



THE REIGATE SOCIETY

The Civic Society for Reigate, Redhill and Merstham

Newsletter No. 96

April 2010

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Those of you for whom we have an email address will have received two communications since the last newsletter: one about the future structure of local government and the other keeping you informed about the reformation of what was the Civic Trust to which we were affiliated. The more email addresses we have the more of you we can keep informed about issues which crop up from time to time and which either affect matters in which the society is asked to express a view or on matters concerning local government. My last appeal brought forth a reasonable response so, if you have not yet informed us, let us know your email address via the website (www.reigatesociety.org.uk) and we can make you feel more a part of your society. You can be assured that your email will not be passed to any other organization and any communication to you will be done in such a way that all other recipients of the same email will be prevented from seeing your address.

Civic Voice has become the successor to the Civic Trust and the Society has affiliated to it for its first year. This enables us to evaluate how the new organization will fit with our own activities and also maintains our insurance cover whilst alternative suppliers are explored.

It seems no time at all since Civic Awards featured in the Newsletter but it is that time of year again to ask for nominations for the society's Civic Awards for 2010. These are normally presented at the Members' Evening in October. There is a nomination form on page 7 of this newsletter for prospective awards and it can be seen from the list of categories on the form that many different schemes could be considered. However please remember that it is best to nominate only those which have already been completed. It is difficult for the adjudicating panel to assess the full impact of schemes which have not yet been completed. You can always submit a nomination next year if you feel that an ongoing scheme is deserving of an award.

The current status of the **Redhill Area Action**

Plan is reported on in the committee reports which appear later in this newsletter.

The change of ownership of **Gatwick Airport** has been completed. Speculation that this might increase the possibility of a second runway has waned following a statement from the new chairman of Gatwick Airport Ltd saying that a second runway will not be considered any time in the near future.

Speaking on 28 January, he said *'The simple fact is we at Gatwick have not a shred of interest in a second runway. It's not government policy and it's not our policy. Even if the Government started to look more favourably at the prospect, we would have to think very hard about spending £100 to £200 million on a planning application with an uncertain decision. We would have to look even more carefully at the economic value of a multi-billion pound project – would there be a commercial return?'*

In the last Newsletter I reported an apparent success for potholes having been repaired as a result of reporting them on the web site www.fixmystreet.com. Three months later I can report that the entire road has now been rebuilt! I can not be sure that these two events are related but it is good to see that Surrey County Council is taking action to remedy the dreadful state of some of the borough's roads. I have heard reports of other roads being similarly treated but it seems to be the exception and may be was simply scheduled on a cycle of repairs spanning in excess of some 50 years.

Other roads, where the holes have been marked up for repair, have not yet been touched. Neither have some surface water gullies on Reigate Hill been cleared even though these cause flooding every time it rains. Perhaps this has a lower priority than potholes. No matter, I shall continue to file reports on road problems and I encourage everybody who can to do the same. The more complaints there are on file the more likely it is that some remedial work will result.

Colin Burbidge

(01737) 245264

SECRETARY'S NOTES

Once again the Society is planning to co-ordinate and publicise the Heritage Open Days in the Borough. This year Michèle Damer has taken on the task totally, leaving me just to organise the Undercroft. In previous years the cost of the printing has been provided by the Borough. This seems unlikely this year due to 'budget savings' being imposed. We have approached our councillors to see whether they can bring any influence to bear and to use their Councillor Award Funds to support us. It would be sad if the Heritage Open Days did not happen this year. It brings a number of people into the Borough and you all have a chance of seeing somewhere which may not normally be open to the public.

The Council has just announced that the Priory Park Community Festival will again take place in the Priory Park on Saturday 26th June. Although the decision to take part has not formally been taken I expect that we will take part again as last year.

Once again the Open Meetings have been well attended. On Thursday 10th December Dennis Turner gave us a very interesting illustrated talk on "**The origins of Reigate and Tandridge Priors**". It was aptly held in the Holbein Hall in Reigate Priory. He told us that a religious house was founded here by William de Warenne, 6th Earl of Surrey. Such events were rarely well documented, but it is clear that the foundations at Reigate and Tandridge were originally both hospitals. He explained that confusion priories were both religious houses subject to canon law. Tandridge Priory was founded before 1217 by Odo de Dammartin; Reigate Priory was in existence sometimes arose because medieval hospices and by 1233. Dennis observed that some confusion arose from the range of different functions covered by the Latin word 'hospes', all of which could be undertaken by priories as well as by hospitals. It appears that probably in the last decade of the 13th century, certainly before 1317, the hospital at Reigate was converted into a more formal, but small Augustinian priory.

TREASURER'S NOTES

Let me remind you that the ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS are due from the 1st April 2010 and the MINIMUM RATES are as follows:

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

Dennis finished his talk with a regret that the archaeological research that accompanied the 'restoration' of Priory Park had not been given the full cooperation which had been hoped.

