



Weybridge Society

Your community association working to keep Weybridge special

Autumn 2017

Hon. Patron – Michael Aspel OBE

WEYBRIDGE NHS FIRE UPDATE – GP PRACTICES TO RETURN TO SITE

In a rush of flames that took down a complex of three-storey buildings overnight and with smoke that billowed on for days, Weybridge's main health centre was reduced to rubble on July 12th, leaving residents despondent over the fate of their NHS services.

The NHS moved quickly to rehouse the two main GP practices, Church Street and Rowan Tree, along with the walk-in centre, which together serve tens of thousands of local residents, to the nearby Walton Hospital site a few miles away. Staff there told *Weybridge Society* that residents had been very understanding during the transition and that they were grateful for the public's good-will.

The burned-out hospital has now been demolished and most of the site cleared. No official cause of the fire has yet been given, but accident rather than arson is suspected.

According to GP staff and the North-west Surrey Clinical Commission Group (CCG), the two GP practices should be back on site on Weybridge's high street in early November, rehoused in new temporary accommodations in the former car park outside the surgeries.

One of the major players in the com-



plex process of rebuilding the site, CCG is responsible for buying and planning the healthcare for the local population and deciding how and where services are provided. However, the site itself is owned by NHS Property Services, while the health services come from various providers - the largest being the two GP practices, plus CSH Surrey, which runs all local community health services, including walk in centres.

'We want to reassure the local community that we will work with partners, providers, stakeholders and the local community to ensure that we develop the health care facilities in Weybridge to meet the future needs of the local population,' said Giselle Rothwell, head of communications at CCG. 'Regular public meetings will be held to keep the community updated on progress and to ask for feedback on the future plans. We are hoping to have another meeting soon to discuss the site.'

At the end of July one such event was held at the Churchfields Community Centre, updating local residents in the imme-

diate aftermath of the fire about the short-term measures in place. Hosted by the local NHS organisations, the meeting had a wide turnout of residents, with the Police, the Fire Service, local Councillors and local MP Philip Hammond also in attendance. Strong feelings were expressed by members of the public that in the long term the building should be replaced complete with all the previous services available, in particular the walk in centre. Assurances were given that new NHS facilities will be provided for the two GP practices, but no commitments were made for the other services.

Any new building will take about three years to plan, build and commission, and cash-strapped local authorities and the NHS may want to take a look at consolidation and reconfiguration of services and properties.

DO YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE? WISH TO GET INVOLVED? The Weybridge Society welcomes all interested local residents, as it expects to be part of the resolution of this issue, ensuring the voice of the broader community is heard. So please get in touch as we look to form a new committee to focus on the future of the Weybridge NHS.

MAJOR WEYBRIDGE TOWN CENTRE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT UNDERWAY



A new Streetscape Project has been awarded £330,000 in local Weybridge Community Infrastructure Levy funding to help over the next year and a half to see it to completion. The project is the result of feedback from town centre businesses through their organisation, the Weybridge Town Business Group (WTBG), as well as other interested parties, who highlighted a range of issues and opportunities to deliver improvements to key sites within Weybridge town centre.

The centrepiece of the project is to

create a small plaza as a focal point with new paving and street furniture to deliver shared flexible spaces for markets and on-street parking. The hope is that these improvements will act as a catalyst to re-energise the town for shoppers, businesses and visitors.

Over the past twelve months, Elmbridge Council has supported the WTBG to develop a coordinated programme of events, environmental improvements and community initiatives to support the vitality and viability of the town centre. The busi-

ness group has highlighted streetscape improvements from Elmgrove Road to Ship Yard as a priority project for Weybridge town centre. In its plan to create a new plaza, the Project aims to declutter

street furniture, resurface and extend the pavement, retain on-street parking, offer a flexible events space and respect the conservation area.

