



THE REIGATE SOCIETY

The Civic Society for Reigate, Redhill and Merstham

Newsletter No. 93 April 2009

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

The proposed redevelopment plans for Redhill Town Centre are dealt with in detail elsewhere in this newsletter. The current proposals have raised transport issues which could well have implications affecting areas well beyond those being considered under the plan.

Our dormant Transport Committee has reactivated itself under the acting chairmanship of John Chittenden and has reinforced the views of the Redhill and the Architecture & Planning Committees with regard to the envisaged future of Redhill. The implications of the transport policies as currently proposed would have far reaching effects well beyond the environs of Redhill town centre particularly those which would propose a reduction in parking provision and the imposition of high parking charges so as to favour public transport. The introduction of a similar arrangement in Reigate town centre would seem to be a logical follow-up measure.

Additionally a paper has been submitted to the borough council commenting on its Core Strategy document which raises issues with regard to through traffic (both north/south and east/west) in Redhill/Reigate with particular regard to heavy goods vehicles. The issue of the resurrection of proposals for a high speed rail link between Heathrow and Gatwick and the Channel Tunnel link also raises questions about the possible effect this might have on the Reigate level crossing and the construction of a direct link between the Guildford and Tonbridge lines at Redhill.

On other matters, it is that time of year again to ask for nominations for the society's Civic Awards. 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 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. There is always next year if you feel that an ongoing scheme is deserving of an award.

Discussion of the proposed replacement vehicle barrier with a gated fence across the access road between the Bell Street Car Park and Park Lane is still ongoing. The school has submitted a revised design in which the height of the proposed fence and gates has been reduced slightly together with a proposal to keep the gate shut but not locked. This appears to be an attempt to reverse a condition previously imposed and has been opposed by the Society and the Friends of Priory Park. However, in what appears to be a concession to the likelihood of a right of way being established, one of the fence panels is designed to be removable at a later date.

The application to the highway authority for the route to be recognized as a public right of way has now been supported by the deposition of a substantial number (over 60) completed evidence forms some of which confirm that the route has been in public use since the Second World War. It may take quite a while before a decision is forthcoming. If the application for a right of way is granted, and there are grounds for being optimistic that will be the case, then any obstructing structures erected in the meantime will be required to be removed at the school's expense.

Colin Burbidge

(01737) 24526

SECRETARY'S NOTES

The Society will again be coordinating and publicising the Heritage Open Days in the Borough. This year the event will be from 10th

to 13th September. Once again we hope the Borough will fund the printing, but once again they are unable to confirm this until nearer the date. Although it is some months away we will be contacting previous participants and trying to find new venues starting in April.

On Thursday 22nd January Brenda Lewis, formally the Surrey County Council's Gardens Officer, gave an illustrated talk on "**Parks and Gardens of East Surrey**". About seventy turned up at St Mark's Church Hall, and we were rewarded by a fascinating tour round about twenty gardens. Descriptions of the present planting and the history of many of them reminded us of how lucky we are in Surrey. Not all of them sadly are open to the public, but many such as Gatton have frequent open days. Here we can see the water menagerie and the Japanese gardens. She told us of the Garden of Death which was demolished in the 18th Century to be replaced by a large house, itself demolished in 1953. This is now the familiar Denbies. We were reminded of the importance of Gertrude Jekyll, Capability Brown and the firm of Pulham in the design and construction of these parks and gardens. She ended with regret that the listing of gardens by English Heritage in fact afforded little actual protection. So that places such as Broome Park in Betchworth, which used to be called Tranquil Dale, was now virtually lost due to new roads, to housing developments and other urbanisation of the once gracious park.

Once again we had an audience of about seventy, on Thursday 12th February, to hear David Williams, Finds Liaison Officer for Surrey County Council give a very interesting and informative talk on "**Surrey Treasures – the work of the Portable Antiquities Scheme in Surrey**". He spoke about the unique voluntary scheme set up to log archaeological finds in England and Wales. He explained the importance of the scheme as objects found and then identified offered great insight into many aspects of past communities and their lifestyles. David Williams said that objects were brought to him by members of the public for identification. The finds were discovered whilst gardening, walking or very often by metal detecting clubs. He stressed the importance of recording the

exact grid reference for each find, and counselled against attempting to polish the object. His advice was to gently wash them. Objects had been brought to him for identification and registering date from the Bronze Age to the 19th century. They included coins, rings, brooches, tools, saddlery, pottery etc. He also explained that a finder of Treasure had a legal duty to report the find to the local Coroner within 14 days. If the object were sold to a Museum an Inquest would be held to establish its true value with any proceeds usually being split 50:50 between the Landowner and the Finder. The Portable Antiquities Scheme database records 300,000 finds made in England and Wales. The listing can be viewed on their web site www.finds.org.uk

The last Open Meeting this winter will probably have occurred by the time you receive this Newsletter. It is to be in Redhill UR Church Hall on Shaw's Corner on 19th March. Chris Howkins' talk is entitled "**Heathers and heathland**". He will be talking about the plants of heathlands and the way in which people used them in the past.

