)	Development & construction service to industry, public & commercial sectors
TWM Solicitors LLP	40 West Street RH2 9BT (221212)	Solicitors
White & Sons	24 High Street RH2 9AY (222600)	Independent Estate Agents, Surveyors & Valuers

Booking form

**THE OCTOBER MEMBERS' EVENING**  
**On Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> October 2009**  
**At THE WOODHATCH CENTRE**  
**7.30 pm for 8.00 pm**

For ticket(s) please complete the top half of this form and send the **WHOLE PAGE** as soon as possible with your remittance and a **STAMPED ADDRESSED ENVELOPE** for the return of the ticket portion to:

John Angel,  
25 Beaufort Road, Reigate RH2 9DQ  
Tel. 01737 242672

Name (s) ..... Tel. No.....

I/we apply for..... tickets @ £10.00 a head Total £ .....

I would like a map (tick if required)

*Cheques should be made payable to the Reigate Society*

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

**THE OCTOBER MEMBERS' EVENING**  
**7.30 pm for 8.00 pm Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> October 2009**

Name(s) ..... Ticket No(s) .....

.....

**To be held at the Woodhatch Centre, Whitebeam Drive, Reigate**

***This ticket covers admission and the buffet with a glass of wine (or soft drink)***

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

**Subscription Payment / Banker's Order Form**

**NAME(S)** .....

**ADDRESS** .....

**I enclose my subscription for 2009 / 2010**      **Individual**      .....

**(Cheques should be made payable to 'The Reigate Society')**      **Family**      .....

**Corporate**      .....

**Please send me a Banker's Order form for payment of future subscriptions.**

**I also enclose my subscription for 2008 / 2009**      **Individual**      .....

**Family**      .....

**Corporate**      .....

**(Please tick box applicable)**

**If you are not a member and would like to join please tick here**

**Please send completed form to:**  
**Charles Wragg, 3 Weald Way, Reigate RH2 7RG**

**(NL 94)**