

MOLESEY RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER SPRING 2018

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Molesey Residents Association Councillors at Elmbridge

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EAST**

Tony Popham 07970-107937
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**MOLESEY
WEST**

Ruby Ahmed 8979-4210
Mike Axton 8979-1502
Vic Eldridge 8979-3905

MRA Councillor at Surrey County Council - Ernest Mallett 8979-6446

OUR AGM is at 8pm on Monday, 26th March in Mole Hall (also called Molesey Centre). Come to hear about the last year's activities, followed by refreshments. Non-members may join for only £3.

PAVILION SITE

First, some history: A large area of open land off Hurst Lane, extending from Hurst Road right up to the rear gardens of houses in Vine Road was, in the 80's, the sports ground (with centrally located pavilion) of the Guardian Royal Exchange Insurance company.

When Guardian Royal Exchange decided it no longer needed a sports ground the land was sold and a planning application made for residential building.

Permission was granted for building on half the land (which is now the Kings Chase development) and a legally binding agreement was made between the owners and Elmbridge Council that the remainder of the land would remain as open leisure land.

The pavilion was converted to accommodate the present Pavilion Club with tennis courts on part of the protected open land while the remainder was allowed to degenerate into an unkempt state.

The restrictive 'Leisure Land' (section 106) agreement was updated in 2003 and freely re-signed by the landowner and the Council.

Since 2003 the owners have made several planning applications for housing on the open land. The Council has refused them all. One refusal was taken to the High Court and was quashed and the Council continued its refusals.

The landowner recently went to Appeal on two later applications. At each stage, the MRA, with help from local residents, put out 400 special newsletters in the local area and, at the last three-day Appeal, MRA Cllrs. Tony Popham and Ernest Mallett made direct representations to the Appeals Inspector, as did the local residents group.

However, the Appeals Inspector (who is government appointed to consider refused applications in light of the government's current policies) found in favour of the developer and gave planning permission for 42 houses.

The MRA and the local residents are pressing Elmbridge Council to uphold the 106 legal agreement.

There is no right of appeal against an Appeals Inspector's decision but a planning permission does not overrule a legally binding agreement. This now leaves things in an interesting position with planning decision granted but unable to proceed unless the legal obligations are set aside.

Elmbridge Council can set the legal agreement aside and will, no doubt, be under considerable government pressure in view of government policy to build more houses. Watch this space!



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WAR MEMORIAL

For many years those lost in two world wars were remembered in bits and pieces in various places around Molesey – on two war memorials, in churches, scout huts, etc. but nowhere was everyone remembered in one place – and the Second World War dead were not listed on any official war memorial at all.

Molesey Second World War Memorial Association was set up some years ago to rectify this situation, but the funds raised at that time were not enough to build the proposed new memorial at The Forum.

There were also difficulties in obtaining an accurate list of names.

Ernest Mallett redesigned the project and negotiated with Elmbridge Council and the installer, Lodge & Co.

With the backing of the then remaining MSWWMA members, two polished granite plinths were installed at the West Molesey site, one plinth for First World War names not already on the existing memorial - and a second plinth for Second World War names.



The plinths were erected in time for the November Remembrance Service, attended by a huge number of Molesey people - who very much appreciated that all of Molesey's War Dead were, at last, remembered on one site. The cost was £15,000 and Ernest Mallett would like to thank the funders, Surrey County Council, Elmbridge Council, the Garfield Weston Bank, the McGillan Family, the Batten Family, the MRA and the MSWWMA Committee members. Ernest would also thank Lodge & Co, Funeral Directors and Stonemasons, for their skilful work.

HAMPTON COURT TRAIN SERVICE

There are some welcome changes to train services between Hampton Court and Waterloo – in particular an earlier first train in the morning and a later last train back in the evening. But a potential difficulty with the last train is that it is scheduled to arrive at Hampton Court just after the once-hourly 411 bus service has left, which could be very inconvenient for people living in West Molesey.

