

BOROUGH COUNCILLORS' REPORT TO O.W.P.C. 25th MARCH 2009,
submitted by Cllr Malcolm Beer.

One or both Cllrs Beer and Wiles have attended and participated in the several Borough related meetings in the period 11th March to 14th March, including Rights of Way & Highway Licensing Panel, Windsor Development Control Panel (WDCP) and the Standards Board.

There was a very long debate at the WDCP on a Change of Use application to permit a private woodland in South Ascot to be designated a Public Open Space. This apparently strange application was to be the first stage in gaining a Suitable Accessible Natural Green Space (SANGS) classification, the first of its kind in RBWM, which would counter the ban on development within 5 kilometres of the Special Protection Area (SPA) of Chobham Common and Bagshot Heath. This was established to protect the nesting areas of the Dartford Warbler and other protected birds from intrusion by nearby residents and dog walkers, and the SANGS procedure is intended to set up alternative areas and thus allow profitable new development in an otherwise banned locality (plus a handsome return to the public open space owner).

Two girls' private schools and the residents of secluded dwellings around the area had sent dozens of letters and emails opposing the proposals and formed the majority of the 100 residents who attended the DC meeting - but no press reporters attended! My wife and I had spent 2 hours the previous day inspecting the site and the many problems such a use would create, so I was able to join the Councillors who spoke against the application, during which I highlighted some of the problems experienced in far more open public spaces here in Old Windsor. The application was refused.

The Rights Of Way meeting discussed the policies for the coming year and I was involved in recommended increasing the targets for removal of obstructive styles and resolution of enforcement actions.

It will be recalled that the last Parish Council meeting resolved to support my attempts to restore the local Thames Flood Forum and to seek OWPC involvement in that rather than a possible wider Lower Thames Flood Forum. It has since transpired that as only two Principal Councils have expressed support, the whole concept of consultative meetings about flooding has been shelved. I have yet to discover how RBWM responded. It would seem necessary for the Parish Councils to unite to seek periodic meetings to safeguard local interests.

Cllr Wiles has used his contacts with the top brass on the Thames Region Flood Defence Committee to ascertain that the EA endeavour to carry out 6 monthly inspections of streams and other watercourses and then call upon the riparian (i.e. waterside) landowners to remedy any problems.

The recent rise in political tensions at Borough has resulted in Cllr Wiles being called in again to help adjudicate in another complaint about Councillors' conduct brought to the Standards Board.

Last week's Cabinet Prioritisation Sub Committee meeting approved the roadwork programme for the coming financial year, including considerably increased funding for something to be done about the Straight Road crossing, amendment of the traffic light trigger system on the cycle route from Windsor, work to the A308 Straight Road from St Lukes Road to Priest Hill and also the Albert Road to Windsor, Kingsbury Drive (Burfield Road end) and Lyndwood Drive.

We have also been advised of street light upgrading in the coming year of St Peters Road and Close, Cell Farm Avenue and Meadow Close.

And two reminders.

Return of voting forms for Parish Councillor representatives on the Parish Sub Committee of the RBWM Standards Board close on Friday 3rd April.

A far more complex consultation closes by 20th April in regard to the Local Development Framework Options Consultation. This describes most of the considerations and seeks the views of individuals and organisations on the overall policies upon which future detailed planning policies will be based. The response form lists 10 questions which may also be returned by email.

Malcolm Beer. 24/3//09.