PUBLIC EVENT: LOCAL THAMES LANDSCAPE STRATEGY FROM WEYBRIDGE TO KEW

Join the Weybridge Society for an important public event on Oct. 5 – a presentation by Thames Landscape Strategy (TLS) coordinator Jason Debney on what's happening with riverbank management, flood risk, environmental enhancement and landscape works.

Of particular interest to Weybridge residents, Debney will be giving an update on proposals for the Weybridge Point car park, a TLS project that secured some £70k+ from Community Infrastructure Funds (CIL) in March this year.

TLS's vision is "to conserve, promote and enhance for the future, one of the world's great river landscapes between Weybridge, Hampton and Kew." Formed in 1994, the TLS has as its patron Sir David Attenborough, a resident of Richmond. More information on TLS can be found via <http://thames-landscape-strategy.org.uk/>.

All are welcome to attend this event, with members free and guests entry at £3, at the Small Hall at the St James Parish Centre Weybridge (Churchfields car park) at 8:00 pm (doors open 7:30 pm).

NEW BROADWATER PATH OPEN

A new inland footpath linking Weybridge and Walton opened this summer, with Surrey County Council completing its works to clear overgrowth and dead trees and open up pastoral vistas along the long awaited Broadwater path.

The Broadwater path now gives local residents an alternate way to cover the 2km from Cowey Sale to the back of St George's Junior School along Greside Road, providing a second relaxed walk



from Weybridge to Walton and back, besides the one offered alongside the river. On Aug. 20 the Surrey Walks Club took its inaugural stroll down the new path, returning along the old course of the Thames around Desborough Island.

The Broadwater area was once part of the landscaped view from Oatlands Park terrace, running along a river leading towards Walton Bridge, although trees now screen that view. About a decade ago and long after it had been first proposed, the Broadwater footpath became a requirement in the planning permission granted to convert Greenlands Farmhouse into Weybridge Health Club. Despite its fine setting, the Club has not been profitable, and this year became part of the Bannatyne Spa Group. Land ownership questions on parts of the path delayed its

completion, but now the Broadwater path is designated as an official wide footpath managed by Surrey County Council.

This public path also now falls within the Thames Landscape Strategy (TLS) area, which continues to see changes of key interest to Weybridge residents. For more information on TLS see <http://thames-landscape-strategy.org.uk> and make a note of our public talk on Oct. 5 by TLS co-ordinator Jason Debney. More on the history of the TLS can also be found in the Weybridge summer 2016 newsletter.

WEYBRIDGE SOCIETY PARKING PROJECT 2017-2018

Undertaking a major local parking survey in conjunction with the Weybridge Town Business Group, which represents local business interests, the Weybridge Society recently presented its findings to Elmbridge Borough and Surrey County councils.

Aware of the dire parking issues in Weybridge, both councils were nonetheless surprised by the data: somewhere between 700 and 1000 cars belonging to Weybridge business employees are parked on residential roads, namely because no suitable off-road car parking spaces are available.

The numbers confirm beyond a doubt what local residents have long suspected: that day-long commuter parking is the primary cause of gridlock on residential roads and has a hugely detrimental impact on residents and shoppers, who are vying for the same spaces. At the meeting councillors reiterated their support of the joint initiative by the Society and the town business group in evaluating the options available to solve the car parking crisis.

The next stage in evaluation, which has already begun, will include the difficult task of identifying where necessary, extra off-street space could be located, together with additional spaces for free parking a little further out of town to act as an alternative.

Opportunities may already exist within the town centre for more efficient use of parking, such as the Churchfields Car Park which has variable pricing depending on length of stay. Other car parks, such as the hospital site – though the possibilities here will not be known for some time – might also become available for new solutions.

More investigatory work, including a longer-term feasibility of park & ride services out towards Brooklands, now needs to be undertaken. The Steering Group of the Parking Project will formulate its proposal to be put to authorities over the next few months. For the purposes of the study, a ten-minute walk to work is considered an acceptable part of the definition of accessible parking, and the main town cen-

tre and the Queens Road area of shops are being considered as two distinct parking locations.

