

Open Space

*An occasional newsletter of the
Aldborough Hatch Defence Association
Issue 23 – November 2008*

Sand and Gravel extraction at Aldborough Hatch Farm Exhibition delayed until New Year

The Exhibition by Lafarge Aggregates to inform residents of plans for extracting sand and gravel on land adjoining St. Peter's Church, St. Peter's Close and Oaks Lane has been delayed until the New Year.

When it became clear that the Exhibition due to take place last summer (see OPEN SPACE, Issue 21, April 2008) was not going to happen, the AHDA wrote to Stuart Anderson at Lafarge Aggregates in September, who replied as follows:

"We submitted our Scoping letter to Redbridge planners in February of this year. Normally this is dealt with in a matter of weeks and despite numerous reminders have only just received a response. This has effectively delayed matters by six months. Now we have received that response we can now instruct the various consultants to commence their assessments with the knowledge that the work being carried out within agreed parameters. Once all the reports are with us we shall prepare the first draft with a view to holding an exhibition in the New Year."

David Pethen, Redbridge Council's Head of Estates Management, has confirmed that there will be a public exhibition in the New Year regarding Aldborough Hatch Farm and has advised that the current gravel extraction on Aldborough Hall Farm will come to an end in March 2009, after which restoration, using inert fill materials, will commence prior to restoration for leisure use.

It's all happening at Fairlop Waters!

Some £652,000 is being expended during the current financial year for improvements to the facilities at Fairlop Waters, whilst further bids for funding are being made - this was revealed at the Council's Cabinet Meeting on 6th October.

Chairman of the Aldborough Hatch Defence Association Ron Jeffries, speaking at the Cabinet Meeting on behalf of the Association and Barkingside 21, congratulated the Council on allocating capital funding of £400,000 from the budget to improve access, to resurface pathways and for other essential work, whilst noting that funding from the GAF3 bid in

the sum of £252,000 will be used for signage, landscaping and a climbing/play area – all to be completed by next April.

The Chairman reminded Councillors that it is two years since the Council took surrender of the lease and that last year's consultation made plain that the public overwhelmingly want the current facilities retained - but improved. Making the point that clearly the Council does not have the money to fund improvements, the Chairman asked what steps the Council has taken to seek capital grants from outside sources?

The verbal reply from the Cabinet Member responsible did not answer the Chairman's question, but next morning before the Chairman had time to send an email asking for a full reply, Ward Councillor Mrs Vanessa Cole had done the job for him! Later that day the Chairman received an informative letter from Jacqueline Eggleston, Redbridge Council's Project Manager for Fairlop Waters, offering to meet with Members of the Association. Jacqueline will attend the Annual Meeting this month, to tell us what is happening and take questions.

Meantime, Jacqueline's letter explained that landscape architects and leisure development consultants have been appointed. A range of initial landscaping works will be completed in this financial year and a potential leisure development partnership will be in place by April. This will allow for major landscaping and leisure investment in 2009/10 and for any planning permission on improvements to the buildings.

Jacqueline is working to raise additional funds for Fairlop. So far, £60,000 has been awarded from the Department for Children, Schools and Families Playbuilder funds for play facilities at Fairlop in 2009/10. Fairlop has been designated as the main recipient of the Play Pathfinder application currently being submitted. This, if successful, will achieve £800,000 for adventure play at Fairlop. A submission has been made to the Mayor's Priority Parks which if successful will award between £400,000 and £2M for Fairlop. An application has been made for £200,000 to SITA (the waste management company that administers the Landfill Tax fund). Draft applications are ready for the next submission round to the Aggregates Levy Fund and to Natural England, and £35,000 has been awarded from Design for London. A range of other funding sources will be approached as and when their next funding rounds open, including the European Regional Development Fund.

It is good to know that something is happening – readers are invited to come to the AGM to find it more and to put their questions.

Aldborough Hatch Defence Association

Annual General Meeting

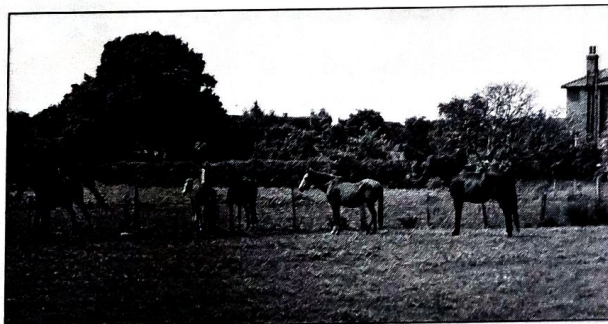
Friday 28th November 2007 at 8pm

St Peter's Church Halls, Aldborough Road North

Speaker: Jacqueline Eggleston

Redbridge Council's Project Manager, Fairlop Waters

All are very welcome to attend



Is this Green Belt land in danger of being sold for housing? See overleaf

Green Belt under threat Land sales get the thumbs up

The results of the much-heralded Redbridge Conversation were published this Autumn – and top of the list for raising the cash to enable the Council to fund much-needed developments was the sale of Green Belt land on Fairlop Plain for housing.

