

**MOLESEY RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER
AUTUMN 2003**

www.moleseyresidentsassociation.org.uk



RECYCLING AND COUNCIL TAX. By the time you receive this Newsletter, many people in Molesey will have been delivered a second wheelie bin. This second bin is for the recycling of cans, plastic and paper. The new scheme had a trial run in Weybridge before being rolled out across the whole borough, with Molesey being one of the first areas to be covered after Weybridge. When this scheme is fully operational, it should increase the Elmbridge recycling rate from a poor 8% to a much more respectable 24%. Although most people will agree that recycling is a Good Thing, it costs money. Over a third of the Elmbridge share of the Council Tax increase last April was to pay for these improved recycling arrangements.

The government insists on improved recycling rates, but expects local councils to raise the money to pay for it. This is just one of the ways in which the government transfers tax increases to local councils (and hence your council tax) whilst allowing the government to keep to its pledge to maintain the standard rates of income tax. The government also gives larger grant increases to councils in the North of the country, again driving up council tax rates here. MRA will continue to press for cost savings within Elmbridge Council to ensure improved value for money in the Elmbridge element of future council tax bills. But do remember, when you get your next council tax bill that, although Elmbridge Council is stuck with collecting all the council tax, only about 1/7th of it goes to Elmbridge, another 1/7th to the Police and the remainder (almost 3/4) to Surrey County Council. On a Band D house, the Elmbridge share of the council tax has increased by only £6 over the whole of the last 10 years, while Surrey's share has increased by £524!

CHRISTMAS MARKET 2003

**Roll Up! Roll Up! - for the best bargains!!
11.00am to 1.00pm on Saturday, November 22nd
at the Day Centre, School Road.**

**The Friends of Molesey Centre will welcome you.
It is your chance to get organised for Christmas!**

JUBILEE CLOCKS

Our three commemorative clocks are now in place. One is on the Central Avenue Post Office, one on The Emporium in Bridge Road and the third on Kents the Chemist in Walton Road.

We are obliged to the shop owners for their co-operation and wish to thank Elmbridge Council for their contribution.

Thanks also to Surrey County Council for a contribution from Cllr. Tony Pegler's local fund. We have had messages of appreciation from Molesey people and trust the clocks will form a fitting long-standing commemoration of the Queen's Golden Jubilee.

MOLESEY POLICE

Resulting from the appeal in our last newsletter, new volunteers have been trained and uniformed and Mrs Hazel Banting is now able to keep Molesey Police Station open on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings as well as Saturday mornings.

Each volunteer does only 2 hours per month and Hazel is hoping to open for more days in the New Year if more people volunteer. Phone her on 8979-1715.

The police station is now permanently staffed with police officers and more are visible 'on the beat' around Molesey. Well done all!

GRAVEL WORKINGS

Just off Hurst Road, the first phase of this work is now almost complete, with extraction finished in the eastern part of the Lambeth Reservoir lying between Hurst Road and the Thames, opposite the Bishop Fox estate and backing onto Cherry Orchard Gardens.

This section has been transformed complete with what will be islands and is expected to be flooded in the next month to form the first part of the wetland wildlife park.

It is important to remember that this will be a wildlife area with limited public access, not a public park with a few birds around.

It should be a great new asset for Molesey.

Work will continue on the other parts of the Lambeth and Chelsea reservoirs for some years yet, but it will all become wetland wildlife park when gravel extraction is complete.

SANDRA HOUSE

The MRA has continued to support the Save Sandra House Group's campaign to persuade the Housing Trust not to close this sheltered accommodation for the elderly in Hansler Grove.

The Trust says that there is little demand for this type of accommodation and wants to refurbish it for those on the housing list. So far the Trust has refused all requests to review its decision to close Sandra House, but the campaign will continue.

JOLLY BOATMAN

Perhaps you saw the recent press coverage or listened to BBC Radio 4 which dealt with this site. We couldn't agree more that this site is a public disgrace.

MRA has been working on this problem since 1975! Numerous letters have gone to the owners, past and present, and we have met with their planning agents and architects.