Some of the current proposals being considered include a combination of controlled parking zones working alongside additional off-street space (some free of charge, some not) during normal weekday trading hours. As shoppers typically require only a short time to pop in and out, roads in the immediate vicinity of retail areas are being considered for free parking of up to an hour, with those a little further out providing up to three hours of free time to accommodate longer meetings, lunches, hairdressing appointments, church services and school interviews etc. Beyond those zones, adequate and unrestricted free parking should be made available to provide an alternative option to car park charges. In this way residents could have improved access to space near their

homes whenever they require it, shoppers and other visitors may be encouraged to visit the town in the knowledge of easy and free parking, while commuters will have the option of paying for the convenience of a nearby car park or walking a little further in exchange for free parking.

While these solutions are being based on the logic of requirements, it will be vital for the various elements of off-street parking and controlled zones to operate together. No matter how low the fee in a car park might be set, human nature suggests that commuters will continue to park all day for free in a residential road that is as close to their place of work as a paid-for car park, unless restrictions are applied to those roads themselves.

Your views on parking are greatly welcomed by the Society, so contact us at transport@weybridgesociety.org.uk.

SHAPING ELMBRIDGE, A NEW LOCAL PLAN – ARE YOU AWARE?

Do you know what's happening in our Borough? Here are a few key government consultations important to local residents:

In response to its Strategic Options consultation on a new local plan, Elmbridge Borough Council received some 50,000 comments from 3,760 respondents. These have been analysed and reported to Councillors and a summary document published (see http://consult.elmbridge.gov.uk/gf2.ti/-/756418/29008485.1/PDF/-/Summary_of_Consultation_Responses_including_appendices.pdf).

The next phase of consultation, which was planned for this summer, has been delayed. This is due to policy chang-

es announced by the Government in its Housing White Paper because they impact on the new Local Plan. The Council is therefore awaiting the outcome of these changes before moving forward, possibly in September.

A Position Statement was issued by the Council's Cabinet on 5th July. This summarises the key issues emerging and explains the context of the Government's current national planning policy (see http://consult.elmbridge.gov.uk/gf2.ti/-/756418/29015653.1/PDF/-/Elmbridge_Local_Plan__Position_Statement_July_2017.pdf).

LOOKING FOR MONITORS IN YOUR AREA

Do you live in Oatlands or St Georges Hill or the streets nearby? Are you concerned about traffic and parking and/or new and ongoing developments in your area?

Then join us on the planning committee of Weybridge Society - we've been making a difference to outcomes for more than fifty years!

All that's required is a keen interest in what's going on, a sharp eye and a willingness to monitor the Elmbridge borough website for updates on planning from time to time. You'll report your findings to the Weybridge Society planning committee by email, alerting the rest of us to what's happening in your neighbourhood, then join in quarterly meetings where we discuss which developments to challenge and how.

Not a lot to ask – but you'll be at the forefront of keeping Weybridge special where it matters most – close to your home! So if you're motivated to fight off the worst developments and make positive changes in your neighbourhood, get in touch with Chairman Dave Arnold chairman@weybridgesociety.org.uk

PLANNING UPDATE

Disclaimer: The following information is summarised from the Weybridge Society's Planning Panel's records. It is up to date at the time of writing, and we endeavour to make it a true representation of the panel's opinion and of our actions and plans. For the latest and most accurate developments on planning, consult Elmbridge Borough.

2016/1195 - 20/22 Castleview Road. The proposal is for a terrace of five two-storey houses. The Weybridge Society Planning Panel (WSPP) lodged an objection on the grounds of a cramped and undesirable development. Fourteen objections have been received by the Council. The application was refused on Aug. 11.

2016/3151 - Roundabouts at Brooklands Road, 2016/3155 (Station roundabout), 2016/3158 (Morrisons Roundabout) & 2016/3160 (War Memorial roundabout at the Cricket Green). These four applications relate to advertisements on roundabouts. All four were refused planning permission at the July 13 Planning Committee meeting, as well as the others

in Elmbridge.

