

Highbury Fields Association



Affiliated to The Pedestrians' Association (Islington Branch)

Newsletter - July 2000

Chairman's Report

Imagine that H.G. Wells had been able to resurrect his Time Machine and kindly parked it for us on Highbury Fields. Suppose we climbed aboard and set the dial to 1980. Wheeeeeeh! What would we see?

At first glance, nothing has really changed. The Fields seem much the same; although the grass is badly worn in places and there is a great blackened ring where a bonfire has been. Mind you, the asphalt paths around and across the Fields look clean and smooth. Wait a second: the lower Field seems bigger; instead of the line of trees and bushes, there is only a long wire fence with a small old-fashioned playground. Half the swings are broken and we wouldn't let Jimmy go on that slide. But we are glad to see that both sets of toilets are in good working order.

Safely back in the year 2000, it is hard to remember just how much has changed in our area over the last twenty years. On the Fields themselves, many of the great trees were lost in the 1987 hurricane; many more small, ornamental trees have replaced them, often in memory of residents who loved the Fields. The huge, decrepit, icy outside pool and paddling pool have been swept away. By the end of July we shall have a new, larger Premier gym. In the autumn we will appreciate again the new floodlighting on the re-surfaced tennis courts and we should also have, in that same area, one of the only five automatic public toilets in the borough.

There has been steady progress in all the streets. So many of the houses were in multiple occupation, with

gas meters in every room. So many of the houses were in a poor state of repair. There has been a rash of new houses in Highbury Terrace Mews, in Leigh Road, in Highbury Hill, behind St Paul's Road and Aberdeen Park. We await the onslaught of large new developments behind Highbury Crescent, in Calabria Road and the threat in the future of far more dwellings at the present Highbury stadium.

As with other local organisations, this past year has brought change and the prospect of greater changes yet. The rapid spread of controlled parking zones [CPZs] in the borough and the promise of many more soon has begun to eliminate the commuter. Only time will tell how we will cope with the expected large increase in residents' cars. Robin Nicholson has suggested and we are investigating hired car pools as a possible answer.

The HFA has joined other Highbury groups in voicing concern about the probable effects of a new Arsenal stadium and the redevelopment of the existing one and are trying to find ways to mitigate those effects. This issue will also dominate the next twelve months.

We had a very successful tennis tournament on 18th June, thanks to Charlotte Halvorsen and Peter Fuggle, who are now sadly stepping down and to Anita de Lotbiniere behind the scenes and Maryse and her helpers for lunch. Anita works hard, long and well all year round. Thank you also for all the letters members send us, which keep us on our toes.

Martin Jones

AGM

On Wednesday July 12th 2000
At Christchurch, Highbury Grove, London N5
7.30 for 7.45pm

Guest Speaker: Doug Gleave, Chair of *Islington Sustainable Transport Round Table* and Joint-Chair of *Islington Transport Aware*. To speak on alternatives to private car use; traffic reduction. Do come with your ideas. All are welcome; those who are not members of the HFA can join at the door.

John Hardiman (1916 – 2000)

In Memoriam

John Hardiman was the Chairman of the Highbury Fields Association from 1981 to 1989. He and his wife Margaret had moved to Highbury in 1979 and he had taken an immediate interest in local affairs. The Association was going through a rather fallow period, and John breathed new life into it.

He had a keen appreciation and deep knowledge of architecture, a passion for conservation and a real talent for getting on with everybody. It was during his stewardship that the HFA began its valuable dialogue with Council officers and councillors, gaining some degree of influence in local matters. In this Margaret gave him strong support.

One lasting memorial to him is the children's playground, now widely acclaimed and appreciated. At the time it was hotly opposed by most local residents, but the committee, under John, had worked hard to get the details right.

John and Margaret retired to Salisbury in Wiltshire, where they have spent the last ten years waging similar struggles to preserve the historic Cathedral Close. In spite of failing health over the last two years, John continued his campaign but died in January. We will have a ceremony in the autumn when we will unveil a bench in his memory.

