

BOROUGH COUNCILLORS' REPORT TO O.W.P.C. 14th

JANUARY 2009

submitted by Cllr Malcolm Beer.

One or both Cllrs Beer and Wiles have attended and participated in the following Borough related meetings in the period 11th December to 14th January 2009:
Full Council, Windsor Development Control Panel plus a related site meeting, Community Council for Berkshire Board Meeting in Newbury, and two Planning & Environment Overview & Scrutiny Panels (P&E O&SP). Cllr Wiles has attended several other meetings. There would have been participation at the Crime & Disorder Forum but a Deputy will take my place because of the clash with tonight's OWPC meeting.

The email correspondence and direct discussion with officers has continued regarding the hotel bedrooms and increasing activity at the Beaumont House Conference Centre, and will be resumed now that Christmas is over.

The Highways Department have just sent the two Ward Councillors a draft plan for a pedestrian crossing island on Straight Road to assist access to the bus stops near Malt House Close for comment. A copy has been emailed to Parish Cllrs and observations would be appreciated.

Several of the "Real Time Information" panels to indicate arrival time of next bus have been installed by Borough at key bus stops, but have yet to be activated.

I have been chasing for an update on progress upon action following the village petition about the traffic management problem at the Straight / Church / St Peters Roads junction, and after a meeting earlier this week I spoke to a senior Highways Officer. He told me that several alternative plans were still under consideration, but all had downsides especially the effect on traffic flow on the A308. Apparently there is no record of any serious injury accident at this junction, so there could be difficulty in securing priority funding (although a small sum is already allocated) because of the nationally adopted policy of taking injury stats into account. He agreed to my request that either he or a colleague come to a public meeting in Old Windsor in the near future to explain the issues and listen to comments.

The P&E O&SP received a presentation on the proposed Airtrack rail link from Staines to Heathrow T5 by two of the project's most senior officers. It received almost unanimous support as it would benefit those who can access SW Trains and should help to reduce local road traffic, subject to the need to reduce the considerably increased down time of level crossings (Datchet excepted) resulting from the proposed extra trains to the link. My proposal that the DfT and local authorities should not be burdened with the expense of rectifying the level crossing problem was adopted. The Chairman of the Parish Council agreed to my suggestion that the Parish should respond in similar terms and I emailed such a response to DEFRA.

The outcome of the Windsor Parking Consultation was considered by P&E O&SP on Monday. Most of the issues have been well aired in the local press and all but one of the proposals won substantial support and will be recommended to Cabinet for a bid for SEERA support funding. The item which received least support was construction of over storey parking at Alexandra Gardens and it is recommended that this be dropped. I was among those who voiced concerns about taking cars entering the area from the M4 (just over 50% of Windsor's visitors) to Windsor Racecourse and then taking passengers back to town by Park & Ride buses, but this was one of the few big options left after the hasty scrapping of the Relief Road Park & Ride in 2007. An acceptable permeable surfacing and Green Belt use will be high profile planning issues. My comment that the substantial cost of improving traffic flow on the roundabout at the end of the Relief Road had not been included was confirmed, even though this would be a factor in assisting in the viability of the Park & Ride.

The time consuming saga of the continuing vandal damage to the fences to the "Parish Path" between Straight Road and the Recreation Ground has continued. Your two Borough Cllrs recently met the Borough Rights of Way Officer and were given evidence that the fences are the legal responsibility of the adjacent property holders, but due to difficulties in getting the old fences repaired by them and pressure from Borough and Parish Cllrs, the Borough renewed the fence when it resurfaced the footpath. Negotiations are ongoing as to the future of the fence.

My apologies for lateness of this report but since the new year I have been very much involved in sorting out a failed clutch on my car and in the funeral of my cousin earlier today.

Malcolm Beer. late 23/1/09.

MEETINGS, ETC., ATTENDED ON BEHALF OF O.W.P.C.

None since the last OWPC Meeting.