2016/3450 - 47 Thames Street. Basement car park for six cars plus ramp access. The Appeal against EBC's decision to refuse the application has been dismissed by the Planning Inspector. Many issues still need to be resolved with respect to the Planning Applications.

2016/4076 - 11 Oakfield Glade. Additional two-storey house proposed but it was deemed "unattractive" and the planning panel added to the 41 objections on the grounds that it was an overdevelopment totally out of character with the neighbourhood. This consideration was accepted by the South Area Planning Committee at its meeting on July 3 when planning permission was refused.

2016/4126 - Clive House, 12-18 Queens Road. This planning application covers knocking down the existing building and replacing it with a three/part four-story building with basement to provide 30 retirement flats. The number of objections rose to 116 based predominantly on the insensitivity of the proposed design to

the local environment due to it being out of proportion in terms of mass, bulk and height and its failure to recognise the local environment of a well set back building line. The proposed development would dominate the street scene and is not appropriate to the current village environment; it would destroy the unique atmosphere of the locally distinctive Queens Road Village.



EBC's listed building consultant has objected to the development based upon its impact on the Salisbury House (a locally listed building) due to the bringing forward of the building line and its increased massing compared to the existing Clive House.

The Main Planning Committee refused the Application at its July 13th meeting unanimously on the basis of the above points, the South Area Planning Sub Committee having already recommended its refusal at its meeting on June 12th. An appeal is considered likely, this would need to be submitted by mid-January 2018.

2017/0953 - Arbrook Farm, Walton Lane Gates to the road and 2017/0196, area used during construction of the new bridge. These applications cover the retention of a sliding entrance gate, brickwork flanking walls and rising bollards as well as the area (originally agricultural land) used by Costains during the construction of the new Walton Bridge. A condition of the original application placed

on Costains was that the land should be returned to its original state once the construction work had been completed. This condition appears not to have been enforced by Elmbridge.

The Society has objected to these current applications on the following grounds: land use is equestrian and not agricultural, there are unidentified highway safety risks, and the flood risk assessment is flawed. Furthermore, it is unacceptable development on Green Belt, and the views identified in the core strategy should be preserved. These views were accepted by EBC Planning and the applicant was ordered to remove the entrance gates by the end of August.

2017/1681 - Locke King House, Balfour Road. This covers the demolition of Locke King House at one of Weybridge's busiest roundabouts and entry point into the town centre, with a proposal for replacing it with a two-storey building comprising ten flats, basement parking and landscaping.



At the time of writing, thirteen objections have been received to the proposed development. The objections highlight that the proposed design is inconsistent with the local street scene, remains detrimental to the Conservation area and would not enhance the character of the area. The tenor of the objections is in-line with the view of the EBC Planning Conservation consultant who advises that there are no

substantial public benefits identified which outweigh the harm to the Conservation area. The Society supports these views.

2017/2086 - 17 High Pine Close. This covers a detached two-storey house with rooms in the roof-space and detached garage in the rear garden. The basis of this application is for a detached house in the rear of 17 High Pine Close with access for cars, pedestrians and service vehicles from York Road using an existing footpath. More than fifty residents have already objected based upon the poor access: it is not clear who owns the access path from York Road which is used by local residents. Further complaints concern the effect on neighbours' amenity in terms of separation of buildings and reduction in natural light and that the site is too small for the proposed building. The proposed development is also said to be contrary to the established character of the road and footpath which is large houses spaced with substantial gaps. The Society supports the residents' views.

St George's House 24 Queens Road. McCarthy & Stone held a meeting with the Society on June 27 to display its latest proposals for an assisted living (extra

care) development on this site following on from the public exhibition on May 18. The proposals are for a four-storey building containing 43 single and double bedroom apartments with 34 car parking spaces. The existing building line and trees would be maintained, but there would be a significant extension to the rear of the existing building.



