

ST HELENS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION AGM
ST HELENS CHURCH HALL
3RD NOVEMBER 2011

Chair's Report

Welcome to Sir Malcolm Rifkind and Cllr Judith Blakeman, both of whom will say a few words later.

It's been another busy year for the Association. Membership has increased to 250, we had a jolly and well attended Christmas Party at the North Pole and an Open Meeting in May to discuss the trees in the borough with RBKC representative and Neighbourhood Watch with Police. We also had a stall at the first and very successful St Helen's Festival.

Key focus of the Association has been the Imperial Campaign. Our sub-group has been exemplary. We had a Consultation with Imperial architects, which 150 people attended. Ironically we were congratulated by the architects at the end of the meeting.

Other things we have been doing:

- Discussions with the Cundalls, the landlords of empty shops on St Helens Parade
- Regularly monitoring planning applications and objecting where applicable.
- Put up the notice board (despite the bins)
- Circulating items of general interest to members.

Today we will be voting on the Committee. Particular thanks goes to John Cox, Martha Hancock and Alison Kretovic who resigned from the Committee. All have been excellent support on the Committee, particularly Alison in role as Secretary. Thanks also to Ruth Hillary who has been Treasurer since we started. We welcome Ben Joseph who has been co-opted on in the past year. I will be standing down after 3 years as Chair and will leave it in the very capable hands of Henry Peterson.

Look forward to seeing you all at the Christmas Party on 13th December at the North Pole.

Treasurers Report

We are in credit, please see attached report. Our main expense is on leaflets, website, hire of church hall and Christmas party. Our income comes from Notting Barns initiative, Gold Standard Award for £500, Raffles and donations

Committee Elections

The following officers were nominated by Clare Singleton and elected by the membership at the AGM:

Chair - Henry Peterson

Vice Chair – Ruth Hilary

Treasurer - Margaret Tyler

Secretary – Tania Martin

The following Committee Members were nominated by Ruth Hillary and elected/re-elected by the membership at the AGM:

Elected onto Committee

Ben Joseph

Re-election to Committee

Nigel Whitbread

Claire Singleton

Adrian May

Lucy Gaiger

Joe Tatton-Brown

Jenny Harborne

Catherine Manheim

Imperial College Update

Phase 1 was approved by Hammersmith & Fulham last year. However, there are issues on the approval process. The developers need to submit an environmental impact report but this was not accurate. 50 people from the estate wrote in. We are still pursuing the inaccuracies of the report and we will need to go over Environmental Statement for Phase 2 with a fine toothcomb.

Phase 2 has had several consultations with plans, models and photos. Phase 2 includes a 34 storey tower of which the bottom part will be for Imperial staff and the top part commercial residential flats, as well as 12 - 16 storey blocks. This will mean that there will be 2,500 more people on site when completed, staff, hotel, etc. There are issues around traffic, infrastructures, environmental pollution, but it is the height that has got people most concerned.

What can we do – write in – it is too big and out of scale and don't want this to be like Paddington Basin. There is a planning argument that this will form the Gateway to London - a cluster of tall towers around A40 signalling the beginning of London. The sky to West is very empty all the way out to Ealing/Acton (with only some of hospital buildings up to 10 storeys).

It is worth also writing to RBKC, who have resisted strongly to tall buildings and also English Heritage.

White City is an Opportunity Area, which the Mayor has responsibility for along with Hammersmith & Fulham. There are plans for clusters of towers along the Westway. However, the planning framework is not yet formulated or adopted so this could be the nearest we get to a legal challenge.

Planning applications can be called in by Eric Pickles (Secretary of State) or the Mayor however there is now an emphasis for growth.

4th potential action is political one – lobbying Boris Johnson and his assistant, Sir Edward Lister. Lobbying Imperial and its council members. We have had a letter back from them and plans are

being vetted by architects etc. In May 2012 political constellation could change – currently favourable political environment for development. If Ken ousts Boris things could change. Who knows what Kens views are – we are meeting with Labour MP for Hammersmith & Fulham.

All Associations are involved – but we will need letters to go in. Hammersmith and Fulham are very determined and don't take much notice of what public think.

We will notify local residents as to when planning application for Phase 2 goes in.

Response from Sir Malcolm Rifkind

If a campaign is to be fought we need allies in others residents associations – if difficult for us MPs to influence Hammersmith, it is also difficult for RBKC.

Imperial is a great national and international asset but it doesn't mean they don't always get it right. SMR looked on website and has seen that our doubts are well founded as there will be an overwhelming visual impact on the Local area. However, it is difficult to stop this happening as there are many glaring example such as the London Eye which destroyed one of the best views – of London (horse guards view – 17th C complex of buildings).

Planning will be granted unless there is overwhelming reason not to, we have to build up a case.

There is a formal planning process, but could informally influence the debates that H & F and Imperial College will have.

