



THE REIGATE SOCIETY

The Civic Society for Reigate, Redhill and Merstham

Newsletter No. 97

September 2010

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

This year the brochure for **Heritage Open Days** within the Borough has once again been produced by the Society. We are indebted to Michèle Damer and Michael Hellings for their sterling work in compiling the brochure and its distribution. Twenty four venues and events are to be held over 9th – 12th September.

Following the AGM we have a change of presidency. We have said farewell to Crispin Blunt and we thank him for his term in office and wish him well in his new role as a minister in the new government. In his place we welcome Nicholas Owen.

Nicholas was unable to attend the AGM due to a longstanding prior engagement but he did manage to come to our last talk before Easter when he gave the vote of thanks to our speaker. We look forward to seeing him at the Members Evening in October and on many future occasions during his term of office.

I mentioned also at the AGM that by the 2011 AGM next July we need to find a new chairman. Under our constitution, I have to stand down and cannot continue in even a temporary capacity. Our current vice chair, Claudia Payne, is unwilling to take on the chairmanship yet again and several possible candidates have been approached but, as yet, all have felt unable to take on this role. Somebody must know of someone who could fill this role. Get your thinking caps on and give us some names.

In the last Newsletter and at the AGM it was also stated that **Civic Voice** has become the successor to the Civic Trust and the Society has affiliated to it for its first year. This was to enable us to evaluate how the new organization will fit with our own activities and also maintained our insurance cover whilst alternative suppliers were explored. Preliminary enquiries have indicated that it is highly likely to be the most economic way to obtain our insurance cover and we shall probably retain our affiliation.

The current status of the **Redhill Area Action Plan** is reported on in the committee reports which appear later in this newsletter.

The state of our roads continues to cause comment and frustration. The continued closure of Daneshill and the state of the surface in Raglan Road come immediately to mind but there must be many other roads which deserve a mention. Road closures for repair or essential infrastructure work are understandable in this 'safety conscious' age in which we live but the disruption which arises when works appear to be delayed way beyond their predicted completion date cause unnecessary inconvenience and frustration. Someone in authority is not ensuring that this is minimized when a job which is estimated to take three weeks is still not complete after seven months!

Complaints about smaller road problems have been successful. I can report that the surface water gullies on Reigate Hill which were causing flooding every time it rained have been cleared even though there has been very little rain.

I continue to encourage everybody to file reports on road problems. The more complaints there are on file the more likely it is that some remedial work will result. www.fixmystreet.com is a very convenient way of doing this.

The compilation of the list of email addresses is taking a little longer than anticipated so this Newsletter will be distributed in the way that was used for the previous issue. Anyone who has not yet done so can transmit their email address for inclusion via 'contact' on the Society website (www.reigatesociety.org.uk).

Following our talk on **Gatton Park** in February by Glyn Sherratt, the Landscape Heritage Officer, members have kindly been asked to a free talk and a tour of the restoration being carried out this summer to the Victorian parterre in front of the main building.

See Natural Amenities report for details.

Colin Burbidge

(01737) 245264

SECRETARY'S NOTES

The Society's **58th Annual General Meeting** was held in The Harlequin Theatre on 1st July. Our Chairman, Colin Burbidge, welcomed the 35 members who attended and relayed our President's apologies for not being able to be present. This would have been Crispin Blunt's last AGM as his five years maximum term had expired. Nicholas Owen had offered to have his name put forward and he was elected as our President for the forthcoming year.

The existing Officers were re-elected: Colin Burbidge as Chairman, Claudia Payne as Vice Chairman, Charles Wragg as Hon. Treasurer, John Angel as Hon. Registrar and myself as Hon. Secretary. Six members of the Council retired by rotation, Michèle Damer, Tom Godfrey, Michael Knight, Gerry Moss, Monica Tingley and Howard Whiting. All had agreed to stand again. In addition there were two new names, John Chittenden and Pauline Young, who had been co-opted on to the Council during the year. All eight were voted on to the Council.

The new rates of subscription, Item 13 on the agenda, were discussed. The Council had looked at the long term financial position of the Society and, in particular, its current reserves. The Chairman said that we had always kept a good balance as an emergency fund in case we had to fight any significant issue. We had now come to the conclusion that with the current inflation we ought to build up our reserve to a higher level. As was seen in the accounts we were only just holding balancing our income and expenditure. It was therefore proposed that the minimum subscriptions be increased to £8 for single membership, £12 for family membership and £25 for corporate membership. These new rates, which will come into effect next April, were approved by the meeting.

