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Riverside Reprieve; It's Not Over Yet

Green Party, local environmental pressure groups and the residents of Twickenham win an important victory for the Riverside



After two years of campaigning to protect the Twickenham riverside, the Green Party and local campaigning groups have finally convinced the LibDem council to back down on the riverside development proposal. Over the last two years, Steve Roest and James Page of the Green Party have identified many reasons why this development proposal is flawed, but the final nail in the LibDem coffin was that the selected developer was undergoing financial problems, and so after two years of campaigning the LibDem council understood that going ahead would have been a disastrous economic decision.

Following heated local debates, and a rather compelling 93.5% vote by residents saying NO to the residential development of the site, a very subdued leader of the council announced at a local meeting that he had decided in view of the state of the developers accounts to wait until next summer to sign a contract.

Next summer is of course after the local elections in May. For those who think a vote for the Green Party is a wasted vote, think again.

Please Sir, Can I Have a Place?

For many years there has been a shortage of primary school places in St. Margarets. Long waiting lists for Orleans Infants School have meant that reception age children – four year olds – have been offered places many miles away at Chase Bridge, or Hampton Hill. This isn't a new phenomenon, as the Liberal Democrats and Conservatives would have us believe. Back in 1994 when the Borough changes brought the north end of St. Margarets into Richmond, the Green Party warned of the impending shortfall in school places. When, in 2002 the Brunel University site was sold to Octagon Developers for housing, the shortfall in infant places was growing fast, along with the population of the area. The Green Party lobbied the LibDem council to include provision of a primary school in the planning brief for the site. But they buried their heads in the sand, obsessed with their problems over Twickenham Riverside, and probably knowing they were about to lose control to the Conservatives.

So when the Conservatives won the council election in 2002 we continued to campaign for primary school provision. We quoted statistics, warning about the potential population growth,

particularly with the new Brunel housing development. Councillors and officers all agreed with our figures but, like their LibDem predecessors, did nothing. Local families were told that a new school on the Brunel site would cost too much, and attract children from out of the Borough. Instead, St. Mary's Primary School in Amyand Park Road was expanded into a two-form entry school, easing the short-term pressure on the East Twickenham side but doing nothing for the children at north end of St. Margarets.

So when we heard that funds had been obtained to expand both Orleans Infants and St. Stephens Junior schools we were pleased finally to see some progress, albeit concerned that there would still be too few places to accommodate children from the north end of St. Margarets.

But now we hear that the council has shelved even those modest plans. Once again the incompetence of both LibDems and Tories have left local children with no hope of a place at their local school. The Green Party believes this to be a disgraceful situation that was entirely avoidable. We will continue to support local families in their struggle to find a solution.

Not an Incinerator!!!



Colnbrook Incinerator undergoing final tests

Although not officially handed over to the clients, the giant Colnbrook incinerator (sorry, I was told when I rang them 'it's not an incinerator') has been undergoing tests for several months with various types of waste from west London boroughs. Residents should therefore be even more careful than before about what they put in the bin. Some waste should not be incinerated (and in some other countries it is specifically banned to do so.)

Only the Greens have maintained the fight against burning mixed waste. The Mayor of London's new waste strategy is working towards a much greater proportion of incineration. Advocates rightly remind us that land filling produces greenhouse gases but incineration is no better - and may be worse if the waste has a high proportion of inert plastics etc.

Make Mine a Dud!

Mortlake Brewery to close at year end.

Closing the brewery would be bad for jobs and mean more beer miles with Budweiser being brought to London from South Wales. The fact is that the closure of the brewery is not so much a result of the financial crisis as of the decision of the government (or rather their narrow-minded regulator the Office of Fair Trading) to allow the takeover of the brewery by Inbev. This in turn follows the virtual abandonment of the 'public interest' test, historically used in such decisions. Two years ago, making

specific reference to brewery mergers, James Page wrote to the government proposing that the impact on carbon emissions be considered, and to CAMRA to gain their support.

Every effort should be made to continue brewing on at least part of the Mortlake site. We have supported local residents who have proposed that the adjacent old bowling green site be used for orchards and allotments, rather than housing.

Please let us know what you think the sites should be used for.

Twenty's Plenty

The council will shortly be deciding on a strategy on 20mph limits. Richmond is way behind other boroughs, such as Kingston and Islington. Here is an opportunity to make residential roads safer and more enticing for would-be cyclists - young and old.

It's no good creating a patch-work quilt of zones which will simply confuse and alienate drivers. Make 20mph the norm for residential roads. It's quite enough!

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