

**MOLESEY RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER
AUTUMN 2004**

www.moleseyresidentsassociation.org.uk



HERITAGE MARKER

This Thameside feature, designed by MRA Councillor Ian Donaldson, has been built beside the towpath near the ferry crossing and is the work of our sister organisation, the Hurst Park Residents Association.

The Marker has been widely acclaimed and, once people could see what the end result was like, many decided they would like to purchase one of the plaques still available as mentioned in our last Newsletter.

Now another 100 plaques have been sold and they will be installed around the outside of the circular surrounding path. The soft, dusty finish of the path will also be replaced by a rigid fine gravel finish as used in the centre of the Marker. This should put the ideal finishing touch to an inspired project which enhances Molesey.

PLAY AREA

When the houses in St. Barnabas Gardens in West Molesey were built, part of the planning conditions included the provision of some money earmarked by the Council to provide facilities for youngsters. But, so far, nothing has happened. MRA Cllr Mike Axton is pressing for this money to be put to good use as soon as possible, and is discussing possible options with Council officers.

MOLESEY HEATH

There used to be a couple of seats on Molesey Heath, but these have long since disappeared. MRA Cllr Mike Axton is pressing the Council for replacements and expects to see them installed by Christmas.

CHANDLERS FIELD SCHOOL

Surrey County Council are now well advanced with the construction of the new Junior wing next to the Infants section of the school. When this is complete, Surrey intend to demolish the old Junior school, the Youth Club and the Scalextric club and to apply for planning consent to build 40-50 houses on the land thus released.

CENTRAL AVENUE POST OFFICE

We are absolutely delighted with the announcement by Post Office Ltd that this West Molesey Office is not to be closed as intended in the Post Office 'reinvention' programme. This is VERY GOOD NEWS for the whole of Molesey – those living in East Molesey would have found themselves standing in a much longer queue at the Walton Road Office if this closure had gone ahead as Walton Road would have been the only Office in the whole of Molesey. The MRA has campaigned very hard for this success.

We wrote with detailed representations to Post Office Ltd and PostWatch (an independent watchdog) and MP Ian Taylor. We also delivered a special Newsletter (drafted by MRA Councillor Mike Axton) to around 3,600 homes in West Molesey to warn residents about the proposed closure, outlining strong arguments for keeping the Central Avenue branch open, and encouraging them to write with objections to Post Office Ltd and PostWatch.

MRA Councillor Vic Eldridge met representatives from Post Office Ltd and PostWatch to present our arguments and, along with the Chief Executive of Elmbridge Council, wrote on behalf of Elmbridge Council to press for the Central Avenue Office to remain open.

This Association would like to thank all those residents who sent in objections, especially those who organised petitions and objections off their own bat. Thanks also to our hard-working helpers who delivered our leaflets and to PostWatch for their input to Post Office Ltd backing our stance.

You may be interested to know that, out of 39 Offices scheduled for closure, this is the only one where that decision has been reversed!! And PostWatch tell us that this is only the second case in the whole of the South East where they have seen this happen.

A great result –

Well done, everyone who fought this, and thanks again.

But, it is essential that this Office is well used in future or the fear of closure could return. In other words, use it or lose it!

HELP, PLEASE!

If you have time to spare during the day perhaps you could help Molesey Care. They give practical help and support to Molesey residents.

There is no regular commitment and the work involves, mainly, transporting people to medical appointments, shopping, etc. Duty Officers are also urgently required to take 'phone calls and process requests for help, particularly on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

For an informal chat contact Judith Dixon on 020-8979-7509 or The Duty Officer between 9am and 1pm on 020-8783-1827. Thank You.

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Last Christmas we managed to get some Christmas lamppost lights installed around the shopping parade opposite St Peter's church, but we were unsuccessful in getting any for the Central Avenue parade.

The council budget is very limited for this, but we have pledged £400 out of our own funds towards a Central Avenue display, and hope we shall have more success this year.