In his Chairman's report on the year, Colin said that even though the new owners of Gatwick Airport had confirmed that they did not intend to ask for an extra runway, we must still stay vigilant as these situations keep changing. He reported that the Civic Trust had ceased to exist, but a new organization, Civic Voice, had risen to take its place. We had joined this for the first year and would see how it develops. Colin said that our Newsletters were now available on our website, and we were aiming to send them to more members by e-mail. He thanked Michèle Damer and the Secretary for their work on coordinating and publicising the Heritage Open Days to which the Society was now fully committed for this year. He also thanked the Officers, the Committee Chairmen and the Council Members for all the

work they had done in the past year.

After the formal part of the meeting had been completed there was a talk by John Byng, Vice Chairman of the Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign. His talk was entitled "CACC, what does it do and what is it for?"

Heritage Open Days this year are to be over 9th – 12th September. Twenty four venues and events are publicised in the brochure which was once again organised by the Society. The Undercroft, to the rear of 16 West Street in Reigate, will be opened on the Saturday and manned by volunteers from the Society.

The **Members' Evening** will be held at the Woodhatch Centre on Monday 11th October at 8pm. As usual there will be drinks and a finger buffet, followed by the presentation of the Society's Annual Awards. The evening will end with a talk by our newly elected President, Nicholas Owen, who has chosen "Not quite 50 years reporting" as the title of his talk.

Always popular, this evening is frequently oversubscribed, as we are limited in numbers. If you wish to attend please fill in the form at the back of this newsletter; enclose a cheque for £10 (still no increase in price) and a stamped addressed envelope and send it to me.

There are two Open Meetings in the autumn. On Thursday 4th November at Holmesdale School in Alma Road, Reigate, there will be a talk on the "**Old Surrey Downs Project**" given by one of the staff who is involved. The Project works to restore chalk grassland on 25 sites in Surrey and South London, including Box Hill, Reigate & Colley Hills.

On Thursday 2nd December at The Priory School in Bell Street, Reigate, Ros Black's talk is intriguingly entitled "**Duxhurst, Lady Henry Somerset's village for inebriate women**". This will be based on her recent book about the life of Lady Henry Somerset. Ros Black focuses on the village Lady Henry built at Duxhurst, south of Sidlow, which became a charitable community.

All these Open Meetings start at 8.15pm and are given on your Programme cards. Details of these and much more can also be seen on the Society's web site www.reigatesociety.org.uk.

Michael Hellings

(01737) 245342

Email: mandmhellings@talktalk.net

TREASURER'S NOTES

Let me remind you that the ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS were due from the 1st April 2010 and the current MINIMUM RATES are as follows:

Individual Members	£5
Family Members	£8
Corporate Members	£25

There is a payment form on page 8.

The rates will change on **1st April 2011** and those of you paying by bankers order may need to change the instructions to your bank.

The new minimum rates will be:

Individual Members	£8
Family Members	£12
Corporate Members	£25

REGISTRAR'S NOTES

Recruitment is improving. Since the last Newsletter, I have welcomed 10 new members which is a great improvement. If you were one of the members who recruited someone – thank you.

The new members are:-

**Mrs J Shaw Mr H Leeson Mr A G Joyce
Mr D Freeman Ms S Finch Mr & Mrs R Sundt**

**Mr J Warbey
Mr R Ansell**

Ms J Sutherland-Rogers

As I reported in the last Newsletter, there are still some members who have not paid their subscriptions for last year (2009-2010). If you are one of those, please pay now and save me having to send out reminders. If anyone has any query about payments (or non-payments) please telephone ME as I keep all the membership records. Don't ring the treasurer as he will only have to ring me. Thank you.

John Angel

(01737) 242672

COMMITTEE REPORTS

ARCHITECTURE & PLANNING

Chairman: Tom Godfrey (01737) 243590

In the last Newsletter, I commented that you had to have some sympathy for the Borough Planning Department because of the problems they faced getting the Core Strategy to the Inquiry - only to have the Inspector abandon the hearings. Their problems continue....

Firstly, the new Government has moved most of the goal posts and secondly, the Core Strategy has come under some criticism from the Inspector who held the Inquiry into this key strategy.

On the first matter, we knew that a new Government would make changes since this had been foreseen in the Green Papers published by the Conservatives. The Coalition appear to have adopted the changes so as to introduce some greater degree of democracy into the planning system by abolishing the regional assemblies

and getting rid of the command structure where planning is imposed from Whitehall.

The most immediate change is the abandonment of the South East Plan with its prescriptive housing numbers. What is to replace it? All will become clear in a "Localism" Bill to be introduced to Parliament in the autumn but it appears that the aim will be to identify a 15 year amount of land broadly available and the Planners have to provide a 5 year supply of available housing land to meet the needs of the locality.

