



# Open Space

*An occasional newsletter of the  
Aldborough Hatch Defence Association*  
Issue 16 – June 2006

## London City Racecourse Yet further delays as Administrator decides to go ahead with Public Inquiry

Almost twelve months after Planestation – the company wishing to develop an all-weather racecourse at Fairlop Waters – went into administration, the decision has been made by the Administrator to go ahead with the Public Inquiry.

All of which means that after seven years of filibustering and delays – first by Wiggins, then by Planestation and now by the Administrator – the future of Fairlop Waters remains uncertain and in the balance.

Here is a brief run-down of what has happened (or not, depending on how you look at things!) over the past 18 months or so.

- **November 2004** – Redbridge Council's Regulatory Committee rejected overwhelmingly the revised planning application submitted by Planestation.
- **February 2005** – Planestation waited three months before announcing that they would appeal the Council's decision. The Planning Inspectorate

set the date of the Public Inquiry for 25<sup>th</sup> April 2006.

- **July 2005** – Following the collapse of its budget airline, EUjet, Planestation went into administration. Any rejoicing at the news was quickly dashed when Grant Thornton, the Administrator, announced that the appeal would go ahead.
- **September 2005** - *Property Week* (2<sup>nd</sup> September 2005) carried a story stating that Grant Thornton, the Administrator, is "reviewing the options on the site" (of Fairlop Waters) "which is going through a public inquiry into its use as a racecourse. The administrator plans to go ahead with the public inquiry and then either to continue to manage the site as a going concern itself, find a joint-venture partner, or sell off the asset."
- **October 2005** – Norham Multi-Leisure Limited, the business that owns the lease for Fairlop Waters (whose shares are held by Tomorrow's Leisure, whose parent company is Planestation) went into administration.
- **December 2005** – Administrator Grant Thornton applied to the Planning Inspectorate for the Public Inquiry set to commence on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2006 to be put into abeyance. The Inspectorate agrees to do so for three months from 15<sup>th</sup> December – until 15<sup>th</sup> March 2006.
- **March 2006** – The 15<sup>th</sup> of March comes and goes! The Aldborough Hatch Defence Association telephones the Inspectorate weekly for news – but none is forthcoming.
- **April 2006** – The Aldborough Hatch Defence Association and Barkingside 21 attended the Council's Area Committee Four by invitation on 19<sup>th</sup> April. Council Officers confirm that they are pressing the Planning Inspectorate to require the Administrator to decide whether or not they wish to proceed with the appeal. The Planning Inspectorate wrote to Grant Thornton on 20<sup>th</sup> April giving them two weeks to decide on the appeal.
- **May 2006** - The Association received a letter dated 5<sup>th</sup> May from the Planning Inspectorate on 6<sup>th</sup> May – the Administrator is going ahead with the appeal and the Inspectorate will be arranging the Public Inquiry.

So there we are – back where we started from!

### Administrator requests late listing for Inquiry

When writing to the Aldborough Hatch Defence Association on 5<sup>th</sup> May, the Planning Inspectorate attached a copy of the letter they received from the Administrator dated 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2006. The letter includes the following: "We would request, in light of the technical issues of dealing with a company in Administration and the involvement of additional parties since the original appeals were made, that in reactivating the appeal, a date is programmed with sufficient time for both the Appellant and the Council to prepare the extensive evidence which is likely to be required in a case of this size. There is further likely to be additional survey work and data collection required, and time required in agreeing a Statement of Common Ground, and therefore we would ask that the appeals are not assigned an early date or cancellation."



# News releases

The Aldborough Hatch Defence Association has issued two news releases to the local press in recent months. Both have been widely quoted in editorials. Here are some extracts:

## 27<sup>th</sup> December 2005

"We appreciate that Planestation has been in administration since last summer and these decisions are now being made by the Administrator.

"However, the indecision goes on and six years have passed since the racecourse at Fairlop Waters was first mooted.

"As Council Tax payers, we are aware that opposing the appeal is costing Redbridge Council money.

"We can only hope that the Administrator will come to an early decision whether or not to proceed with the appeal.

"Of one thing we can be certain and that is that the opposition to this unwanted and potentially devastating intrusion into the Green Belt is as strong and vigorous as ever."

## 7<sup>th</sup> May 2006

"We are extremely disappointed to learn some 18 months after the Council overwhelmingly rejected the plans for a racecourse on the Green Belt of Fairlop Waters that the Public Inquiry is to go ahead.