As reported in our Summer Newsletter, the Christmas tree we planted and lit on the Central Avenue roundabout died after being vandalised but we intend to replace it in time for some Christmas cheer.

NO DOGS!

On the Hampton Court side of Graburn Way in East Molesey lies a piece of land which was recently transferred to Elmbridge Council for public use (resulting from a long campaign by MRA about its future).

This pleasant enclosed grassed area then became used by professional dog walkers, frequently leading quite large numbers of dogs.

MRA Cllr. Nigel Cooper met with Council Officers and it was agreed that, for a trial period, the area should be closed to all dog walkers. Notices to that effect are now installed at each gate.

Local residents have complimented both EBC Officers and the MRA on returning this area to its former enjoyable state. The status of the 27 acres on the other side of Graburn Way remains unchanged

JOLLY BOATMAN/STATION

This site has been a thorn in our sides for many long years.

There have been lengthy discussions with interested parties about the combined site (which is subject to a planning brief and is part of the Conservation Area).

Developers have now put forward suggestions – not a planning application – that the site should be developed with two four-storey blocks of housing, one either side of the railway platforms and tracks, and a restaurant facing the river with three floors of housing above.

This Association considers this a completely inappropriate proposal for this nationally important site, with no consideration to the wider needs of the area and we have written to the Council to say so with some thoughts of our own

ORANGE

Mobile 'phone company Orange have withdrawn their planning application to erect mobile 'phone masts on Cow Common and at Summer Road – but have not gone away!

They are presently investigating possible sites behind Aldersgrove and behind the police sports ground at Imber Court. The Council has little power over erection of phone masts up to 15m tall if they conform to laid-down criteria.

CAR PARK CHARGING

As mentioned in our Spring Newsletter, Elmbridge Council is extending car park charging across the Borough and has engaged Consultants to suggest suitable schemes.

For Molesey car park they propose 30p per hour or £3 all day, with a season ticket annual fee of about £230.

They say this will free up car park spaces and produce income for Elmbridge Council to help keep down Council Tax.

We don't object to paying the odd 30p and certainly support stricter enforcement of parking restrictions in Walton Road.

BUT, with limited parking facilities in Molesey generally, what about the potential knock-on effects?

1. Charging in the car park is likely to drive all-day parkers out of the car park on to local residential streets.
2. Residents in those streets will probably complain at being unable to park outside their own houses and demand resident-only provision in those streets (now happening in Esher where car park charging has just been introduced).
3. If they are successful, resident-only bays will be installed in those streets, which will reduce the amount of parking available. The residents affected will have to pay a yearly fee, typically £60, which will give them the right to use the bays but it will not guarantee that one will be available. At the moment, part-pavement parking allows parking on both sides in many of these narrow roads. But if bays are marked out it is likely that parking will be possible only on one side of the road, again reducing the number of parking spaces available.
4. This will all have to be enforced with traffic wardens, more lines and, in general, a Kingston-type situation.

We oppose the scheme because it seems to us that the likely result will be that everyone pays more for less parking spaces overall. But it should aid holding down Council Tax rates. We want to know local residents' views. Elmbridge Council's Cabinet will shortly consider the proposals and we understand a public consultation period will follow.

OLD SEWAGE FARM LAND

MRA continues to campaign for that part of Molesey Heath currently earmarked in the Local Plan for potential housing development (the former Molesey Sewage Works site) to be brought within the Green Belt.

Elmbridge Council is now initiating the first steps towards the preparation of a new Local Development Framework, which will ultimately replace the Local Plan, and MRA Councillors will be pressing for the new Framework to protect the whole of Molesey Heath from potential development.

WALTON ROAD SHOPS

Almost opposite Dennis Road, next to the Vet's, is a big shop that used to be Thames Tools.

A planning application has been submitted to demolish this shop to replace it with four flats and to build another four flats, a terrace of three 2-storey houses and a detached house, all with parking, on the land behind the shop and adjoining shops.

Your MRA councillors will be looking very carefully at this application.