



Open Space

*An occasional newsletter of the
Aldborough Hatch Defence Association
Issue 20 – November 2007*

Fairlop Waters – future in the balance

Following public consultations on the future of Fairlop Waters in April and May, Redbridge Council has appointed a non-profit making organisation to operate the site, whilst a consultant is at work producing a spatial plan, development brief and financial appraisal. So – twelve months after the Council bought back the lease from Planestation's administrators – we are once again in limbo-land as to the future of this much valued area of Green Belt.

Four public consultation meetings took place – at the Town Hall, Fullwell Cross Library, Fairlop Waters and the Community Care Centre in Aldborough Hatch. Some 200 individuals and 22 groups took part – including a number of Aldborough Hatch Defence Association (AHDA) members and local residents. The AHDA submitted its written proposals – which were printed in *Open Space* Issue 19 dated April 2007.

A report presented to the Cabinet of Redbridge Council on 31st July stated that amongst those attending the consultations there was a wish to keep what is there, but to make it better. People wanted to retain the watersports facilities, the golf, the open space, the country park and wildlife. Amongst the facilities that need to be improved were the park and natural environment, access to footpaths, the watersports, golf, security, children's play area, the bar and restaurant. A number of people wanted to put a stop to radio controlled cars and funfairs using the site, whilst others wanted the golf course removed or downsized. There was a plea for no long term contracts – a reference, no doubt, to the fact that back in the 80s the then Redbridge Council signed Fairlop Waters over to a developer on a 125 year lease, with the disastrous results that we have suffered ever since!

Amongst the facilities that residents would like to see at Fairlop Waters were children's play/youth facilities, a visitors'/education centre, a café, toilets, access between Hainault Country Park and Fairlop Waters, cycling, bird watching hides/screens, bridle paths, swimming pool/lido, climbing wall, picnic areas, bus service along Forest Road, events, benches/seating, an hotel. Housing was debated at the meetings – with a very small minority in favour of some such

development near the two Underground Stations (seemingly overlooking the fact that the rubbish infill continues to emit methane gas - hardly conducive to housing! - that this is Green Belt land and that the Leader of the Council has stated publicly that housing is not on the agenda!

Meeting on 12th July, the Council's Leisure, Culture and the Olympics Scrutiny Committee supported the transfer of the site to Vision: Redbridge Culture and Leisure (VRCL) – a non-profit distributing organisation – in the short term. In the longer term, the Committee supported the appointment of a development partner or partners in order to give the Council capital finance to invest in the site and effect the improvements which were requested by the local community. The Committee supported the aim to retain and improve all the existing facilities on the site, including sustaining and enhancing the natural environment.

It was reported that several unsolicited offers have been received from investors. A hotel company has approached the Council about opening a hotel facility on site. Six separate groups are interested in opening another children's indoor soft play facility and some included outdoor play and provision for older children and teenagers. Four groups expressed an interest in the golf facilities. One local company offered to lease the fishing operation on the current angling and sailing lakes.

It is reported that at the Council Meeting on 20th September, a number of Councillors expressed concern at transferring control of the site by lease to VRCL whilst a consultant gets to work on future development of the site. Councillor Robert Cole was concerned that the lease would mean a long-term binding agreement and he wanted an assurance that VRCL would not be able to make material changes without the Council's permission. Councillor Richard Hoskins said that the Council had suffered "years of missed opportunities", adding: "We do not want to rush into a long-term lease. We need to know exactly what we are doing and seek the right advice. This is a golden opportunity and is worth taking our time to make sure we get it right." The Cabinet member for Leisure, Culture and the Olympics, Councillor Ronnie Barden was pressed to agree that the lease would be for two years or less and is reported to have agreed to do so.

Aldborough Hatch Defence Association Annual General Meeting

Friday 24th November 2006 at 8pm
St Peter's Vestry Room, Aldborough Road North
All are welcome

Aldborough Hatch Defence Association

Application for Renewal or New Membership

I wish to: * become a Member of the Aldborough Hatch
Defence Association for the year 2007 to 2008
* renew my Membership for the year 2007 to 2008
**Please delete as applicable*

Name: (Mr, Mrs, Miss).....

Address:

Postcode: Telephone:

I enclose £ as a donation towards the Association's
Fighting Fund (£5 or more per individual or family).

Signed:

Date:

Please hand in at the AGM or return to:
**The Hon Treasurer, c/o 37 Spearpoint Gardens, Aldborough Road
North, Aldborough Hatch, ILFORD, Essex IG2 7SX**