

**MOLESEY RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER
AUTUMN 2006**

www.moleseyresidentsassociation.org.uk



THE JOLLY BOATMAN AND STATION SITE

As most Molesey residents will be aware the new owner of the Jolly Boatman site, Gladedale, has put forward proposals for development of this combined site – and is promising a planning application this autumn.

In 1999, as the result of a consultant's report, a planning brief for this site was drawn up, went through full public consultation and was approved by the Council. To make the cost of other works on the site financially viable, the brief accepted that 25% of the total site could be used for residential development, but with none being placed on the Jolly Boatman area. The new developers have ignored the brief and have proposed about 85% of the site should be devoted to residential development with 130 flats, or 90 flats if a hotel is included. The proposed flats would be constructed in blocks up to 5 storeys high either side of the railway line with another block (or a hotel) on the Jolly Boatman site.

In our view, if the 25% was financially viable in 1999, it would be more than viable now, as property prices have escalated so much in the last 6 or 7 years. And, of course, the whole area is a listed Conservation Area!

The developers plead that they need to build so many flats because of the high cost of building an underground car park to house all the cars. If they didn't build so many flats perhaps underground car parking would be unnecessary. In our view the developers (in conjunction with Network Rail) are concerned only with extracting the maximum amount of money from the site, regardless of planning briefs, environmental, heritage, conservation or any other considerations.

This Association is 100% opposed to these proposals. Can you imagine this sort of dense over-development being allowed near the Palace of Versailles? Hampton Court Palace is of similar status and is the second most visited heritage site in the UK. How dare these money-grabbers try it here? If the developers paid too much for the site because they thought they could make a killing, that's their problem – not ours!

We must also be wary of their threats that if their plans don't go ahead the site will remain a mess for years to come. So? Once it's built on, it's built on forever. Much better to remain as it is until a better solution is found.

To enable the people of Molesey to have their say, the MRA has booked Mole Hall for a public meeting on Friday, 13th October, starting at 8pm. Unfortunately this will be before many people receive this Newsletter. However, we shall publicise it beforehand and everybody will be welcome.

QUADRANT HOUSE

Plans to build an extra storey on this office block in Island Farm Road in West Molesey, and to build 16 flats there, have been withdrawn following objections from MRA councillor Mike Axton. Mike highlighted the unacceptably high building density and the overlooking of the houses on Fleetside estate.

A revised application has now been received – this time without the extra storey.

RECYCLING PLASTICS

Elmbridge Council tells us that only plastic bottles can be recycled. These may be from milk, fizzy drink, household cleaning, personal hygiene, water, shampoo, shower gel/bathroom items. Nothing plastic except bottles, any colour.

Please rinse and remove caps before placing in the bin. Also, if the letters PET or HDPE are stamped on any plastic products they are recyclable.

MOLESEY HOSPITAL

The PCT (Primary Care Trust), which looks after the health of residents in this part of Elmbridge, is shortly to merge with another PCT to cover a larger area.

At a recent meeting between the two PCTs the two Chief Executives said that they did not consider Molesey Hospital to be viable in the future – meaning that they intended to close it.

Molesey Hospital is a local cottage hospital which the government is supposed to favour, but here is the local PCT proposing to close it. You can be assured that this Association will oppose such closure at every turn.

BOOK OF MOLESEY

As you may recall from previous newsletters, MRA financed the reprinting of this favourite book.

This has been very successful and we have sold and delivered over 400 copies to residents of Molesey.

The book, written by the late Roland Baker, local historian and resident of Molesey, records the history of Molesey over the centuries with many photographs and illustrations.

Have you ever wondered why Kent Road is so called? Where was Mole Abbey? Where could you buy a new house for £395? Where were the many big country houses that were here when Molesey was a very agricultural area?

This book would make an unusual and inexpensive Christmas or birthday present. We can still supply at the pre-publication price of only £15 each. From Ernest Mallett, 20, Walton Road or 8979-6446.

GRAFFITI

If you spot graffiti - phone Elmbridge Council on 01932-474775. They have a very efficient graffiti removal team who will quickly deal with it.