The Society's reaction to the May 18 exhibition was that the mass, bulk, height and design is inconsistent with the Queens Road Village environment. Since that date McCarthy & Stone have done little to answer the criticisms of the Society and others. A planning application is expected in the next few months, although the recent decision on Clive House, see 2016/4126 above, may give McCarthy & Stone some further thoughts on the way forward before submitting any application.

JOIN THE WEYBRIDGE SOCIETY

Founded more than fifty years ago, the Weybridge Society has recently become a registered UK charity. As ever the Society provides an opportunity for residents to keep abreast of events and issues affecting our community and with charity status, your donations go even further. We welcome new members and membership can be either individual at £8 annually or joint (for two people at the same address) at £12. Full details can be found on our website www.weybridgesociety.org.uk. The QR code alongside provides a link directly to the joining page.



MEET TIM OLIVER

WEYBRIDGE'S NEW SURREY COUNTY COUNCILLOR

When it comes to local government it turns out that Tim Oliver, the new Surrey County councillor for Weybridge, is an old hand at politics, both at the borough and county levels. And if you believe the old adage about giving something you want done to a busy person, Oliver is surely the man, his enthusiasm undented by his various commitments and the challenges ahead.

Oliver, who's been based in Esher for the last 25 years, also holds the post of deputy leader of the Tories in Elmbridge Borough council where he represents Esher. In addition, he continues in property investments and consultancy work, as well as a non-executive role as director of a charity website and a committee member at two local hospices. He was elected as Surrey County Councillor for Weybridge last May.



Previously Oliver also worked at Surrey County Council (SCC) representing Esher and East Molesey in 2005-2009. He took a break from that work because of professional commitments at the time: he was still at Parabis, the £200 million legal and professional services business that he helped grow to more than 2,500 staff. Oliver remained CEO of Parabis until 2015 and says he decided to return to SCC at the urging of the Conservative Party when the previous county councillor decided not to stand for re-election.

In early summer, the Weybridge Society caught up with Tim for a chat over a cof-

fee at Café Rouge on the Queen's Road to find out what he thinks are Weybridge's biggest concerns and what he hopes he can do.

WeySoc: Of the issues now facing Weybridge what can you most influence as a Surrey County Councillor?

Oliver: Weybridge is a diverse community. I live a short distance away and travel through Weybridge at regular intervals, and as deputy leader of the Borough Council I have a good view across the political divide of what goes on. The top issues are traffic, creating a vibrant town centre and parking. Traffic is a county issue in terms of roads and highways, so as county councillor, two of those issues I think I can influence more than most.

WeySoc: We agree! In a survey carried out by the Society a few years ago, traffic congestion in Weybridge was cited as one of the major concerns. But the continuing approval of high density developments is only likely toacerbate the situation. Do you think there are real initiatives/actions that can improve the situation? Also as you're right that parking is a major concern in Weybridge for both residents and businesses, what changes would you like to see to the current arrangements?

Oliver: Overall, we need to find a way of moving traffic out of the centre. There's a park and ride scheme in development for Brooklands, particularly aimed at the workers, and that could free up two hour slots for people to pop into shops and also free up residential parking.

We also need to look at the A3 Wisley access – how to help with Seven Hills and

Brooklands Road congestions – with by passes and junctions. The government has put £100,000 in funds into a study by SCC and a local entrepreneur partnership to find out what can be done.

Lastly, we need improved pedestrian and cycle routes as it's difficult to find a proper pavement in places. And schools need to make more of an effort to educate parents to walk their children.

On high density development, that's a borough issue, and the issues there are protected greenbelt and whether planning decisions are appropriate. But we do need to stop replacing single dwellings with multi dwellings -- that would be a good principle to adopt and operate on.