In the meantime, Planning Authorities are encouraged to continue with the preparation of the Core Strategy and they will be responsible for establishing the right level of local housing provision in their area. Some authorities may decide to retain their existing housing targets that were set out in the revoked Regional Plans. Others may decide to review their housing targets and the option is given to go back to the number originally proposed or to adopt the

figures that came out of the Examination in Public. These figures for the Borough were 7,740 and 9,240 dwellings respectively - a reduction on the 12,500 dwellings that the Inspector was seeking to establish!

We do not know what the Borough will be seeking to establish but the Secretary of State has indicated that authorities should quickly signal their intention to undertake an early review so that communities and landowners know where they stand.

But two matters that concern day to day planning have been changed, firstly the requirement that developments should have a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare and secondly, the ending of the designation of garden land as previously developed land thus ending the "garden grabbers" charter

On the second matter, the Core Strategy was withdrawn in March 2010 so that the Borough now has no such plan in place. The Inspector's Report, on the Borough's web site, is in draft form only. It has not been officially released but has been disclosed because someone made a Freedom of Information request!

His overall conclusion is that the Core Strategy is not sound, and cannot be made sound by way of enforceable changes. There are three reasons given:-

1. There is no flexibility for the delivery of housing and the Borough relies too much on windfalls in the latter part of the plan period. He maintains the Strategy does not demonstrate that the South East Plan housing requirement will be met.
2. A failure to sufficiently engage with transport planning for the Redhill-Reigate hub.
3. The cumulative effect of the changes necessary to remedy all other elements of unsoundness would be to change the plan submitted and require it to be rewritten.

There are some twelve other areas in which the Inspector has concern but these would have been capable of resolution as they dealt with matters of detailed evidence, justification and monitoring. However overall, he was unhappy.

The Borough has to go away and think again and will consult in due course. A cynic would say that nothing has been lost since the new

Government's proposals would require a major revision anyway but, despite the Inspector's comments, much of the draft Core Strategy will no doubt remain.

One of the kindred societies of which we are a member is the London Green Belt Council which is a body made up of amenity societies round London concerned with the Green Belt. We noted recently that they were expressing concern about the recently amended General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) which was introduced by the last Government to enable minor structures, such as conservatories, to be erected without the need for planning consent.

The concern related to a development in Woldingham where a house in the Green Belt was to double in size under the provisions of this Order whereas the Tandridge Council's Policy on development in the Green Belt was more restrictive. We had recently had similar concerns regarding two such applications, in the Green Belt, on the slopes of Colley Hill. The Borough accepted that, in both cases, these were Permitted Development enabling the houses to be more than doubled in size whereas the Approved Development Plan Policy would limit the extension to less than 50%.

The London Green Belt Council have written to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and we have written to our MP, Crispin Blunt, in support of the Council's position - namely to limit the application of the GPDO in the Green Belt in the same way that it is restricted in the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and in Conservation Areas

There has been, as yet, no decision on the Tesco application in Brighton Road, Redhill but the Company is making slow progress towards resolving all the difficulties.

The principle objection was that any new foodstore should be more central to the town and the preferred location was on the south side of Cromwell Road as identified in the Redhill Area Action Plan. A study has now shown that this site is unsuitable for this purpose. However Sainsbury's have indicated that they have a central location under consideration!

Surrey Highways has agreed to the traffic proposals but the flooding assessment is still unresolved.

Tesco are currently working on proposals to relocate the sub-station at the northern end of the site and to provide a "green" roof to reduce the

impact of the view from Redstone Hill. They have been asked to redesign the building to make the housing better integrated with the store, but are reluctant. Lastly, there is no news from Network Rail about their intentions for linking the Guildford and Tonbridge lines which will cross this site.

Tesco are pushing for a decision as soon as possible but the status of the application on the Borough's website shows that stage 2 of 5 has been reached and a site inspection has yet to be made!

Finally, turning to the two applications highlighted in the Spring newsletter - the replacement of floodlights at the Old Reigatian Rugby Club has yet to be resolved and the request to be able to shut the gate to the path through the Priory School grounds also remains undecided.

STOP PRESS

Since this Newsletter was written, the Borough Council have announced the further consultation on the Core Strategy. It runs from the 23rd July to the 3rd September 2010 - during the holiday period of course! The document can be accessed on the Borough's website via Planning - Planning Policies - Local Development Framework -Core Strategy. It is not the easiest document to interpret being amendments by cross referencing! We shall do our best.

