



the bulletin

Representing the views of all who live in the historic Thameside village of Strawberry Hill

No. 138 December 2008

Protests over more phone masts in Tower Road

Residents have called on SHRA to help them investigate a plan to increase the number of phone masts to be erected on the roof of Rochester House in Tower Road. A public notice was posted recently saying a planning application would be made shortly.



The three existing masts on Rochester House

A planning application was approved in February 2006 for a total of 16 masts, three of which have since been installed.

Residents have shown themselves wary of

increasing numbers of phone masts. A plan to put a mast on Strawberry Hill Golf Course was thrown out on aesthetic grounds. While parents of children at St James' school in Stanley Road were concerned about the impact on health from radiation, this is not an "material planning consideration" because no causal link has been

established. The principle reason acceptable to Council planners is aesthetic.

The building is currently being refurbished.

Parents call for safer crossing

Strawberry Vale parents Emily Cotton and Ellen Purton are calling on Richmond Council to build a safer crossing at the junctions of Tower Road, Waldegrave Road Cross Deep and Strawberry Vale. They have witnessed many near accidents while taking children to school and fear that soon a child could be seriously hurt.

They say the crossing is confusing for drivers who do not know whether to signal or where to turn. "We hear hooting every 15 minutes during the day", says Emily.

Each morning children from four local schools – St James' Primary, St Catherine's, St James' Boys' School and The Mall – use the two crossings by the roundabout, as well as parents and children visiting Radnor Gardens.

Emily and Ellen, who each have three boys

using the crossing every day, have collected a petition with 150 signatories. They are in discussion with the Council and have also called on SHRA to present their case to local councillors.



Emily Cotton, Ellen Purton and children

Ideally, they would like a Zebra or Pelican crossing in Waldegrave Road just above the roundabout. Emily and Ellen say a lollipop lady at that spot could be equally effective.

...in brief...

An appeal by residents and Cllr Clare Head against extended opening hours at the Piano Lounge on Cross Deep was rejected by Richmond Magistrates on 21st November.

The Council has decided that the proposed temporary ice rink on Twickenham Green should have a feasibility study and will not now open this winter.

Carols and mulled wine on December 12

The annual Strawberry Hill Christmas tree unveiling and carol concert will be held in Wellesley Parade at 6pm on December 12. The event will be opened by the Deputy Mayor, Cllr. Geoff Acton.

Now a very popular event, it features mulled wine (for parents) soft drinks for children and hot mince pies for all. The Strawberry Hill Singers invite you to join them in carols. Drinks and mince pies are free. A collection will be made for a local charity.

Stopcock misery mystery

Four houses in Pope's Avenue recently found themselves without water one Monday morning.

Investigation revealed someone had opened the cover of their meters in the pavement, turned off the water with the key (which is usually left inside) and closed the cover. They then took the keys away, which were later found in the front garden of a nearby house.

When contacted, Thames Water said they could do nothing about it and advised the caller to buy a new key. It has since emerged that another property was targeted in August this year.

Plumber's tip: the meter tap can be turned on - or off - with a pair of pliers; replacement keys can be bought from plumbers' merchants. Keep the key in your house.

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Transport

Structural work slows

The refurbishment of Strawberry Hill Station footbridge has been rescheduled to an unspecified date in 2009. The job should have been completed this summer, but much more work is needed than was originally thought and there is neither time nor budget to undertake the work, says SWT.

While redecoration is the responsibility of SWT, it cannot be started until Network Rail has repaired the structure.

Booking office opening

SWT is proposing to reduce the opening hours of the booking office from 6.30 am to 13.30 pm from Monday to Saturday. SWT says this reflects travellers' use of the booking office now that there is an automatic ticket machine on each platform.

SWT adds that opening hours at Twickenham station booking office are unaltered and can be used for such operations as renewing season tickets when Strawberry Hill office is closed.

The final decision on this proposal rests with the Department for Transport. SHRA is seeking answers to questions about passenger safety on unmanned stations and opening hours of the waiting room, which can only be open when staff are present.

Airtrack enquiry may impact Strawberry Hill

The public enquiry into the Airtrack scheme to link Reading, Guildford, and Waterloo will start next year. The proposed half-hourly Waterloo service would serve Staines, Twickenham, Richmond and Clapham Junction. It would be useable by all passengers, not just those bound to and from Heathrow.