The **Annual General Meeting** will be held on 2nd July. Please note that this is now to be at the **Reigate Methodist Church**, High Street, Reigate, not at the Redhill Methodist Hall as printed in your programme. 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.

Michael Hellings

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REGISTRAR'S NOTES

I am pleased to say that we are still managing to recruit new members, although I wish that the rate was a little bit higher. Since the last Newsletter we have welcomed eight new members, including two new Corporate Members. They are:

**M/s R Norgrove
Mrs B Le Bihan
Dr P A Walter**

**Mr & Mrs B Rust
Mrs B Band**

The Corporate Members are:

Ormerods (Solicitors)

The Holmesdale Building Society.

Their details appear on the back page with the other Corporate Members.

As you will have seen in other parts of this Newsletter, the financial year starts again on the 1st April, when subscriptions are due. The bad news is that this also means that it is the time when I have to check for any non-payers for the year just finishing. I see that, as usual, there are a few members who have **NOT paid for 2008/9**. If you think that you could be one of them 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.

John Angel

(01737) 242672

TREASURER'S NOTES

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS were due on the 1st April. MINIMUM RATES are as follows:

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

Those still paying by cheque or cash (Bankers Order forms are always available), and have not yet done so should use the Subscription Payment Form on page 7 of this Newsletter, and return it to me with your payment.

Charles Wragg

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COMMITTEE REPORTS

ARCHITECTURE & PLANNING

Chairman: Tom Godfrey

(01737) 243590

One redeeming feature of the credit crunch is that the number of applications still continues to decrease because we have been faced with two major consultations since the beginning of the year. Firstly, the Redhill Area Action Plan and secondly the Borough's Core Strategy.

Fortuitously for the Architecture and Planning Committee, the Redhill Committee has taken the lead position on the Redhill Area Action Plan but we have been coordinating to make sure that we both "sing from the same hymn sheet". Luckily our views coincide and we both feel that the Plan has the potential to damage the economic status of Redhill rather than enhance it.

There are five strategic elements to the plans of which we believe three are flawed.

The first is the creation of a strategic hub but the weakness is that there are no proposals to integrate the station more fully with the shopping and office space, thus weakening the hub.

There is a parking strategy which will subordinate the economic viability of the centre to its aims by "suppressing car trips through consolidation of car parking provision, pricing policies, bus priority measures and reallocation of road space". The Plan further says that "increased car parking or

relaxation of charges or restrictions will undermine efforts to promote public transport and reduce town centre congestion".

The various highway proposals appear to be based on a very sparse set of statistics and the so-called "living streets" concept is an untested model in a situation such as Redhill.

The Redhill Committee has submitted a comprehensive review and critique of the Plan and is to be congratulated on its labours.

Interestingly, Tesco are getting ready to challenge this plan before it has even been approved. You will no doubt be aware that they are proposing to make an application for a large superstore with flats over on the Reading Arch Road site. The Plan provides for a large food store on the chosen site to the south of Cromwell Road – the Reading Arch Road is proposed to be allocated for leisure and similar uses.

This Committee's responsibility is the Core Strategy, which was originally consulted upon late last summer. We had little to comment on at that stage because we felt it was only a compendium of aims and objectives to which little objection could be raised. Now we have a much more focused document which sets out the aims and objectives through to 2026.

Unfortunately, the document had been prepared before the Secretary of State had pronounced on the housing numbers increasing the 9,240 to 11,240 dwellings so that the Strategy only provides for the first number.

Of these 1,730 will be in the Banstead area, with 400 in the regeneration area of Preston; 3,750 units in Redhill including the existing 1,000 units at Holmethorpe and another 1,000 units on the Town Centre sites; 775 units spread around the urban area of Reigate and 3,000 in Horley area of which 2,280 units are already identified under the Horley Master Plan. Where the extra 2,000 dwelling will go has not been established but the Green Belt is to be reviewed in the Redhill/Reigate area!

In the context of the Government's edicts contained in the South East Plan, there is little to object to in the Core Strategy. Some may argue against a Green Belt Review but the Green Belt is longstanding and circumstances may have changed. For robustness and in order to satisfy

Government, a comprehensive Green Belt Review should take place. The Council should use the review as a mechanism to reaffirm, strengthen and validate the areas that need protection, in particular, any strategic, narrow gaps between settlements.

Unless there are any major amendments proposed, this Strategy will be examined later this year by a member of the Planning Inspectorate and his/her report will set out the situation for Reigate and Banstead for a number of years.

The only "fly in the ointment" is the Secretary of State, Hazel Blears, who may yet confirm the 11,240 dwellings despite the objections from the Borough Council and others locally.