REDHILL

Chairman: Gerry Moss (01737) 765508

The Committee has now recently received the Borough's answers to the questions concerning the road plans for Redhill which were sent some four months ago. Those questions derived from a close reading of the road models undertaken in conjunction with the Redhill Area Action Plan (RAAP). The answers do not show that the Society's concerns have been understood. Furthermore the road proposals were devised before the models were undertaken and although the proposed traffic signals do not deal with traffic as well as the existing roundabouts, the signal system is to be substantially retained. At times it is difficult to discern which is cause and which is effect.

The additions to the Core Strategy, which was rejected by the Inspector, do contain paragraphs concerning the roads but they reinforce the original policy to suppress demand by cars in favour of public transport. Now it has to be said that The Society might well support that if it could work. But outside of the Metropolis there is little sign that such a policy can succeed especially for a busy cross roads with substantial through traffic. Rather all the indications are that the policy is incompatible with the growth of housing, commerce and retailing which is the substance of the RAAP.

Let me remind you that the plan for the roads was to replace the three town roundabouts with

traffic signals. The current position is that the retention of the Reading Arch roundabout has been conceded but the other two are to go. In their place is to be a "Scoot System" of traffic lights to manage the traffic in the town. This is the system which is to suppress the use of the car through the town and encourage the use of buses. The idea is to try to reverse the often repeated mantra that increasing a road system only brings forth additional cars. Therefore if the capacity of the roads is constrained then the cars will go away. But not all changes are reversible. It is accepted this will result in even worse queues outside of the town so "going away" may well mean finding different routes. Since much of the traffic of this junction of A23 and A25 is through traffic, present users will need to rat run round the town (which the planners rightly frown on) or go through Reigate. This problem is far from being one which involves only the people of Redhill. If the plans fail because of the concerns which the Society is expressing, all will suffer.

The plain answer you may say, and The Society has been saying it for many years, is to replace Princess and Marketfield ways with a better bypass system. No such plan is envisaged and with the current stringencies may be ruled out for the foreseeable future.

Perhaps we need to remind ourselves that the Plans tell us that Redhill is the third town of Surrey in size and that it is judged to be failing to fulfil its potential especially in the retail area. We perhaps need to remind ourselves that it was chosen as the site for expansion because it

occupies an important transport Hub south of London suitable for successful development. If this is so how can it be that constraining the operation of the hub can bring success when the apparent need is to improve the operation of the hub so that it can handle more commerce? Planning a development whilst reducing traffic capacity might easily be seen as giving rise to a baby only to strangle it at birth.

Who is behind this plan? SCC is the Roads Authority but the Core Strategy and RAAP are plans which are solely the responsibility of the Borough Council. These days Borough officers come and go with bewildering frequency. We had hoped that the changes in the officers dealing with this problem would result in a new and more realistic approach. Apparently this is not the case.

You might expect that the elected members for Redhill would play a leading part in the planning of the town for which they are responsible. However, these days most Borough Policies such as Core Strategy and RAAP are decided by those elected members who form the borough "executive". Maybe the Redhill Borough Councillors do not have much say. However, all those who have some responsibility whether through election or appointment to the executive have the clear duty to ensure that the contents of a plan are mutually compatible and when any such issues are resolved that the public are clearly informed. Only in this way can trust be established in place of widespread suspicion. Otherwise we shall wonder what they are really up to.

Harry Ingram (Secretary)

NATURAL AMENITIES

Chairman: Colin Burbidge (01737) 245264

The inflow to the lake in **Priory Park** is to be modified as there have been problems with the silt trap since the restoration of the park was completed. The chosen reed bed design was unsatisfactory from the start and silt has been entering the lake almost from the moment it was refilled thereby negating the benefits that accrued from the desilting operation. A more conventional design is to be installed which should solve the problem but only if the accumulated silt is removed on a regular basis and the new structure is properly maintained.

Hanson have submitted an eleventh hour application to extend the working life of the **Buckland Sand Pits**. If this is to be approved by the county council it is hoped that sufficiently stringent conditions are imposed that will help towards restoring the water table to a higher level. This would take a long time to achieve even if their operations were to cease completely but every little will help.

GATTON PARK

VISIT TO PARTERRE RESTORATION

Thursday, 23rd September 2010 at 2.30 p.m.

The parterre, which was originally laid out by the designer H E Milner, is one of the key features of the estate, providing stunning views of the main lake across the 'Capability' Brown designed parkland. The restoration of the parterre involves removing the tarmac tennis courts that were installed in the 1950's, re-grading the land, reinstating the footpaths and restoring the stone urns that border the parkland.

