



Admiral Rodney House

The Walton Society

Members' Newsletter

January 2010



The Walton Society appreciates the continued support of all its members and wishes them a Happy and more Prosperous New Year

CIVIC TRUST CLOSES

The shocking news arrived on 22nd April that the Civic Trust – our parent body – was being placed in administration due to financial difficulties.

Fortunately, Tony Burton of the National Trust was available to lead the recovery by organising **The Civic Society Initiative** based in the offices of the North of England Civic Trust in Blackpool and able to take on much of the function of the now defunct Civic Trust.

An initial appeal for funds and practical support produced an overwhelming response from over 650 Civic Societies – including The Walton Society – whilst work has gone on to build a new organisation. Major supporters have included CPRE, RIBA (Northern Region) and English Heritage, who have promised that nationwide Heritage Day activities will continue. Further donations can be sent to: The Civic Society Initiative, Unit 101, The Tea Factory, 82 Wood Street, Liverpool L1 4DQ.

An initial convention also took place at the HQ of Blackpool Council on 15th and 16th October and we await a further report.

Griff Rhys Jones, formerly President of the Civic Trust, commented: *"I hope it is helpful if I respond to some of the main issues here. First and foremost I think it is helpful to confirm that the Civic Society Initiative is temporary. It has been established solely to help find the best way forward for the civic society movement, following the loss of the Civic Trust. It is not a new organisation and certainly not a Civic Trust Mark Two. It is a means to address the question as to whether a new organisation is even needed and how any arrangements for supporting and representing the civic society movement would be funded."* **Griff Rhys Jones**

So, it's up to all of us to contribute to whatever new leading body emerges from these ashes so that we can continue to protect our environmental heritage that so many people have worked so hard to construct and maintain.

MARTIN SCHOFIELD President

THE SEVEN HILLS ROAD FIASCO

There has been a collective sigh of relief that the original plan by Southern Gas network to close Seven Hills Road for a minimum period of 7 months, has been reduced to a more acceptable timetable, which, following the work carried out over New Year, is given below:

- 04/01/10 – 31/01/10: Lane restrictions in Seven Hills Road South
- 15/03/10 – 11/04/10: Lane restrictions on Queens Road roundabout
- 29/03/10 – 11/04/10: Seven Hills Road closed. The road will reopen on 12/04/10
- 20/06/10 – 29/08/10: Seven Hills Road closed. The road will reopen on 30/08/10

Though SCC had been involved for months, little was known about this closure, and there was no public announcement or consultation. It was left to local groups to discover what was happening.

The Weybridge Society led the way by sending a very detailed and well thought out objection to Philip Hammond MP, the local press, County and Borough Councillors. I also wrote to the Chief Executive at SCC drawing his attention to this problem, and asked that SCC urgently looks into implementing the same arrangement recently organised in Kent where the Local Authority has much greater power over Utilities including the ability to impose heavy financial penalties for over-running of road works.

On 13th November, Leader of Elmbridge Borough Council and County Councillor, Roy Taylor said "I am afraid that the Utility companies are not controlled by SCC and accordingly can do much as they like, but we have put enormous pressure on Southern Gas Network. EBC has no part to play other than being frustrated onlookers".

On 27th November the new 12 week schedule was announced at the Hilton Hotel exhibition which I attended, along with Walton Society Councillors, the Society Secretary and Vice Chairman. With contributions from many members of the Public and local businesses the schedule has been further amended so that most of the work will occur during the School summer holidays. Clearly this success has been achieved by pressure from our MP, local people, the local amenity Societies and their Councillors. I spoke at the December SCC meeting because I feel that the handling of this whole matter by SCC has unfortunately lost the confidence of the Electorate and has brought the County Council into disrepute.

Tom Phelps Penry – County Councillor for Walton Division

PARKING CONTROLS IN WALTON

The proposals for the Walton Controlled Parking Scheme were finally agreed at the SCC Elmbridge Local Committee meeting on 7th December, comprising a much slimmed down version of the proposals put on display in The Heart and Walton Library in the summer and in line with the concerns expressed by many residents. The scheme now mainly consists of double yellow lines to restrict parking at road junctions and restrictions to ensure that the main through routes such as the A244 New Zealand Avenue / Hershams Road do not get narrowed by parked cars.

The details of the scheme can be found on the SCC Highways website. A map shows where the restrictions will come and what they will be.

A few further amendments were agreed at the Local Committee meeting in response to residents requests, notably the removal of restrictions by the humps in Bowes Road, fewer yellow lines in Manor Road, the removal of plans for two new stretches of limited waiting bays in Bridge Street, a reduction in the double yellow lines in the cul-de-sac part of Esher Avenue, and reductions in the proposals for Stompond Lane and Red House Lane. Further consultation on residents parking schemes in Sandy Way and Dale, Harvey and Mayo Roads is due to be carried out shortly.

It is anticipated that the new scheme will start to come into effect in the spring and be completed by the end of June. Discussions are also taking place on an increase in the capacity of the Enforcement Officers to ensure that the new restrictions are properly monitored.

It is good to see that local residents' concerns have been listened to while still keeping to the principle of improving safety on the roads in central Walton.

Diary Dates

BARN DANCE
FRIDAY 5th MARCH 2010
St. Andrews URC Hall, Hershams Road, Walton
7pm for 7.30pm start - £14.00
(children £7.00) including supper
Phone 224563 or 222978 for tickets .

MAKING TERRACE ROAD SAFER

As a frequent user of Terrace Road I was often worried to see vehicles speeding along the stretch between Waterside Drive and the Hurst Road/Walton Road junction at speeds well over the 40mph limit, despite the fact that there are family homes along the road.

