

MOLESEY RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2022

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MRA Councillor at Surrey County Council - Ernest Mallett 020-8979-6446

JOLLY BOATMAN & STATION SITE DEVELOPMENT

Molesey Residents Association has long looked for a moderate redevelopment of this site in keeping with its position just across the river from Hampton Court Palace - but has resisted large over-bearing schemes. The current planning proposal is for a huge development of the site including 97 homes (largely in 4 large blocks in the station car park), an 84-bed hotel right beside Hampton Court Way opposite the BP petrol station, retail units, station interchange, car parking, servicing, new public realm, landscaping and other associated works. (see pictures below of one of the car park blocks and the hotel)

Molesey Residents Association, together with many local residents, felt the proposed development was too high and too big with insufficient car parking and too few affordable homes.

Elmbridge Council refused the proposal on the grounds of excessive height and bulk, out of keeping with its position close to Hampton Court Palace.

The developers then decided to go to Appeal.

To resist this Appeal, MRA made a contribution to Hampton Court Rescue Campaign's expenses in opposing the Appeal.

In spite of everything, the Appeals Inspector found for the developer and has allowed the development to proceed, to start within three years. The Inspector also agreed to the use of part of the adjoining Cigarette Island Park as a temporary car park, for up to two years.

There is no right of appeal against an Appeal decision but there are other avenues of challenge and, after careful consideration of the Planning Inspector's reasons for approving the development and having taken specialist legal advice, the Council has served the Secretary of State with the claim form for a Planning Statutory Review. This request for a review seeks to quash the Appeal Inspector's decision, on the basis that the Inspector failed to give legally adequate reasons for his disagreement with the advice of Historic England. If the Council is given permission to proceed a hearing will take place for a judge to consider the matter. Any hearing may take many months before it is heard.



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WEST MOLESEY WAR MEMORIAL

The garden around the memorial had become very overgrown and neglected - appearing to show a lack of respect for those who had given their lives in the service of the country.

When MRA Cllr Ruby Ahmed saw the state of the memorial she went to the portfolio holder responsible at Elmbridge Council to organise some rapid remedial action.

Very soon, the grass had been cut and the weeds removed and the memorial has now returned to a presentable state. What an improvement the before and after pictures show!



Meanwhile, MRA has funded the usual replanting of the Police Station Green's two gardens, the Bridge Road Horse Trough, the East & West Molesey War Memorial pots and the West Molesey Memorial Garden.

All this is carried out, on behalf of MRA, by MRA Cty. Cllr. Ernest Mallett who, apart from ferrying water around in the hot weather to try and keep most of the planting alive, is battling with the resident fox at West Molesey War Memorial, who likes to dig for worms in the Memorial flower garden.

From the photo, you will see that Ernest has put in a new higher palisade. This has stopped the fox's major destruction but he is still digging some holes.



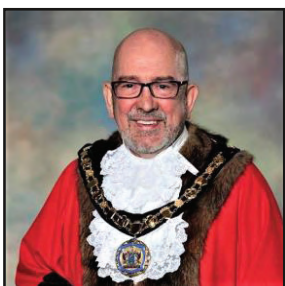
UNAUTHORISED ENCAMPMENTS

Unfortunately, there were a couple of incidents in July of travellers setting up unauthorised encampments locally, one at Hurst Meadows, and one at the land by the Queen Elizabeth Reservoir.

Elmbridge Council and the police took swift action using well-established procedures, and fortunately the travellers vacated both sites within a couple of days without the need for the authorities to resort to legal action, which inevitably takes some time.

The Council has taken steps to protect all of its car parks and open spaces from incursions but, in practice, it is not always possible to prevent entry by determined groups.

MOLESEY MAYOR



MRA Councillor, Tony Popham, has recently completed a year in office as Mayor of Elmbridge.

This is a prestigious position as the first citizen of Elmbridge, chairing meetings of Full Council and carrying out ceremonial duties representing Elmbridge Council at many official, social and community events around the Borough throughout the year.

Tony said he had a very busy, but thoroughly enjoyable, year, meeting all sorts of people at many different events. Well done, Tony.

ELMBRIDGE LOCAL PLAN - and Green Spaces

This very important document sets the broad parameters for deciding planning applications received over the coming years. The new Plan was unanimously approved by Elmbridge Council in March and, following a public consultation period, has now been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for approval.

The Council has proposed that none of the much-valued Green Belt land in Elmbridge should be released for development and, furthermore, has argued that the special circumstances of the Borough means that it cannot follow the Government's methodology for assessing future housing needs, which would have resulted in 641 new homes per year being built in Elmbridge between 2021 and 2037.

Instead, it envisages a target of 73% of this figure, around 466 per year. It remains to be seen whether or not this will be approved by the Planning Inspector.