The service is planned to start in 2014. Proposals can be seen on www.airtrack.org.

There is pressure from other local residents' groups to route Airtrack through Strawberry Hill to serve Teddington, Kingston and Wimbledon. In the view of SHRA, this proposal is unlikely to be accepted.

Moreover, SHRA is opposed to the extension. Not only would trains probably not stop at Strawberry Hill, it would result in the level crossing closing an additional four times every hour.

Residents seeking a voice in these proposals can join the Windsor Lines Passenger Association, which represents users of both Strawberry Hill and Twickenham stations. See www.wlpa.co.uk, or contact the Association at 36 Park Road, Hounslow, TW3 2EU.

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SHOCC tactics for third-world countries

A charity based at St Mary's College unites students and staff in projects to help poor communities in Africa and Third World countries. Since 1971 Strawberry Hill Overseas and Community Concern (SHOCC) has raised more than £250,000 for over 100 projects in 35 countries.

Recent projects include a primary school in Kenya, a secondary school in Ghana and an HIV/Aids hospice in Guatemala.

More information about the work of SHOCC can be found at:

www.smuc.ac.uk/shocc

Planning

Gifford House

The former Gifford Lodge Estate took another step towards redevelopment in October when the Contact Centre was demolished, freeing up more land for sale with Gifford House.

Planning permission was granted in March to build a new Centre on the former children's garden, but it seems that building will not take place until some time in 2009.



The old Contact Centre has been demolished

Seventeen sealed bids for Gifford House were received by the Council and Care UK. We are told that bids are currently being evaluated and a preferred bidder will be selected in late November. Residents are particularly anxious to know the type and size of the development.

A Planning Statement for the site suggests car-free and car club arrangements for any residential development. A residential development for the elderly is also a possibility.

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Secret gardener brightens station

A keen local gardener, who prefers to remain anonymous, has brightened Strawberry Hill station with a brilliant display of flowers on the Richmond platform and is reclaiming the rose bed on the Kingston side.

"The other day when I was working on the flower bed, a train driver opened his window and said how lovely it looked". Strawberry Hill commuters and SHRA agree.



The garden on Platform 1 at the station

The mystery gardener sought permission from South West Trains to restore the flower beds which many years ago won awards in best-kept station competitions.

The gardener adds, "I do not need any further help, although people offer it when they see me at work, nor do I need plants, but I am in touch with Squires, who have offered some new roses."

Friends of Strawberry Hill Quiz Night

The Friends of Strawberry Hill will hold a quiz night and supper evening at York House on February 27, as part of the final fund raising for the house refurbishment.

Tickets, price £12.50 which includes a ploughman's supper, are available from Alixe Kingston.

E-mail: ladykingston@btinternet.com

Holy Trinity Church re-opens Parish Room

Holy Trinity Church on Twickenham Green has spent almost £100,000 on a complete makeover of its Parish Room, including new toilets, lighting, flooring and decor. To celebrate the changes, the room has been renamed The Green Room.

The Green Room is the meeting room inside the main entrance of Holy Trinity Church. The Room is well known locally as a polling station at election times, and it throws its doors open for events such as the HANDS charities fair on Twickenham Green.



The new Green Room at Holy Trinity Church

The Rev. Mike Starkey is vicar of Holy Trinity Church. "The Room looks absolutely stunning," he said, "and it was a big relief that the builders finished the work on schedule. The Room is used for nearly 50 hours a week by community groups, so the work had to be finished in time for the start of the new term".

Fundraising took just two months during the spring. "We pulled out all the stops and raised £100,000 in just a couple of months – a mixture of grant funding and donations" said Rev. Starkey, a former radio journalist.

The congregation at Holy Trinity has grown from around 30 to over 230 in the past eight years and mostly consists of young families from the Twickenham Green and Strawberry Hill areas. The church has close links with Archdeacon Cambridge's School.