ORANGE PHONE MAST

Negotiations are still proceeding between Orange and the Met. Police. We very much hope that these negotiations will be successful, since it should mean that Molesey will have the one large mobile phone mast on the Police sports grounds rather than a rash of 15-metre masts all over Molesey in the future.

CAR PARKING CHARGES

Elmbridge Council's cabinet is expected to introduce charges in the Walton Road car park shortly.

In spite of reports in the press to the contrary, MRA has always opposed car park charges in Molesey – the only group on the Council to do so.

The key decision to introduce charges was taken in February 2005 – in spite of MRA opposition. With the basic case lost, we did not oppose the phased implementation scheme which delays charging in Molesey – in order to address problems we had raised about displacement from the Molesey car park once charging starts.

And so it is – car parks in Esher, Walton and Weybridge are now charged, but not (as yet) in Molesey.

As recently as last month MRA Cllr. Mike Axton was assured that we would be fully consulted about the plans for Molesey but nothing has been heard. We urge Elmbridge to defer Molesey's charges until our frequently raised concerns about the knock-on effects of charging have been fully considered and addressed.

TESCO ROUNDABOUT

At the roundabout by the Hurst Park Tesco's, minor modifications have been made to the road edges at the entrance to this mini-roundabout.

This is, in our view, no more than a gesture and a proper roundabout is what is required to improve the safety at this junction.

5 YEAR SUBS

Increasing numbers of our members are opting to pay £15 for a 5-year MRA membership, avoiding the irritation of yearly visits and guaranteeing no fee increases for 5 years. Better for you and better for us – why not join them?

SHAMBLES AT S.C.C.

Surrey Cnty Council is responsible for all roads, pavements and street lighting. It decided to cut staffing levels in the Highways Department and staff had to re-apply for their own jobs – twice in one year! Some were unsuccessful and morale sank. They were then moved to an office in Leatherhead, where phones and computers were initially inoperative.

Surrey has also got itself committed to a long-running contract with Carillion (their contractors) which it seems is virtually impossible to cancel.

Carillion's performance has been much less than ideal with many works not carried out, and with work done costing more than agreed.

Vigorous complaints from MRA County Cllr Ernest Mallett and others from all over Surrey caused the Leader of the Conservative-run council to set up a group to oversee the difficulties with Carillion.

It is because of all of the above that many Molesey roads and potholes are unrepaired and long-promised actions to put better signing on the approach road from Walton to the dangerous Walton Road/Molesey Road cross roads in West Molesey have not been completed. We have been told three times by SCC that Carillion say they have carried out this work, but nothing has been done. Who's telling fibs?

MRA Councillor Mike Axton has been pushing for a roundabout here, but SCC refuses. We have now referred the matter to our MP, Ian Taylor, who backs our concerns.

KINGSTON HOSPITAL

Kingston Hospital hopes to become a Foundation Trust shortly. There will be three levels of management -

1. Members of the Trust
2. A Council of Governors
3. A Board of Directors

Anyone over 16 living in the catchment area (which includes Elmbridge) is entitled to apply for free Membership of the Trust.

Members receive information about the Trust's plans, attend meetings and elect representatives to serve on the Council of Governors.

The Council of Governors will oversee the Board of Directors (who are responsible for running the hospital) but will not be involved in the day to day running of the hospital.

Trust members living in Elmbridge will elect two of the Governors. Only members of the Trust will have a vote – not the general public. The more members we have in Molesey, the more say we will have in the management of Kingston Hospital.

Full details are available at –

www.kingstonhospital.nhs.uk/news/foundation_trust.htm

An application form to become a Trust member can be downloaded from page 29 of this website. MRA councillors or committee members will also have a supply.

MEALS ON WHEELS

Volunteer drivers are desperately needed during the week and at weekends for a couple of hours to deliver meals from 11.30am each day. Even a couple of hours once per month would be a great help! Call Maggie Preece on 8979-5337 for a chat and further information.

MOLESEY BOAT CLUB

Plans have been given first stage approval by the Council to allow the boat club to build a rowing tank.

While the Association is sympathetic to the Club's ambitions, we are concerned that the amount of public land involved is excessive. We believe that the maximum land area fronting the river must be public amenity land with an extended and improved children's play area with seats, shrubs and landscaping. This is what MRA councillors will be pressing for.