REDHILL

Chairman: Gerry Moss

(01737) 765508

 In the last Newsletter I described the low level of two way consultation being followed. At the Preferred Option Stage, due partly to the appointment of Alan Kay to the Redhill Regeneration Portfolio and partly to the intervention of another local councillor, we have had two extended interviews with Senior Borough Officers. They have capably underlined the intentions of the Report but failed to assuage our misgivings.

This round of consultation has been accompanied by several presentations to interested parties but the usefulness of that process has been undermined by the failure to underline the more controversial parts of the Report so that comment has often been ill informed.

The Preferred Option solution to the problem of growing traffic congestion is an enforced move from cars to Public Transport. Princess Way and Marketfield way are to have their roundabouts replaced with bus friendly traffic signals and the two carriageways in either direction reduced to one to allow the others to be used for right turns. No satisfactory explanation was forthcoming to explain how one carriageway could cope better with the present 60% of traffic which passes straight through the town than the present arrangement. We were told, however, that the proposals had yet to be tested by SCC Highways.

The problem is that SCC Highways are very much in favour of the move to Public Transport and the preferred option above. The Society considers that all three options: the present road layout, that proposed and the third option of a one way circular system, should all be tested on a common basis by an independent Traffic expert.

Another shortcoming with the Preferred Options Report is that parking is planned to be reduced and high parking charges imposed so as to favour Public transport. Increased parking charges will deter some shoppers from coming to Redhill. The Redhill Committee considers a better option to be the sighting of a strategic ring of car parks to provide for the needs of commuters and shoppers without that traffic entering the core of the town.

Finally, concern with the roads has resulted in too much emphasis on Princess Way and Marketfield Way. Important though those roads are, a more central question to the success of the town is what happens in the core. Our priorities are:

1. Developing the Town Centre, increasing the pedestrian area and improving it.
2. Making the very best of the Marketfield opportunity.
3. Applying the living streets principle to the west side of the town from which the bulk of pedestrians and bicycles will come.
4. Improving the area between station and town.
5. Improving the outlook to and from the North East Quadrant.

We are also concerned that the planned facility

for travellers to be dropped off or picked up at the station may be woefully inadequate.

Many other issues are covered in the twenty page response from the Society aimed at not clear why this site has been included in the

correcting the balance of the Preferred Options Report. The reaction of Councillors to this report will be critical to what appears in The Final Option and we are sending copies of our report to all of them.

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NATURAL AMENITIES

Chairman: Colin Burbidge

(01737) 245264

Waste disposal plans in Surrey, particularly those which affect the southeastern part of the county, have been highlighted again recently. The plan to build a mass-burn waste disposal plant at Capel has been quashed in the High Court. This plant had been universally opposed throughout the area for a number of environmental reasons and the decision is most welcome. Capel Parish Council is to be congratulated on its persistence and its victory. It is not known whether Surrey Waste Management has a 'plan B' and their next move is awaited with interest.

There is no further news of the borough council's proposals for **recycling**. This is another issue which has been featured in the media recently where both the methodology and the economics have been discussed. Further consultations have been promised before any changes are made to the current methods by which recycled materials are collected.

The recycling facilities proposed for the **Copyhold** site under the Surrey Waste Management Plan have been approved but it is

areas being considered under the Redhill Town Centre Redevelopment Plan because the plans also include an outdoor recreation area and a nature reserve.

Another area featured in this plan is **Memorial Park** where there is an emerging community-led project to further its enhancement. We have offered support for this initiative in any way we can.

The damaged roof of the gazebo in **Woodhatch Park** has been replaced with materials which are claimed to be vandal-resistant. Let us hope that this is successful and no further damage ensues.

There has been reorganization within the borough council's Countryside Management group and two countryside rangers should be appointed during the coming financial year to supplement the supervision of our open spaces.

Now that the Surrey Hills Society has become an established organization the Reigate Society is to apply for Society Membership. This will then enable us to better voice our views on matters relating to those parts of the hills which are in our area of interest.

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

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
Coomb Care Foundation	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	1Castlefield 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

CIVIC AWARDS 2009

Nominations for this year's awards are now invited. These may be for any of the following categories:-

- New buildings.**
- Conservation and restoration.**
- Street improvements or layouts.**
- Conversions, improvements or adaptations.**
- Schemes for exterior decoration.**
- Tree planting, gardens and landscaping.**

Name of proposer :..... Tel:

Name and address of project:
.....
.....

Contacts (e.g. owner, tenant, architect or agent):
.....
..... Tel:

Designer (if known):
..... Tel:

Reasons for nomination:
.....
.....
.....
.....

Nominations to be sent to:-
Tom Godfrey,
Chairman of the Society' Architecture and Planning Committee
3 Flanchford Road
Reigate RH2 8AA
by Monday 22nd June 2009.

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

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