After a three-hour long meeting on 13th October, the Council's Capital Programme Corporate Panel agreed to make the following recommendations to Cabinet:

(1) That the 2009/10 to 2011/12 Capital Programme be funded from Council to efficiencies, land and property sales, and expanded paid parking together with improved parking enforcement. It also recommends that options for potential funding from sale of allotments, car parks, Council Tax increases and increased service or parking charges be not taken forward.

(2) That in respect of land sales the following specific factors be considered:-

That during our consultation we were reminded by members of the public that Cabinet members had given recent commitments in relation to certain individual pieces of land. Cabinet is asked to take these into account in its recommendations to Council. In addition, Cabinet's attention is drawn to the fact that the recommended capital programme could rely heavily on funding from the sale of one or two particular sites. Therefore there will remain considerable uncertainty until the various potential obstacles to these sales have been resolved and the expected proceeds established more precisely.

(3) That unavoidable capital expenditure totaling approximately £119m be taken forward as follows: School Improvement; School places (assuming academy funding); ICT Strategy and Indirect Revenue; Roads and traffic; Care and well being; Affordable Housing; Re-cycling; Community Safety.

(4) That in so far as funding permits, and in accordance with the preferences given in the Conversation, desirable capital expenditure be taken forward in the following categories: School improvement; Recycling; Leisure; Care and well-being; Community Safety; Roads and Traffic.

(5) That the Council examines all options for the delivery of land sales, including a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) (*And in case you think this is something with four wheels – which it is not – an explanatory paper was attached to the panel's agenda. Having read it, I am none the wiser – Chairman, AHDA.*)

Summaries of the results were published in Redbridge Life and the local press. Full details are available on the Council's website – including the paper on SPV.

Results flawed – no mandate for land sales

Addressing the Capital Programme Corporate Panel for two minutes at its meeting on 13th October, the AHDA Chairman said: "In Thursday's *Ilford Recorder* the online poll asked if land at Fairlop Plain should be sold off for housing? At five this afternoon - five days later - the percentage saying 'No' stood at 96.42 per cent. A resounding result – you might say - but hardly a scientific representation of the views of the residents of this Borough. It so happens that some 96 per cent of *Recorder* readers do not want housing on Fairlop Plain and only 3.58 per cent want it.

"In our view the results of that poll are no different from that of the Redbridge Conversation. Both are totally unrepresentative of the Borough. We are told that there were

5,142 online and written replies to the Conversation. Of these 442 replies were removed but we are not told who decided to remove them nor the criteria used.

"Be that as it may, some 4,700 responses were analysed. Assuming that the population of Redbridge is 250,000 – a conservative figure - this means that the responses of only 1.8 per cent of the Borough's population were used in the survey. How the report published on the website can state that there was a "strong level of participation" beggars belief!

"Some 52 per cent of respondents put land sales as their top choice. That's less than one per cent of the Borough – so 99 per cent do not want land to be sold. The land sale options in the Conversation – which were very limited - were for the sale of land on Fairlop Plain and at Oaks Lane for housing – all Green Belt. Selling green belt land is akin to flogging off the family silver. The figures I have quoted do not give you a mandate to act. I urge you to reject the recommendation for the sale of Green Belt land. This should be sacrosanct. Hundreds of residents and the majority of Councillors did not spend ten years fighting the threat of a racecourse to end up with housing."

A number of other residents spoke. Councillor Ruth Clark wanted to know why ward councillors had not been advised that land sales within their ward would be an option in the Redbridge Conversation – and was told that it was impossible to advise councillors in this way. The jubilation of allotment holders was short-lived when they were warned that a later Council might reverse this decision.

Stop Press

At its meeting on Tuesday 4th November, the Council's Cabinet recommended that the full Council "receive and agree that the recommendations of the Panel guide the preparation of the 2009-10 to 2011-12 Capital Programme". Perhaps the important word here is "guide" for we are aware that a number of Councillors are prepared to fight to the bitter end any suggestion that Green Belt land is sold for housing. The battle to preserve the Green Belt of Fairlop Plain has been waged over many years and the fight will continue unabated.

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 2008 to 2009
* renew my Membership for the year 2008 to 2009
*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

Aldborough Hatch Defence Association

For further information on any of the items in this issue please contact

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