MRA Councillor Mike Axton has made representations to South Western Trains, asking them to reconsider this timing as a priority and to arrange an earlier arrival of the train or to liaise with Transport for London to negotiate a slightly later departure time for the bus.

WALTON ROAD CAR PARK and Hurst Park

You will have noticed the 3 hours of free parking that, as we promised in our last election manifesto, now apply in the Walton Road car park on Saturdays. Many free parking tickets are being dispensed every Saturday, so this is working – to the benefit both customers and shops in the area, while reducing the level of parking in nearby roads. However, when parking there, remember to take and display your parking ticket to show that you are not exceeding your 3 free hours!

Money has also been approved at Council to install the long awaited boules court at Hurst Park and for an enhanced footpath from Thames Court through to the riverside land.

DISRUPTIVE ROAD WORKS

We understand that Surrey County Council (SCC) is planning to replace the old iron bridge over the River Mole in Esher Road, which has been assessed as nearing the end of its working life. The intention is to provide a wider structure with a standard width carriageway, and footbridges for pedestrians on both sides. Whilst this would ultimately be a considerable improvement to the current situation, we are concerned about the considerable disruption that will occur if this work goes ahead.

MRA Councillors are therefore pressing SCC for assurances that the period of any road closures would be kept to a minimum, and we would also like to see a temporary crossing for pedestrians and cyclists. We will update residents as and when we obtain more information about this.

Other presently ongoing disruptive work is the replacement of old gas mains, initially along Walton Road in East Molesey between Dennis Road and Hansler Grove. After that, starting in early April, similar work will take place further along Walton Road in West Molesey between Rosemary Avenue and Grange Road – all expected to be completed by the middle of June. These works mean extra traffic lights, diverted bus routes, etc

CHARITY QUIZ NIGHT

MRA held a quiz night in Mole Hall in late November. The evening went well, although some 'contestants' did better than others, with our treasurer's table coming last! However, an entertaining evening was had by everyone present.

We are glad to say that, as a result of the evening, we have been able to send almost £500 to The Silverlining charity, which supports people with brain injuries.

If it were not for Rawlinson & Webber's sponsorship (the hire of the hall, all the printing and the prizes for the evening's winners) this would not have been possible.

We would also like to thank Molesey Refrigeration, Customised Beauty, Petriti's, E and J Wilson, Tesco, The Avena, Molesey Fish Bar, Ruby's, The Card Collection, Mezzet and Boots in Kingston, all of whom gave support, usually in the form of raffle prizes. Thank You all!

ROADS, SURREY C.C.'s FINANCES - and your Council Tax!

As in other areas, many roads around Molesey are in poor condition. Buckingham Avenue, Berkeley Drive, The Crescent and Boleyn Drive are particularly bad. These are residential roads, but the stretch of Walton Road between New Road and Rosemary Avenue is a classified through road and is in a very poor state.



Road repairs are expensive and Surrey County Council is so short of money that it has reduced its road maintenance programme to 'safety defective' issues only - so it seems there is no prospect of a quick resolution.

Conservative controlled Surrey County Council is aiming to 'save' £65 million in this year and has already made cuts to Youth Services, Libraries, Carers Services/Support, Care Packages/Disabled Grants amongst other items.

Highways has only one criteria, that is, the road network must be maintained 'SAFE', so Highways is always open to cuts, both scheduled and random.

The government has agreed to a Surrey council tax increase this year of 3%, plus another 3% for adult services – amounting to 5.9% overall. Of the council tax you pay, Surrey's is by far the largest part, amounting to over three-quarters of what you pay, with Elmbridge and the police each getting about one eighth of your total payment. So your council tax increase is largely decided by Surrey's demand.

MOLESEY HOSPITAL

It is now some time since the Board of Surrey Downs Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) announced its decision to keep Molesey Hospital open, and to review the site and its facilities to develop long term solutions to improving patient care in the Molesey area. Since then there has been very little information about what happens next.

On 7 February the CCG held a meeting to update stakeholders on the work undertaken so far by NHS Property Services on the further development of options, and MRA representatives attended.