SMR would like to help and Baroness Manningham Buller is a personal friend. She is very thoughtful and serious person and he is willing to make representations to her so that she gives considerable thought to the plans.

This is not about abandoning the site, but about the scale of site. If the tower was essential then SMR could understand, but the vast majority of tower is not to be used by Imperial, but is part of financial package, so there maybe scope for compromise. It might be that they are going for a larger tower, so that they are prepared to for it to be lower.

Scope to make a representation to GLA –Boris Johnson & Edward Lister. Plus, for the Royal Borough to make representation to H & F. However, SMR is not wildly optimistic, but neither deeply pessimistic. We will need to get other Residents Associations and people to be part of the process.

Cllr Judith Blakeman

The RBK&C Cabinet Member for Planning is not upbeat as H&F has tall tower syndrome with plans for them down the length of railway and doesn't think we will get anywhere. The tower is paying for open space by height, so there is a possibility of reducing open space and height

There are 2 other issues to discuss. The underpass under the railway to facilitate movement but which might disturb area, and Network Rail proposals for advertising towers alongside their track.

Ruth is liaising with the Travellers on the advertising tower, they are opposed to this on grounds of their privacy.

Q&A

Resident 1: There is a degree of impotence of individuals when encountering processes – no replies to letters, no specific responses to building details. It does not feel that we are in Big Society – but that we are little people with big institutions and big local governments. The big towers are controversial, so extraordinary we can't engage in a debate. What would David Cameron do if still living here?

SMR: There are 2 points – there has been a deep sense of frustration over the years, but through Big Society the aim is to empower local communities over events that affect their lives. Difficulties on most local issues, there are activists but this is only a tiny percentage of the population, would need a professional poll to find out exact numbers for and against each issue. The aim is for Government have less power and local more.

Tall towers are much rarer now than in the 1960s. In the 50s and 60s it was very fashionable as thought they resolved the housing problem but found lower rise has the same density because of space between the towers. With Imperial there is a commercial imperative to the tower

Resident 2: Resident is pro the tower, he is delighted to have the sky scraper

Resident 3: As a resident on Eynham Road he believes the link to Imperial college development is an incredible thing as it will be the link between North Ken, Shepherds Bush and Westfield.

Resident 4: William Cooper – Chair of Woodlands Area Residents, has illustrations of Phase 2 if anyone wants to see them.

Resident 5: If the Environmental Plan for Phase 2 is not correct, what sanctions do we have?

SMR : The Environmental Plan is required to help guide the Council to grant planning. If the Council has given planning permission based on misrepresentations the Council can revoke permission. Individuals can make representations.

Resident 6: Does a conservation area have any impact on decision?

SMR: No value on views, but you would have a case if the development was in the conservation area. Adjacency to conservation area could be argued but difficult as in different borough.

The chair introduced a discussion on the subway, as the next agenda item. The Association has agreed with Imperial to canvass views of local residents

Subway

There are proposals for a shallow underpass from the Imperial West site which will dip under railway and come out in Latimer Road by the old Latimer Arms Pub. The subway will be for pedestrians and

cycles. Quite a threatening area to walk through but if lots of people use the underpass it might get less dangerous.

Resident 7: No threat walking though Westway, there is a preconception that it is dangerous.

Resident 8 : I was mugged there.

Resident 9: Football stadium on that area – could be a lot of people coming over from matches. – also police can't chase through subway.

Resident 10: Is there any study as to how many people might use it?

CS: We just are being for our view to feed back to Imperial.

Cllr Judith Blakeman:

There are 2 issues – people coming from Hammersmith travelling to the new Academy and people from Imperial coming to use the Westway Sports centre.

Resident 7: Would make the area lively – could they make something of the subway and around the entrances?

Resident 11: No objection to link. It's a dead area and once people start walking up and down it the area will come alive. However, subway will need to be wide and manned.

Resident 9: What do people on Stable Way think?

Ruth: I have made contact with Travellers. The link is too close and they are against it. They are an insular group and are invited to our meeting but have not yet come.

Resident 9: The subway cuts journey time down to tube

WC: Underpasses on Scrubs Lane were closed down because of crime.

Resident 10: As an Oxford gardens resident – what is it going to mean? Opposed to impact on the street.

Vote taken by show of hands

24 Yes

17 opposed

12 abstaining

Paper votes received to date by Association were similar in proportions for and against– This means that there were less than 100 votes overall, out of 700 households on St Quintins Estate, so Association will not be claiming that outcome is conclusive.

Any other business

Christmas Party 13 December – everyone welcome

11 November is the end of the Advertising Tower consultation – please write to Hammersmith & Fulham as this affects us.

Judith Blakeman - Ward Initiative

Ward Initiative lasts for 4 years – we have put in a bid as we want to set up virtual forum in whole ward.

Neighbourhood Plan – aspirations to develop one.

Vicar & Judith plan to hold a Queens Diamond Jubilee St Helens Festival next year