When alterations were made to the Waterside Drive roundabout I had tried to persuade Surrey Highways, given that pupils from Grovelands School crossed the road at this point to access the Leisure Centre, to reduce the speed limit but they pleaded 'poverty' and nothing was done.

Earlier this year, in the summer, I listened, horrified, as the owner of the shop on Terrace Road told me how a car had skidded off the road, crashed into his parked van – which was pushed against the wall of the shop causing a large crack in it. I later learnt that there had been at least 7 serious accidents on that stretch of the road.

I decided then to canvass the residents of Terrace Road, Rivernook Close and Sunnyside to get their support for a reduction in the speed limit. The result was unanimous – apart from a few absentees.

I sent the results to Surrey Highways, who presented a recommendation to the Borough Local Committee last month, which, with the support of Surrey Police, was approved.

I am delighted that the concerns of the residents of the Terrace Road area have been listened to and that the 30mph limit can be applied in the very near future.

TOM PHELPS PENRY

WALTON HIGH STREET

The refurbishment of the High Street is due to be implemented some time next year. The aim is to give a facelift to the street and to make it a more welcoming area for shoppers.

The plans were displayed in the Public Library and local people were invited to give their views as to the style of street furniture to be used. The choice was between 'contemporary' and 'heritage'. The response, from the majority of those who expressed a preference, was that the 'heritage' style fitted in better with the buildings in the High Street. This was also the view expressed on behalf of the Walton Society and as a result of an on-street survey by the Surrey Advertiser. The Council however decided to ignore the views of the Public and have voted for the 'contemporary' option, stating that this will be cheaper to maintain.

When the Public are consulted over a matter such as this, then however small the response, surely the view expressed should be respected.

If you feel strongly about this matter then please contact Martin Parker, Head of Town Planning (mparker@elmbridge.gov.uk) and copy to our website (info@thewaltonssociety.org.uk)

ANDREW REID, Vice Chairman

AN ELECTION LOOMS

It is looking ever more certain that the General Election will be held on Thursday 6th May 2010 – coinciding with the local elections of Borough Councillors. This makes good sense if seen purely from the administrative and financial points of view and will help the recognised political parties, with the benefit they receive from Press and television, but will again create a confused situation for the likes of ourselves and our colleagues who believe that an independent approach is essential in Local Government.

Many more words will circulate before the date but please remember that the distinctive policies of local Residents Associations – giving the needs of local people priority without concern for national party political dogma – must be uppermost in the minds of voters who want the best representation to which they are entitled.

PROBLEMS WITH COPPER

Two years ago, O&H, the developers of The Heart, applied for permission to refurbish the shops on Hepworth Way from Birthdays through Annafranco to where Courts Pharmacy used to be. They proposed to use on the upper storey an oxidised copper cladding that had a uniform appearance. The sample materials were approved, but, in mid 2008, when the work was done, somehow the wrong sort of copper was put up – a shiny untreated version of what should have been used. Questions were asked and the Council's Planning Officers were told that the shiny copper would oxidise naturally and after a year or so would look like the material that had been agreed. Unfortunately, it has weathered unevenly, resulting in a streaky appearance that has been described as like rusty metal.

Despite the Council's Planning Department recommending that this does not have a significant adverse effect on the area and that nothing further should be done about it, your local Walton Society Councillors argued successfully that the present appearance is unacceptable, especially on such an important site right in the middle of town. In addition, as it could be reasonably expected to stay there for 40 years or more, the mistake should be rectified and the right material put up as soon as possible. Watch that space!

CHRIS SADLER and DAVID WALSH

WIDENING THE DESBOROUGH CUT?

The Environment Agency (EA) has recently held a consultation on its proposed Lower Thames Flood Risk Management Strategy. This involves creating 3 new Diversion Channels between Datchet / Windsor and Shepperton that would allow flood water to travel more quickly down stream and avoid floods in Staines and Chertsey. From Shepperton downstream, it is suggested that the extra flow of water should be managed by widening the Desborough Cut by 3 to 4 metres and improving the weirs at Sunbury, Molesey and Teddington Locks. There is little detailed design work so far, but knowing that the new Jubilee River – a diversion channel upstream of Windsor was blamed by some people for some of the flooding in 2003, we are sceptical about the long term implications for Walton and other communities downstream of here. With bridges at both ends of the Cut, would widening it in the middle have a material beneficial effect? It would also mean the destruction of the delightful towpath walk between Walton and Weybridge. Would the improvements to the weirs be adequate for the higher rate of flow expected at the point in Shepperton where the new Diversion Cannels would end? These concerns have been incorporated into the formal Elmbridge Borough Council response to the EA.

**Cllr Chris Sadler, Chariman
Environmental Affairs Overview
and Scrutiny Committee**

100 CLUB

Winners have included:

June: D Lloyd £17.40; J Gilby £8.70; M Boissevain £4.35.

July: B Style £17.40; F Wheals £8.70; R Doery £4.35.

August: M Randall £39.15; F Hare £17.40; E Elam £8.70; A Lisle £4.35.

September: I Starnes £17.80; E Holmes £8.90; D Battle £4.45.

October: E Harris £18.00; M Bowtell £9.00; A Lisle £4.50.

THE WALTON SOCIETY COUNCILLORS

Surrey County Council

Tom Phelps Penry, Walton Division
01932 247519

Elmbridge Borough Council

Chris Sadler, Walton Central, 01932 881687
David Walsh, Walton Central, 01932 253315

Published for The Walton Society by Martin Schofield. Printed by The Brampton Press.