We have submitted our own planning briefs and our councillors were heavily involved with the Council's 1986 and 2000 Planning Briefs.

There has been much work and many promises, even reviews of several different designs and unsatisfactory planning applications. The one success to date is when MRA councillors forced Whitbread to demolish the old derelict building and remove the ugly hoardings they had erected around it. Whitbread then sold the site on.

We are informed that the new owners of the site, together with Network Rail, 'will be putting forward some proposals' to Elmbridge Council shortly. But we have been told this many times over the years. We have worked much harder than anyone at this and will continue until we get success.

HURST PARK LAND

Surrey CC owns the major part of the Hurst Park riverside land (but not the new District Park which is owned by Elmbridge) and has decided to declare the riverside land surplus to requirements. Elmbridge Council has a lease on the land with about 68 years to run.

Now Surrey wants to dispose of it – presumably to unload their expense (they pay Elmbridge toward the cost of maintenance). MRA councillors will press for this land to be transferred to Elmbridge at zero cost with a sum set aside for future maintenance.

GRAFFITI

We continue to remove graffiti and wish to thank those who remove it without fuss when they find it close to their homes. We have removed it from bus shelters and green pavement telecoms cabinets but it appears to be an ongoing task. One of the worst areas is around Central Avenue where the 'tags' of "Snap" and "Luck" appear regularly. If anyone knows who these menaces are, we will be pleased to hear.

HAMPTON COURT PALACE

Most people will know that the Palace is likely to decide to charge people for entry to the Palace gardens, which have always been free.

There has been a considerable outcry about this and MRA has written to the Palace opposing this idea and pressing for local residents to be exempt from any charge – we think Molesey puts up with enough from the Palace (parking at Flower Show times, late night fireworks, etc) and feel that such a charge should not be imposed.

The Palace management has not yet made a final decision but it looks odds-on that they will want to introduce charging. However, there is a group named Hampton Court Road Environmental Committee which has obtained a Q.C.'s legal Opinion which argues that, due to the long term free use of the paths, a public right of way has been created, and that imposing charges would therefore be unlawful.

The MRA has led a combination of Elmbridge RA groups to protest to Rod Giddins, the Historic Royal Palaces Group Director, and we have written to local MPs and to Lord McIntosh, Minister with responsibility for Royal Palaces.

Island Fm Rd Resurfacing

The traffic calming scheme along Molesey Park, Island Farm and Pool Roads is now complete and SCC has recently resurfaced the worst parts of the road surfaces along this stretch.

However that part of Island Farm Road between Approach Road and Ray Road has still not been resurfaced. The Surrey CC highways officer tells us that insufficient money was allocated to resurface the complete length, but he is hoping to get more money allocated to complete this in future.

HURST PARK PRECINCT

The planning application for the redevelopment of this rundown site is now before Elmbridge Council. The plans show a (Tesco) supermarket about twice the size of the East Molesey branch, a 150-place car park and flats accommodation varying between 3 and 5 stories high.

There is also the probability of a roundabout being built on Hurst Road at the junction with Buckingham Avenue which, apart from making the exit from the store safer, would also have the effect of slowing the Hurst Road traffic.

BACK-LAND DEVELOPERS

There have been recent planning applications to develop three significant sites in Molesey.

Between Faraday Road and Odard Road an application made for 37 dwellings was refused. A second application for 27 dwellings was approved but the developer has now re-applied for 36.

On another site sandwiched between the gardens of Dennis Road and Pemberton Road there is an application to build 6 houses.

On a third site mainly between the gardens of Langton Road and Seymour Road the first application was refused on appeal and a new application now proposes 5 houses and 8 flats.

These applications and appeals demonstrate the constant pressure for building more houses in the south-east.

MRA opposes any inappropriate development in Molesey. But we recognise that appeals are decided by Inspectors appointed by the Government – which wants more houses!

OUCH!

Now the growing season is over, please check to ensure you have no shrubs or foliage overhanging the pavement outside your house.

This can be an inconvenience for most of us, but is much worse for those with sight problems or other disabilities.