

BOROUGH COUNCILLORS' REPORT 27th APRIL 2011

This report covers the main activities of Old Windsor's Borough Councillors Malcolm Beer and Eric Wiles since 23rd March. We have attended fewer meetings than usual due to the Borough practice of deferring potentially politically charged meetings in the run up to the Elections, plus the deferral of others to avoid present Councillors deciding upon matters which a new Council will have to administer.

We both attended a site meeting near the Newtonside Orchard Mobile Home Park with Windsor Development Control Panel colleagues in relation to the highly controversial planning application for two permanent gypsy / traveller caravan pitches and three temporary pitches in the Green Belt immediately adjacent to Old Windsor. At our request, we met Planning Officers to achieve a better understanding of each other's approaches prior to the resolution of this application. We were braced for another tense Panel meeting but the applicant withdrew the application only hours before the meeting. While there is no doubt whatsoever that the huge number of objections from the community was a major contributor, the deciding factor in the officers changing their initial recommendation of permission to one of refusal was the Panel's support for the reasons for refusal we personally put to the public meeting, rather than anonymous comments.

After the Borough Flood Group meeting attention was drawn to the current ruling group of the Borough of the need for a far greater involvement in the Battle Bourne Flood Defence Project. One of us has since met the Borough's representative on the Thames Region Flood Defence Committee and shown him the poor state of almost all of the existing flood defence and explained the detailed proposals to replace it.

It was noted that despite another well supported effort by Borough and voluntary sector officers manning exhibits and enquiry stalls at the Big Society Open Day on a recent Saturday in Windsor, there was less public interest than at the earlier Maidenhead Day.

Eric has been involved in meetings of Kings Court First School Governors (Health & Safety Sub Committee), Windsor Municipal Charities (retired peoples' accommodation) and two Licensing Panels relating to changes of alcohol drinking hours, etc.

I took part in a Rights of Way & Highway Licensing Panel which set the programme of work on footpaths, styles and bridges, etc., for the coming year and also contributed to a Planning & Environment Overview & Scrutiny Panel response on remedial work to a multi storey car park.

I chaired a busy Local Authorities Aircraft Noise Council Executive meeting which agreed its programme of evidence gathering to inform member Councils and respond to the Department for Transport Consultation "Developing a Sustainable Framework for UK Aviation". This critical consultation will set aviation policy on night flights, flight paths, noise, pollution, and many associated matters for many years to come. It was noted that while the number of flights was 20,000 less than the 477,000 before the 9/11 terrorist crashes, the seating utilisation has only increased by 2-3% to an average of 75% over all flights. There was disgust at the passing of yet another promised publication date for the Heathrow Noise Action Plan as Defra have yet to sign it off for submission to the EU. It is understood that 57 amendments had to be made to the initial "carry on as we are" BAA plan as a result of LAANC and other responses.

Eric Wiles & Malcolm Beer. 27th April 1011.