Although no final decisions have been made, they are looking closely at the possibility of redeveloping the site to provide modern hospital facilities, and incorporating local GP services there. There is clearly much more work to be done on the development of options, however, but we will update residents via our website and Newsletters when we have more information.

MORE PLANNING APPLICATIONS

A planning application for over 1000 houses, together with supermarket, school, etc at Drake Park (next to Fieldcommon on the road to Hersham) was refused by Elmbridge Council because it was on green belt land. This has gone to Appeal and the result is awaited – but the government insists that Elmbridge, and every other Council, builds many more houses.

A planning application for 75 affordable homes at Britannia House in Pool Road is also under consideration (planning application 2017/2372). Some of the semi-detached properties in this scheme would back onto the rear gardens of some of the houses in Monks Avenue.

APOLOGIES In our last newsletter we offered the opportunity to receive Mandarin Chinese lessons from a local tutor. But we got the phone number wrong – it should be **07754-670-186**. Sorry!

SUBSCRIPTIONS

We are now in the 2018 membership year and, as usual, we are short of subscription collectors. It would be very helpful to MRA if you could forward your subscription to any of the addresses on the tear-off strip at the bottom of this page. The annual household subscription stays at only £3 per year - hardly the cost of a cup of coffee! – or, to save having to subscribe every year, £15 for five years.

If you prefer, you can pay by bank transfer to the MRA Santander account number **86284805**, sort code **09-01-28**. Please also send an email to mra.subs@yahoo.com with your name and address – to make sure we know who sent the money! We will send you a membership receipt. Thank You.

RIVER MOLE

Every year the River Mole suffers from a pennywort invasion. Pennywort (also known as dollarweed) is an invasive plant which grows on the riverbank and spreads across the water surface to completely cover the river to the detriment of water flow and local wildlife.

Each year the Environment Agency carries out clearing operations, sometimes along the banks and sometimes by boat, but it is a never-ending task. The invasion has been particularly bad during this last year and is expected to be even more severe during this coming Summer.

The E.A. is struggling to find the budget to carry out this work and seems to have decided that other flood prevention work they have to do across their area is more important than clearing pennywort from the Mole. Maybe this can be left since the area is protected from flooding by the Ember Cut, which the E.A. see as the priority to keep clear - but the situation is still unsatisfactory.



MOLESEY SEA SCOUTS

For years the 1st Molesey (Jaguar) Sea Scouts had a riverside base by the reservoirs beside the Thames but were forced to leave this some years ago when the land on which it was sited was earmarked for gravel extraction.

In 2016 they submitted a planning application (2016/2760) for a replacement boat storage facility and water activity centre on land by the River Thames at Hurst Park.

Although there was considerable support for the Scouts' ambition of returning to a riverside base, this application was ultimately withdrawn in the light of concerns and objections raised by a number of organisations and individuals, including the Environment Agency, Elmbridge planning officers, the Friends of Hurst Park and the Hurst Park Residents Association. The Scouts held an Open Morning on 3 February to allow interested residents and organisations to look at their proposals for a possible revised application, and to express their views, and we encouraged anyone with an interest to attend.

We understand that the Scouts have now submitted a revised application

THAMES RIVERBANK

Our riverbanks, towpaths and riverside open spaces are some of the great joys of living in Elmbridge. Anyone who has walked, cycled, run or sailed along the towpath from Weybridge to Molesey will know how beautiful it can be. However, the work involved in maintaining this special community asset (involving the Thames Landscape Strategy) is very time intensive and the volunteers who work so tirelessly to maintain the riverside deserve our grateful thanks.

Your Membership is Greatly Appreciated

If you would like to pay direct, please return the tear off slip with £3.00 or £15.00 to any of the following addresses:-
20 Walton Road KT8 0DF, 42, Beauchamp Road KT8 2PG or 245, Fleetside KT8 2NL

We will make sure you get a Membership Card *Thank You*



MOLESEY RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION HOUSEHOLD MEMBERSHIP - SPRING 2018

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