A new designation in new Local Plans allows Councils to designate specified areas as Local Green Spaces, and this will provide strengthened protection against future development. Throughout the long process of developing the Plan, MRA Councillor Mike Axton led the MRA's campaign to ensure that the key green spaces in Molesey are included in this important new classification.

We are pleased to report that our recommendations were accepted by the Council, and that several areas will now be classified as Local Green Spaces. These include Cigarette Island, the whole of the Hurst Meadows and Hurst Park Open Spaces, the Grovelands Recreation Ground, Molesey Heath, the West Molesey Recreation Ground and the Bishop Fox green areas. Land which is already classified as Green Belt does not, of course, need this additional protection.



UPDATE on the MOLE BRIDGE in ESHER ROAD

Surrey County Council has issued a replacement design for the Mole Bridge and associated road widening. This shows a wider bridge and wider road pattern taking in additional land, mostly from the Police Station Green, and removing a line of trees from the Green.



The start schedule was July 2022 but the current statement says the project start date is now January 2023, due to there being gas and sewer pipes under the bridge for which a separate design and agreement is needed. The installation period is estimated to be one year, during which normal vehicle use will be mostly unavailable. Pedestrian and cycle crossing may be partially available.

The intention is to submit this bridge project to Elmbridge Council as a Planning Application as Elmbridge owns the extra land which will be needed for Highway use. Support or objection can be made to any Planning Application.

Original design plans were said to be in Molesey Library but we have not been able to locate them. When a Planning Application occurs, we expect the details will be on the Elmbridge Planning web site and in Molesey Library. Currently, we have no information on the source of funding, but the cost has been said to be provisionally between £3m and £5m.

LOCAL ELECTIONS, in May, produced mixed results for MRA. Ruby Ahmed was elected in Molesey West by a good majority, but our very good candidate, Harry Lojhan, could only make third place in Molesey East behind the Conservative and Liberal Democrat candidates. Here, Steve Bax, Conservative, took the seat ahead of the Lib. Dems. - by only 5 votes out of over 3000 votes cast!

We often find it irritating that both the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats seem only to be able to think in terms of national political parties, both referring to Elmbridge as a Lib Dem-led Council.

This is not so – Elmbridge Council is made up of 19 Residents Association councillors, 15 Conservatives, 13 Lib Dems and 1 Independent. – so the Council is run by the Residents Associations, usually supported by the Liberal Democrats.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

We do need incoming subscriptions to cover our expenses, such as the production of this newsletter, and to enable us to continue representing Molesey on a long-term basis.

If you would like to take an active part in supporting MRA in maintaining Molesey as a great place to live and work or, if you have not yet renewed your subscription for this year, it would be a great help to the Association if you could forward your subscription to any of the addresses at the bottom of this page or, if you prefer, you could make an online payment to Molesey Residents Association at Santander account number **86284805**, sort code **09-01-28**. Please also send an email to mra.subs@gmail.com with your name and address – to make sure we know who sent the money! We will make sure you receive a membership card/receipt. The annual household subscription is only £4 per year – or, to save having to subscribe every year, £15 for five years. If you could see your way clear to making the 5-year subscription it would help greatly in reducing the amount of administration involved. A big Thank You in anticipation of your support.

QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE

To mark this exceptional occasion the MRA decided to add a memorial plaque to the horse trough memorial column at the corner of Wolsey Road and Bridge Road. This column carries plaques commemorating

Royal Jubilees dating from Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1887 and we thought it was appropriate to add one for the present unique 70-year Jubilee.

We took our ideas and design to Lodge Brothers, who generously offered to produce and install the plaque without charge as a donation to the residents of Molesey. We gratefully accepted and the plaque is now in place.



We hope to plant a memorial tree on The Forum land (near the library) later this year.

MRA County Cllr. Ernest Mallett says: MOLESEY WETLANDS??

What?, Where? I hear you say. Well, some 6 or 7 years ago, Thames Water, in conjunction with Cemex, finished gravel extraction from our Thames riverside reservoirs and re-contoured them into an intended paradise for wild water birds. This much has been successful.

What has not happened is the Visitor Centre, car park and public access. I have continually tracked this in the Surrey Planning Department. Recently, Planning.Application 2011/0186 (Yes, dated from 2011), for a required plan has been regurgitated. I have been pressing for action on this, then suddenly I got an Email to say that this 2011 scheme, (fixed or to be modified), has been 'Withdrawn'. So, we are again back to square one with no public facilities on the horizon.

Rest assured, I will not let it rest there but, if ever you are privileged to try to deal with Thames Water or Cemex – Best of Luck!!

Other News: We are informed that, at present, there are no plans at Surrey County Council to proceed with the 'Improved Cycling and Walking Scheme' in Molesey. This scheme would prevent parking in some important roads, impose a 20 mph speed limit in the shopping 'high street' and introduce several raised crossings around Molesey

Your Membership is Greatly Appreciated

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



MOLESEY RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION HOUSEHOLD MEMBERSHIP - AUTUMN 2022

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