

From: John Allford
Sent: Thursday, September 05, 2002 12:40 AM
To: STAG mailing list
Cc: Jeremy Smith; Colm Lennon; Ivan Ball
Subject: STAG Update september 2002.

STAG

Stoughton Action Group

Working for all residents.

Chairman:- John Allford.
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Update September 2002

To all members

It may seem that STAG has been very quiet lately but much work has been going on. In May, residents who attended the meeting at Northmead School to discuss the community's requirements of the proposed community centre elected a steering committee. Committee members produced a specification of Stoughton's requirements for the Developers but have yet to receive a response. What we do know, however, is that the 150 square metres offered will not accommodate the community's needs.

I have continued to forward your concerns to the Developers, although, perhaps due to holidays, they have been slow to respond. Matters arising have been: -

- The continued use of the southern part of Grange Road by construction traffic, including dumper trucks that appear to be constantly carrying earth, spoil, whatever, back and forth.
- Construction vehicles using Cumberland Avenue.
- The excessive speed and general lack of care by drivers, even when using the correct routes.
- The removal of the bus shelter at Johnston Walk, with no indication of what is to replace it.
- Traffic calming measures in Johnston Walk.

Tilehouse residents have been given details of the traffic calming measures to be installed along Johnston Walk and resident's opinions sought by the Developers. It would be helpful if any comments were copied to STAG, so that we can maintain an independent record."

The above is not an exhaustive list and I am sure these and other matters will be raised again at the next meeting with the developers.

Next meeting with developers.

The next meeting with the developers will be on **Monday 9th September 2002, 7:30pm at the Holiday Inn, Egerton Road.**

It would appear that, as usual, not everyone, including myself this time, has received notice of this from the developers, so please spread the word. I will attempt to get a printed copy of this to members without e-mail, but once more, please inform any members that you are in contact with.

The meeting is to discuss the latest plans for the commercial area, STAG is concerned that there have been a number of changes to the buildings and associated transport alterations. You may have seen a letter from the Borough Council, concerning this application, in which it is indicated that the bus only route is to be deleted. It is not stated, in the letter, whether the route is to be closed, OR OPENED TO ALL TRAFFIC !!! *But I am not taking bets.*

If you wish to make a representation to the Council Officers, you should do so within 21 days of the 27th. August.

As usual the plans can be viewed at the Council Offices during office hours, or there is a late night service on Thursday evening. If you wish to make use of the latter, you should ring GBC planning administration on 01483 444609.

Further development in North Guildford.

As you will be aware, Surrey County Council plans to build 4,000 new homes in North Guildford, over the next ten to fifteen years.

STAG members attended meetings in Guildford, Woking and Fairlands and Worplesdon and have written to the Deputy Prime Minister as below.

The Rt. Hon. John Prescott MP
Deputy Prime Minister
House of Commons
Westminster
London
SW1 0AA

Our reference: nh001/jp

30 August 2002

Dear Sir,

Surrey County Council Increasing Urbanisation of the Green Belt

I write to you on behalf of Stoughton Action Group (STAG), a group of residents representing the Guildford ward of Stoughton, which adjoins the wards designated to accept two of the proposed housing sites in North Guildford and the South Woking site is also relatively close. Residents in this large, densely populated area of North Guildford have expressed their concerns to STAG, the Guildford Borough Council and Surrey County Council over proposals made by the latter to create three new communities each of 2,000 dwellings. These are to be constructed between Guildford and Woking on what has always been considered valuable green belt land. Regrettably, many are also of the opinion that as this is the result of Central Government decree, it is a *fait accompli* and the normal planning process will be ineffectual. The action of Surrey County Council to date has done little to boost the confidence of residents, hence this letter to you.

This action appears to fly in the face of policy for the green belt and established open spaces, on which recently, you commented. "It is crucial that we protect our open spaces and playing fields. We expect local authorities to plan effectively and to protect these valuable resources, delivering new open space, sport and recreational facilities in a sustainable manner".

Others will, no doubt, write to your Office quoting various Policy Documents. However, how do you reconcile these proposals to your statement in *Planning for the Communities of the Future* 23 February 1998: "Most people want to live in towns and cities because of their work"? How will 6,000 homes in the Green Belt "reclaim our city centres for the people" and bring about any "renaissance" of Guildford and Woking?