On 25th February Glyn Sherratt was the speaker at Tanners Hall in the Harlequin. His illustrated talk was titled "**Gatton Park: Bringing an 18th century landscape back to life**". Gatton was in the 18th century a Rotten Borough returning two Members of Parliament. In 1751 it was purchased by Sir James Colebrooke. He enlisted the help of 'Capability' Brown who replaced the formal landscaping with a much more naturalistic one which showed off the rolling landscape. He greatly enlarged the main lake and formed smaller linked lakes. Ledgers show that 'Capability' Brown was paid £3055 for his services between 1762 and 1768 - one of his larger commissions. With contemporary illustrations and recent photos Glyn showed us the various gardens, and how the work has progressed. Much of the work has been supported by the National Lottery Heritage Lottery Fund. He made a special mention of the volunteers who were dedicated to the restoration and running of the Park. He finally reminded us that the web site www.gattonpark.com was full of useful information about the Park.

The last Open Meeting this winter will probably have occurred by the time you receive this Newsletter. Lester Hicks will be talking on "**How Britain manages its waste**". This will be on Thursday 25th March in the Redhill UR Church Hall, Hatchlands Road.

The **Annual General Meeting** will be held on 1st July at the Tanners & Woolsack Rooms in the Harlequin, Redhill. The speaker and subject will be announced nearer the time.

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.

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For those still not paying by Banker's Order, please complete the Subscription Payment Form on page 7 of this Newsletter, and return it with your cheque (or cash) to me at the address shown.

Charles Wragg (01737) 210640

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REGISTRAR'S NOTES

I am glad to be able to say that we are welcoming more new members this time than we did in the last Newsletter. We have welcomed five new members this time. They are: -

Mr K Goodwin
Mr E J Addison

Miss G Haydock
Mr & Mrs Dunsmuir

As I told you in my last report, there are some members who have not yet paid their subscriptions for 2008-09. I have to say that there

are still some outstanding. What I must say to them is that the deadline is the end of March, when I will be deleting their names from our records. Please don't leave us – we don't want you to go!

To everyone else – please keep recruiting for me. If you have a query on your subscriptions please call ME - not the treasurer.
Thank you.

John Angel

(01737) 242672

COMMITTEE REPORTS

ARCHITECTURE & PLANNING

Chairman: Tom Godfrey (01737) 243590

You have to have some sympathy for the Borough Council - they spend some two years preparing the Core Strategy for the Local Development Framework but during the gestation period the Government continued to move the goalposts in the South East Plan, culminating in the escalation of the housing numbers for the Borough by about a third to 10,000 in the early part of 2009.

The Borough had submitted the Core Strategy for approval based on 9,240 dwellings but the Inspector, at a Pre-Inquiry meeting, required them to revise the figures to meet the new total and suggested that Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), should be tested.

This document indicates that there is capacity in the urban area of the Borough for some 12,500 dwellings but this includes the so called "windfall sites" (i.e. sites that are not allocated but brought forward by land owners and developers). Despite the fact that some 90% of the houses provided in the last year were on such sites, the Government does not accept that this is relevant and all future sites have to be allocated!

The Borough's representatives at the Inquiry had a difficult time on the day that housing figures were discussed and clearly, the Inspector was unhappy with the situation and brought the Inquiry to a halt and cancelled the last day! We wait for his report, due early April, to see what he has to say and then the Borough will try and meet his comments.

This delay will, of course, impact the further stages of the Local Development Framework as set out in the last Newsletter and everything will happen much later than expected. So the \$64,000 question is – what will happen if there is a change of Government?

The Conservatives have published two Green Papers: one on Planning and one on Housing. And there are some interesting ideas as well as some dodgy ones e.g. third party appeals. The main thrust appears to be to reinstate some degree of democracy into the planning system by abolishing the regional assemblies and getting rid of the command structure where planning is imposed from Whitehall. Communities and Local Government are to work together to decide what is right for their area within broad national guidelines. We shall see how and whether this objective can be achieved

The main casualty of this delay is the Redhill Area Action Plan Development where the Society has been talking – to good effect – to the Borough and County Councils (more from the Redhill Committee). We are waiting – with bated breath – for the Development Management & Site Allocations Development Plan Document. This is the document which will set out the "nuts and bolts" approach to development control; and will be the most used in day-to-day matters.

On such matters, there are few major applications submitted to the Council at the present time just a collection of house extensions and suchlike. Having said that, there was an application to convert the roofspaces at Merrywood Gardens approached by an ugly series of external staircases which has been refused. !0 houses are proposed at the end of

Daneshill Close precipitously close to the embankment to Batts Hill and 10 flats in Croydon Road close to the junction with Holmesdale Road.

Of more concern to the Committee have been two applications which, on the face of them, have appeared minor but both affect the community adversely. The first to remove the condition imposed by the Borough on the Priory School to keep locked open the new gate to the north of the school. This is on the right-of-way that is being sought in an application to the Surrey County Council. The other is an application to retain enhanced floodlighting at the Old

Reigatians Rugby Club. The lights are higher and more intensive and have been erected without planning consent – no justification has been made in the application and the light spill from these lights is substantial. Technically, there are means of reducing the impact on the neighbours but these have not been put in place.

