

OLD WINDSOR ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 20th April 2011

BOROUGH COUNCILLORS REPORT

Over the past year the two Borough Councillors representing Old Windsor, Malcolm Beer and Eric Wiles, have continued to be extremely busy in a wide range of activities where planning, roads, environmental issues, aviation, flooding, licensing, day centre management and policing have been to the forefront. A good working understanding with most other Councillors as well as the Officers has been invaluable in progressing many behind the scenes matters including those outside of our main activities on behalf of residents.

The 30mph speed limit on Straight Road had eventually been agreed after many years plugging away against Department for Transport policies to keeping traffic flowing at all costs, and funding had been won for a traffic study of the Church Road / St Peters Road crossing long before an unfortunate fatal accident occurred there. That led to the early installation of experimental temporary traffic lights, but the set up was too basic to cope with the conflicting traffic movements and was removed after creating miles of traffic jams. We have continued in the Working Group of local Councillors and Highways Officers to reduce the dangers at this and other locations, including the St Lukes / Burfield / Crimp Hill Road junction and school crossing. Proposals for Straight Road will be put to public consultation after the forthcoming elections.

We have both been very active on the Windsor Development Control Panel, especially in presenting a wide range of issues to oppose the highly controversial proposed gypsy and traveller site in the Green Belt next to the village; an initial Officers recommendation of approval changed to refusal and the subsequent withdrawal of the application.

On the Planning & Environment Overview & Scrutiny Panel Malcolm backed the innovative blue bin recycling scheme as well as scrutinising other planning, highway and flooding matters before they were submitted for adoption by the Cabinet. He continued on the Local Development Framework Working Group which is preparing a new planning policy document, and the Borough Flood Group. Having been involved in the initial project team site meeting relating to the reinstatement of the Battle Bourne Flood Defences at the Datchet end of Old Windsor, he and Eric hope to coax Borough, Heathrow and Crown Estate contacts to help fund the £3.5million flood scheme to protect 800 of our houses. Eric is also on the Flood Group and represented Berkshire on the Environment Agency's Thames Region Flood Defence Committee for many years.

Malcolm continued on the Borough Aviation Forum and as a representative on the Heathrow Airport Consultative Committee, its Noise & Track Keeping Group and the Local Authorities Aircraft Noise Council. As Chairman of the latter body he finds it a real challenge to balance the weight and technical expertise of the Environmental Officers of 8 London Boroughs against the lower involvement of Councillors outside the M25 when the Council replies to aviation related consultations or feeds information to the influential 2M group. The most important issues for Old Windsor are getting RBWM involved in a new noise monitoring system and getting acoustic insulation to meet future changes in flight paths which will bring far more landings over us.

Eric has been entrusted with chairing many of the very frequent 3 person Appeals, Licensing and Standards (Code of Conduct) Panels dealing with a wide range of controversial issues, and has served on the Audit & Review and Sustainability Panels, dealing with overall expenditure, environmental and related cost issues, Age Concern and several Day Centre Committees which included securing a substantial grant for our Day Centre.

Malcolm's Crime & Disorder Overview & Scrutiny Panel membership helped to get a better local police presence, a Borough Community Warden for Old Windsor and raised awareness of the need for improvements in buildings and staffing of youth clubs which helped to secure substantial improvements to our youth club.

He has been active on the Cycling Forum where road defects are a major concern. Many hours preparing plans to get £400,000 Olympic funding for a dedicated cycling and running road circuit came to naught despite support from the National Development Officer of British Cycling. He continued on Rights of Way & Highway Licensing and Local Access Forums, and had roles on Thames Valley Athletics Centre, Arthur Jacob Nature Reserve (Horton), Manor Lodge Approved Accommodation and Old Windsor Youth Club Committee.

Very few Councillors match this workload and the pre-meeting chore of absorbing page after page of reports. Few activities bring instant benefits directly to Old Windsor, but in persevering with them and in helping the Borough at large they also help our community. We hope to build upon our wide range of experience and personal contacts to protect existing services in the face of reduced funding, improve them and provide new ones wherever possible in the future.

Malcolm Beer and Eric Wiles. 20th April 2011.