Rare glass window gets SHRA cash



The Noah window at Strawberry Hill

A donation of £500 has been made by SHRA to the Strawberry Hill Trust to help preserve a rare piece of 16th century Flemish glass. Depicting Noah's Ark (above), the preservation is part of the £8 million restoration programme which began this year and concludes in 2010. The donation was made at the final public event to be held in the house before it closed for the work to begin.

The picture below shows (left to right) Eugene Bacot, SHRA, Judith Lovelace, Chair of The Friends of Strawberry Hill, Michael Snodin, Chair of The Strawberry Hill Trust.



Eugene Bacot presents the cheque on behalf of the SHRA

Save our Riverside

Save Our Riverside (SOR) is a group of Twickenham residents with no political agenda who have come together to oppose the present Council's plans to develop the old swimming pool site on the Twickenham Riverside with luxury houses and flats.

This is the fourth proposal in twenty-eight years by the Council, which owns the land on behalf of the public, to put commercial development on our precious Riverside. On previous occasions the schemes were called in for consideration by the Secretary of State as a result of widespread protest and turned down on the grounds that the site should be retained as public open space.

The present plans include a "River Centre" to be run by the Richmond Environment Trust. The commercial

development is intended to finance the construction of the Centre. The Trust hopes that the ongoing costs of maintaining this large structure on the embankment will be met by a 100-seater restaurant, offices and educational facilities.

No viable solution has even been suggested for the management of the traffic engendered by these developments. SOR is proposing a choice of alternatives which would give the Riverside back to the community and open it out to the town.

For further information please contact SOR at saveourriverside@hotmail.com, or visit their website:

www.saveourriverside.co.uk

Inclusion of this article in the Bulletin does not imply SHRA's support for SOR.



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New sixth form to open in 2010

By Sister Paula Thomas, Headmistress of St Catherine's School

When I first visited St. Catherine's, I was impressed by the sense of happiness, purpose and enthusiasm shown by staff and pupils alike. I am delighted to say that the attributes which first drew me here are still very much in evidence and indeed are thriving.

The Prep Department, which takes girls from 3 to 11 years of age and now accepts boys from 3 to 7 years of age, is vibrant. We are increasing facilities with our new extension, which should be ready for use in January 2009. It is in the Prep Department that the firm foundations are laid to prepare our pupils for the challenges and opportunities available in the Senior School.

With the present AS/A2 system I feel it is

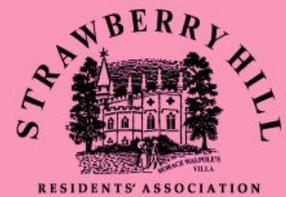


important for pupils to have continuity and stability from GCSE into A Level. Public examinations in the Lower Sixth leave little time to get used to a new environment and adjust to new expectations.

Opportunity

I am passionate about giving the girls at St.

Catherine's the opportunity to build on their GCSE results in the environment where they feel confident with the staff and their high expectations. This will give them the optimum chance of obtaining the best possible results in order to achieve a place at the university of their choice. For this reason plans and preparations are well under way to open our own Sixth Form in September 2010.



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Final chance for Mallard Place and Waldegrave Park

Despite our best efforts, we have been unable to find anyone willing to distribute the Bulletin to Mallard Place and also to the South side of Waldegrave Park. Unless volunteers step forward, this is the last issue residents will receive for the time being.

The job is not onerous, taking about 30 minutes three times a year. If you think you can help, please contact Clare Phelps or email:

Bulletin@shra.org.uk.

May SHRA help you with planning issues?

If you and/or your neighbours are concerned about projected building plans in your area, we are here to give advice and support. Together with local councillors, SHRA is able to help by giving advice on:

- 1 Co-ordinating objections
- 2 Pin-pointing acceptable grounds for objections
- 3 Explaining the workings of the Council's Planning Department

Contact Teresa Read or any member of the Committee.

RENEWAL OF SUBSCRIPTION of £3.00 (minimum) PER HOME FOR YEAR 2009

This subscription renewal may be made by cash or cheque made payable to Strawberry Hill Residents' Association.

Hand to either:

A John Naish, 12 Waldegrave Gardens, TW1 4PG

B Costcutter by Strawberry Hill Station

C Post Office, Tower Road

Payment may also be made by Standing Order. Forms are available from John or from the SHRA website (www.shra.org.uk)

Additional donations are always welcome!

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