WeySoc: Many Weybridge residents and members of our Society have expressed concern about the evaluation of highways matters carried out by SCC Highways when Elmbridge Borough Council planning applications are assessed? Do you share this concern and what can be done about it?

Oliver: It's a fair point about needing more cooperation. SCC Highways needs to liaise with Borough more frequently. The issues are access and visibility, and we do rarely see Surrey highways objecting on specific applications. We need to be more proactive and aggressive. We need to look at Elmbridge – the junction at Weybridge station, the carparks at the station. One resident came up with a suggestion for an underground car park outside the (Hand & Spear) pub and affordable housing above. We need to think through various options.

WeySoc: How do you plan to improve communications between SCC and Weybridge residents? Past experience is poor.

Oliver: I've already had a meeting with borough councillors to hear their views

on issues and I will be setting up a meeting with the Weybridge Business Group and residents groups like the Portmore Park Road and Triangle Residents Group (TRG). I will sit down with these groups as a starting point and the aim is to have town hall meetings. I positively welcome and want to fully engage with local communities. The idea is to get a consensus - I've been elected to listen to residents and though we can't satisfy all, we do want to hear from people. For example, it would be great to have feedback on the library (a SCC building not fully utilised). We work with residents groups, like the TRG, who wanted advisory signage for HGV lorries and we're looking at a 20 mile limit in the Triangle area. Baker Street – should we pedestrianise it? We've had mixed views. But we are here to listen and come up with solutions. I'd like to tell residents we're going to work hard on improving Weybridge town centre to encourage that businesses put in a good mix of shops.

WeySoc: What effect will severe SCC budget cuts will have on Weybridge residents?

Oliver: Cuts in funding tend to relate to social services, but in Weybridge the community centre for the elderly is still here. I have to say I opposed the closure of the tennis courts – we have to listen carefully to residents here. And Elmbridge saved a million by changing services on rubbish but not recognising the disruption and not putting in plans for that. As far as the SCC is concerned, our strength is having regular meetings with high level cabinet members – MPs that represent Surrey like Hammond, Hunt and Robb – so I do think we can lobby the government effectively on local concerns.

WeySoc: Many thanks and best of luck!

WEYBRIDGE SOCIETY 2017 STUDENT AWARDS

The Weybridge Society supports young people working to make Weybridge a better place to live, and each year recognises students at our local state secondary school Heathside who have excelled in the subject of history and in community service. This year's recipients, who received their awards in early September, are James Derham, for the Weybridge Society



James Derham

Award for History, and Nancy Scott, for the Weybridge Society Award for Sixth Form Contributions to the Community of Weybridge. Both are talented and high-achieving



Nancy Scott

students well deserving of recognition. James had outstanding GSCE results in all four units of his exam and delivered a fine WWI remembrance assembly in year 9. Nancy became a ward volunteer at the Princess Alice Hospice and volunteers with RYA Sailability which supports disabled sailors. A very fine athlete and active in many areas, Nancy worked hard and achieved amazing academic results, earning a place at Cambridge to study medicine. Best of luck to our winners!

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE & CHARITY TRUSTEES WE'RE LOOKING TO EXPAND!

Are you interested in becoming a Society member, or a more active member? Do you have a particular strength or role you'd like to play on our steering committee?

We're actively looking for enthusiastic people to join us at the Society, to help us expand our activities in making Weybridge a great place to live - so tell everyone you know the Society wants them! We're also keen for current members to get more involved, so if you or anyone you know could fill some of the vacancies below, let us know! Our meetings are open, but please contact any committee member if you'd like to come along. Our executive committee meetings are bi-monthly and run from 19:30 to 21:30, location is St. Charles Borromeo Church on Portmore Park Road.

So come show your support for a better Weybridge, and spread the word about all the good the Society does!

News Letter Comments - Did anything catch your eye in this newsletter, or would you like to make a comment to the writer? Your feedback would be appreciated. Please let us know through newsletter@weybridgesociety.org.uk

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE & CHARITY TRUSTEES

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