Finally, many of you may have noted that the Borough's international profile has risen, following the decision to require the eponymous Mr Fidler to remove his house in the Green Belt in Salfords. A good result for the enforcement team and hopefully the first of many.

REDHILL

Chairman: Gerry Moss (01737) 765508

The long awaited meeting between the Borough Policy Division, SCC Highways and the Society finally took place on 26 February, twelve months after the submission of our report on the Preferred Option for Redhill. The Core Strategy has foundered (see Architecture and Planning Report) and there will be substantial delay before another can be submitted, but work on the Redhill Area Action plan will now continue in parallel. This is breaking news!

The meeting began with a description of work so far on the transformation of the Redhill Memorial Park. On the one hand access will be improved; refreshment and better children's playground facilities will be provided and the park redesigned to a more varied landscape. The question of opening the river, raised by the Society thirty years ago, will be revisited. One has to be patient in these things! On the other hand the park will be used for emergency flood control necessary for the development of the Marketfield plot.

We were royally treated to an intensive power point presentation by Kathy O'Leary, Head of Policy, and Mark Teasdale which suggested that there may be many welcome changes to the present Preferred Option. We were also given some grounds for hope that with the new team, now in place for six months, consultation in future will be better. Now is the time to move forward on some of the main issues raised in our report of last February.

The critical issue was the performance of the Princess Way, Marketfield Way road system and its effect not only on Redhill but on Reigate through the redirection of traffic. Modelling exercises have demonstrated the growing congestion some of us have noticed during the rush hours! The final one (hitherto) shows the expected benefits from introducing the SCOOT traffic control system over the area extending from Frenches Road to Redstone Hill to Reading Arch to Queensway. The working diagram showed coloured dots representing traffic chasing each other through the town certainly in a more regular fashion under Scoot. However, although our questions extended the two hour meeting to three and a quarter hours, which concluded with a sense of tiredness if not complete conviction, we still had difficulty reconciling such descriptions as; "signalised junctions reduces highway capacity", and the "suppression of the use of the private car" in the written report, with this fine display. We shall now have to review the actual modeling exercises to that end.

If this report seems unduly detailed to you it is because I wish to get across the considerable detail in which these matters need to be considered by all sides. The effect of these issues on the future of both Redhill and Reigate should not be underestimated. The saga continues.

Harry Ingram (Secretary)

TRANSPORT

Acting Chairman: John Chittenden
(01737) 242328

Nine reports have been submitted to the various authorities concerned with long term expansion and development of the East Surrey area.

A number of local Parish and Council representatives had also been contacted and their attention had been drawn to three problems:

- Unrealistic levels of housing expansion within the Borough and along the London/Brighton and the Maidstone/Guildford corridors.
- The affects of the proposal to reduce vehicle trips on the A23 Hub without making provision elsewhere

for extra industrial and construction traffic.

- The fact that all authorities had failed to implement, protect or provide alternative solutions to the Reigate Relief Road scheme.

The effect of population expansion will be spread over many years but planning needs to be undertaken now to provide provision and protection of the infrastructure. The A217, Reigate High Street, the Reigate Rail Level Crossing, the villages along the A25 are all affected by increased traffic and need to be involved in any plan for the future.

NATURAL AMENITIES

Chairman: Colin Burbidge (01737) 245264

As mentioned in the Redhill report the Borough Council is currently undertaking a consultation on **Memorial Park**. The aim is to create a long term vision that is supported by the local community and is realistic to achieve. Some outline ideas have been put forward which include a new entrance and park building and a relocated children's play area, the opening up of the currently culverted water course and refurbishment of the remaining areas. The progression of any approved scheme will be dependent on available funding and this will be sought as grants and sponsorship from external sources. We support this in principle but we would wish to see a fully costed scheme with a projected delivery programme before its commencement to avoid the possibility of the town being left with a partial scheme, the completion of which might be dependent upon promised funding which is not ring-fenced.

Priory Park has been designated a site of nature conservation importance (SNCI). This title encompasses both the grassland and woodland areas and reinforces the park's significance in maintaining green areas within the town centre.

Claudia Payne has for many years been the Society Representative on the **Reigate Heath** Management Steering Group and we thank her for her dedication to that role. She has now handed over the task to Michèle Damer.

The planning consent to extract sand from the adjoining sandpits is due to expire in June and, as yet, the operators have not submitted an application for an extension of the operational period. It will be interesting to see what happens in the coming months.

There is no further news on the Borough Council's plans for domestic waste recycling but it has been announced by SCC that incineration no longer has a part to play in their waste disposal plans and a composting plant has been approved at the former Wisley airfield.

The Reigate Society

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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

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

	Address	Business
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 ¹ / ₂ 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