"No date has been set for the Inquiry. What is particularly galling is the fact that the Administrator has requested that the Inquiry is not set down for an early hearing as additional survey work and data collection is required. This means yet further prevarication and the indecision goes on.

"Seven years have passed since the racecourse at Fairlop Waters was first mooted. Until there is some clarity as to the future of this stretch of open space, the facilities will continue to be run down.

"We are aware that the Council has set aside some £130,000 to fight the appeal and has briefed its legal team. Any further delays will cost Redbridge Council more money.

"We urge the Council to press the Inspectorate to hold the Public Inquiry sooner rather than later.

"With the new all-weather racecourse opening at Great Lees, Chelmsford, in October next, it must be abundantly clear that the viability of the London City Racecourse is highly questionable. The appeal must fail on those grounds alone.

"Meanwhile the Aldborough Hatch Defence Association and Barkingside 21 will continue to work together to oppose this unwanted and potentially devastating intrusion into the Green Belt with all the strength and vigour at their command."

### Aldborough Hatch Defence Association

For further information on any of the items in this issue please contact  
Ron Jeffries, Chairman, 37 Spearpoint Gardens,  
Aldborough Road North, Aldborough Hatch, ILFORD, Essex IG2 7SX  
TEL: 020 8599 7250; E. mail: ronjeffries@hotmail.com

Produced by SPS Communications, 499 Aldborough Road North,  
ILFORD, Essex IG2 7SY (TEL: 020 8590 0299 or 020 8599 6452)

## What's happening with all-weather racecourses around the country?

\*The new all-weather racecourse at Great Lees, Chelmsford, starts racing in October next, but without a full grandstand until the summer of 2007.

\*Newbury is not going ahead with its plans for an all-weather racecourse – the reason is said to be because the calendar is already saturated with all-weather racing fixtures and the course at Kempton is already up and running.

\*The plans for a course at Musselburgh were called in.

\*Newmarket and Sedgefield had plans for all-weather racecourses but are said to have dropped out due to lack of fixtures.

\*Kempton and Great Lees are both floodlit courses.

\*Newbury, Sedgefield and Newmarket were all granted planning permission for their all-weather racecourses – but decided not to go ahead.

\*Should the London City Racecourse go ahead they would only be guaranteed 16 fixtures a year and would have to bid in an internet auction with other racecourse operators for any more.

The viability of the London City Racecourse is an issue which will need to be fully explored at the Public Inquiry.

## London City Racecourse

### Current Planning Application

The revised planning application that was heard – and rejected – by the Redbridge Council's Regulatory Committee at its meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2004 made the following changes to the first application:

*A reduction in capacity of the grandstand from 20,000 to 8,500*

*(with capacity for a further 3,500 spectators);*

*Parking reduced from 1,773 vehicles to 1,105;*

*Height of the grandstand reduced from 37 to 29.8m;*

*Length of the grandstand reduced from 1,015 to 400m;*

*Two ancillary buildings removed;*

*Potential for racing at bank holidays and weekends in addition to the 31 Thursday evening race fixtures envisaged in the first application.*

The Committee refused planning permission for the following three reasons:

1. *The proposed development, by reason of its excessive scale, extent, use and form would constitute inappropriate development within the Metropolitan Green Belt and would conflict with its purposes to:-*

*(i) safeguard open countryside from encroachment;*

*(ii) act as a check against the further sprawl of built-up areas;*

*(iii) prevent the coalescence of neighbouring settlements; and*

*(iv) assist in urban regeneration*

*and fail to fulfil its objectives, contrary to Policies OA 1, OA 2, OA 3, OA 4 and OA 9 of this Council's Unitary Development Plan and national planning policy guidance as expressed in Planning Policy Guidance Note 2.*

2. *From the information available to the Council from the application as currently submitted, the proposals to deal with the impact of traffic to and from the site, and the impact on the capacity of public transport are inadequate to prevent an undesirable and unacceptable adverse impact on the local road network and public transport system.*

3. *On the information currently available, the Council is unable to be certain that the proposals will not have an adverse effect on a site of Nature Conservation Importance - Borough Grade 1 without adequate mitigation measures being proposed, causing a direct loss of habitats including open grassland and water bodies as well as indirectly affecting the remaining habitats by reason of increased activity, noise, disturbance and light pollution, contrary to Policies OA 16, OA 17, OA 18 and KR 21 of this Council's Unitary Development Plan as well as directly conflicting with national planning policy guidance as expressed in Planning Policy Guidance Note 9.*