This is not yet another simple case of NIMBYism; the housing shortage in the SE is recognised. However, following recent experience with a 500+ dwelling development on a brownfield site at Queen Elizabeth Park, Guildford, local residents have genuine concerns and it is on these that I would appreciate your guidance and comment. Additionally there is difficulty comprehending the requirement for 6,000 new homes on the Green Belt when it reported that over 9,000 stand empty in the county. Residents are fearful that their quality of life will suffer with this long-term building project both during construction and following occupation. Many, especially those on fixed incomes, are unable to move away from any development because of the rapidly escalating house prices and, quite understandably, feel trapped by Government Policy. Answers to the following may help to alleviate these concerns and prevent repetitious reference to these factors in future.

Existing infrastructure

This is probably the greatest area of concern, NW Guildford's access routes are currently taking between 1,800 and 2,200 vehicles per hour at peak, and an addition of between 6,000 and 12,000 new cars will not enhance this situation. What is the Government's policy on the establishment of a suitable infrastructure being in place before any development is allowed?

Affordable Housing

It is claimed that the new developments will include a proportion of affordable housing for key workers and local families. Is a definition of "affordable housing" possible at this time? Many young key workers probably could not afford to repay the average mortgage advance of £78,900 (*Statistical Release HS-Q4: 25 July 2002*). Currently, this is just an abstract term for many residents and a clear statement from your Office would be appreciated.

Cyanide

Can you advise us please on the hazard presented by the unquantified amount of cyanide canisters allegedly buried in the area over 50 years ago? Does this represent a potential hazard to existing residents, many of whom are probably ignorant of its presence? If planning permission is granted, will it be necessary for the cyanide to be removed before any development? If so, how will this be undertaken and what are the safety implications for existing residents during such an operation?

I thank you in anticipation and look forward to your response

Yours faithfully

For and on behalf of Stoughton Action Group, Guildford

cc. S Doughty MP
R Hargreaves SCC

Letters from Parish Councils and STAG are not enough, if you have a view on the "new communities" proposed for NE and NW Guildford and South of Woking, you should also write. If you do, please remember to copy your letter to your MP.

Chairman

Following recent changes in my personal circumstances, I have felt obliged to stand down as Chairman of STAG. I would like to thank everyone for their support during my time in office.

I am please to inform you that Nigel Horton has agreed to becoming Acting Chairman and trust you will continue to support Nigel and the rest of the committee.

Nigel can be contacted by: -Telephone: 01483 235 811, Fax: 08701 606 635, e-mail: nhstag@hotmail.com

Please address all correspondence to: N Horton, STAG, PO Box 498, Guildford GU2 9WP

Please do not continue to use Nigel's other e-mail address for STAG matters.

Nigel has asked me to include the following: -

Dear Member,

All residents of Stoughton are automatically members of STAG unless they indicate otherwise. Therefore, I write to you to mark the retirement of STAG's first Chairman John Allford after three years service on behalf of this voluntary group. John's sterling efforts since the group's inception have resulted in some of the benefits we see today, especially in relation to the new Queen Elizabeth Park development. For this we should all be very grateful and I take this opportunity to thank John and wish him well for the future. As a relative new boy to STAG, I would be very grateful if John remains an active member of STAG and will indeed welcome his support.

STAG is very concerned that any developments should not detract from the quality of life for Stoughton residents. STAG is not just concerned with the Queen Elizabeth Park Development, STAG is trying to get the best for the community of Stoughton. However, in order to do this we need more active members, are you able to help us represent you? If so I would like to hear from you.

Nigel Horton

I very much hope to remain active within STAG and to give Nigel and the committee whatever assistance I can.

Community Hall

We wish to thank all who attended the meeting at Northmead School in May and/or returned questionnaires. Special thanks is due to all who offered assistance. We have not forgotten your offers of help and will contact you when the time comes.

The minutes of the meeting are attached/enclosed. If you have any queries or comments regarding the minutes, please contact myself or Nigel.

Your Details

May I apologies for any errors in your name or contact details I may have made, whilst transcribing from the lists or questionnaires. Please DO let me have correct information.

Once again thanks for your support in the past and all the best to Nigel for the future.

John Allford
Chairman

(Now EX)