Enter via the main school entrance at the lodge in Rocky Lane and meet in the main car park. Drive up past the Chapel on the righthand side and turn right. The car park is on the left.

Tickets will not be issued but, if you are coming, please let Claudia know beforehand via the Society website so that we can let them know how many to expect.

The Reigate Society

President: Nicholas Owen

Chairman: Colin Burbidge, MSc., C Eng., 16 Brokes Crescent, Reigate, RH2 9PS. Tel: 01737 245264

Hon. Secretary: Michael Hellings, 53 West Street, Reigate, RH2 9BZ. Tel: 01737 245342

Hon. Treasurer: Charles Wragg, 3 Weald Way, Reigate, RH2 7RG. Tel: 01737 210640

CORPORATE MEMBERS

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Note that all addresses are of Reigate town and all telephone numbers have the code 01737, unless otherwise stated.

	Address	Business
Bakers Radio Ltd	6 Western Parade, Prices lane RH2 8AU (240543 / 242322)	TV, Electrical Retailers
Care Unlimited	Chaldon Rise Mews, Rockshaw Road, Merstham RH1 3DE (645171 / 646266)	Care Homes
Care Homes of Distinction Ltd	Wray Park, 55 Alma Road RH2 0DN (242778)	Care Homes & Property Development
Crow Watkin	14 Bell Street RH2 7BE (245886)	Independent Estate Agents, Surveyors & Valuers
Dunottar School	High Trees Road, RH2 7EL (761945)	
East Surrey College	Claremont Road, Gatton Point, Redhill RH1 2JX (772611)	
Iain Johnston	4 Chart Lane (244160)	Podiatrist
Michael Jones & Associates	Crossway House, 8 London Road RH2 9HY (245610)	Engineering Consultants – Building Services
Keymex Ltd	59-61 Bell Street RH2 7AQ (240171)	Domestic Appliance Sales, Service & Repairs
Holmesdale Building Society	43 Church Street RH2 0AE (245716)	Your local Building Society for all your mortgage and investment needs
La Barbe Restaurant	71 Bell Street RH2 7AN (241966)	Restaurant & Outside Catering
Micklefield School	10 Somers Road RH2 9DU (242615 / 224211 / 224212)	Independent Preparatory School for boys and girls age 2½ to 11
Ormerods	Suite 4 Chapter House 33 London Road RH2 9HZ (0208 686 5000)	Solicitors
Reigate Priory Cricket Club	Park Lane, RH2 8JX (244477)	Cricket Club with senior & junior sections
Reigate Priory School	Bell Street RH2 7RL (245065 / 240229)	
Royal Alexandra & Albert School	Gatton Park, RH2 0TW (649050)	Boarding school for boys and girls ages 7 to 18
Stanton Construction	1 Castlefield Road RH2 0SA (227430)	Development & construction service to industry, public & commercial sectors
TWM Solicitors LLP	40 West Street RH2 9BT (221212)	Solicitors
White & Sons	24 High Street RH2 9AY (222600)	Independent Estate Agents, Surveyors & Valuers

THE OCTOBER MEMBERS' EVENING

On Monday, 11th October 2010
At THE WOODHATCH CENTRE
7.30 pm for 8.00 pm

For ticket(s) please complete the top half of this form and send the WHOLE PAGE as soon as possible with your remittance and a STAMPED ADDRESSED ENVELOPE for the return of the ticket portion to:

Mchael Hellings,
53 West Street, Reigate, RH2 9BZ.

Tel. 01737 245342

Name (s) Tel. No.....

I/we apply for..... tickets @ £10.00 a head Total £

I would like a map (tick if required)

Cheques should be made payable to the Reigate Society

THE OCTOBER MEMBERS' EVENING

7.30 pm for 8.00 pm Monday, 11th October 2010

Name(s) Ticket No(s)

.....

To be held at the Woodhatch Centre, Whitebeam Drive, Reigate

This ticket covers admission and the buffet with a glass of wine (or soft drink)

Subscription Payment / Banker's Order Form

NAME(S)

ADDRESS

Email

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---|------------------|
| ☐ | I enclose my subscription for 2010 /2011
(Cheques should be made payable to 'The Reigate Society') | Individual |
| | | Family |
| | | Corporate |
| ☐ | Please send me a Banker's Order form for payment of future subscriptions. | |
| ☐ | I also enclose my subscription for 2009 / 2010 | Individual |
| | | Family |
| | | Corporate |

☐ (Please tick box applicable)

If you are not a member and would like to join please tick here

Please send completed form to:
Charles Wragg, 3 Weald Way, Reigate RH2 7RG

(NL 97)