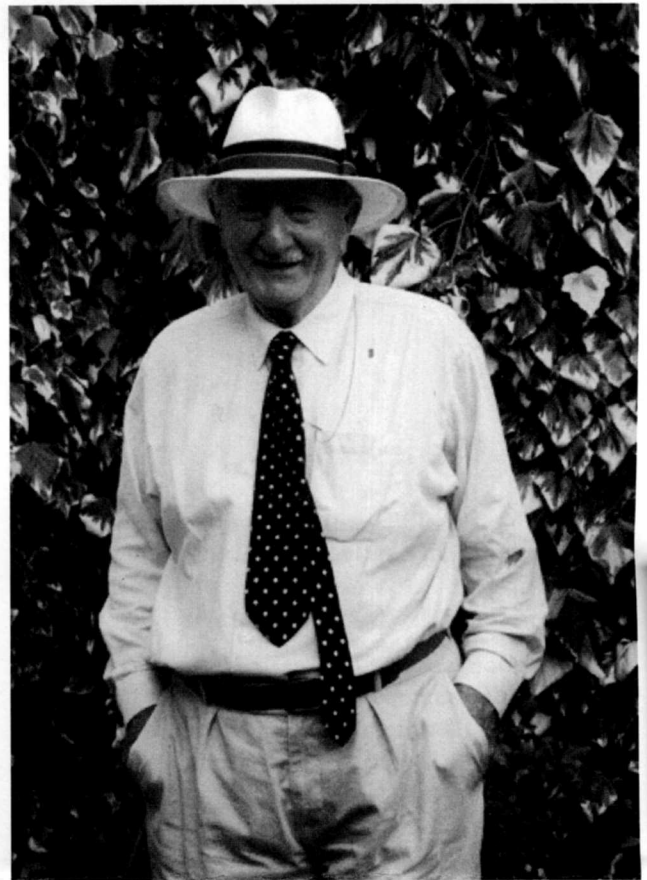
Martin Jones

Progress with the UDP

The Council's Unitary Development Plan sets out the policy framework for development for the next ten years of so. The Council has to follow this, although, as we have seen with the Arsenal, it can get round the UDP. The Council has already published some draft changes and it held a useful 'Round Table' about the vexed question of density. It is now placing further changes on 'Deposit' for a further six-week period for Objections. If you have Objected already you will be notified of this and if the Council has modified its proposals in the light of the earlier Objections you may be asked to withdraw your Objection.

However you don't have to do so and the Council will send ALL Objections to the Inspector holding the Public Inquiry. This has now been scheduled for 19th September and there will be a 'Pre-Inquiry Meeting' sometime in the middle of July. At this meeting The Inquiry Inspector will discuss the timetable for the Inquiry.

Robin Mabey



Disabled People in Islington

Concern for the Future

The Council is cutting back on Council Tax, which must have a dire effect on funding for essential services for disabled people in Islington. This comes at a time when the Council is already considering severe cuts in our Community Care services and also tightening up the criteria whereby people may receive services. This will merely make the situation worse.

Disabled people would rather see essential services sustained than pay slightly less Council Tax. We will however notice if our Community Care services are cut or even taken away. For us these services are not luxuries: they are essential if we are to live independently in our own homes.

We urge the Council to think again carefully. It is known that **eleven** Day Centres are threatened with closure. Two are in the HFA area: Highbury New Park Day Centre for Elderly (used as a Polling Station occasionally) and Leigh Road Respite Centre for Learning Difficulties. Decisions regarding these will be taken in July.

Further to the above, the Council intends to cut back on Homecare Service and to make cuts in Care Management (Social Workers). All this means that the situation for Disabled people will get worse unless the Council changes its mind.

Bay Hodgson

Dreamwork 3

'Dreamwork' was set up in Islington in 1997 as part of the LWT Talent Challenge. Five leading businesses were invited to collaborate with five London boroughs, each to organise a large-scale site-specific performance event involving up to 200 young people. Halifax plc chose Islington, and the Dreamwork organisation was born. In that first year, Geraldine Pilgrim, the Artistic Director, led a team of students, professionals and arts organisations in creating a multi-media event in the empty Mount Carmel Convent School off the Holloway Road. In August 1999, she organised a two-week Summer School of the performing arts for 33 young people at the White Lion Centre in Islington.

This spring, under the auspices of the Mayor's Charity and with support from Kings Cross Partnership, Charitable Trusts, local businesses and many individuals, 'Dreamwork 3' was created in the faded splendours of St Pancras Chambers, the former Midland Grand Hotel at St Pancras Station. As Joan Toovey, of the Kings Cross Partnership, writes, "To complement the physical regeneration of the area, the partnership is funding a range of events which promote cultural activities in Kings Cross, encouraging, wherever possible, local participation... This is a great chance for local young people to gain experience of working in the arts within the surroundings of one of London's landmark buildings – an opportunity which I expect they will never forget". Nor shall we, the audience.

As we gathered in the foyer, it was clear that we, too, had our parts to play: we were travellers checking in at the grand hotel for a night's stay. We were asked what accommodation we sought, we signed the register, we were given the keys to our rooms, and we stepped forward. But the glass doors in front of us warned us that this was to be no ordinary overnight stay: they were lightly coated with a delicate cut-out of bare woodland trees; we were about to enter an enchanted forest – seeking perhaps, our own Sleeping Beauty?

In the ground-floor coffee lounge there were customers and waitresses, but they were all asleep, caught in various poses – when the Lilac Fairy had waved her wand?

Thence into a waiting-room, invaded by the steam of old St Pancras Station and the sounds of trains departing; couples of former years static in their farewells – Edwardian elegance, a war-time officer and his fiancée, a young man with a bouquet of roses – waiting for whom? We climbed the great curving staircase to the first floor. The palace/hotel certainly needed sweeping but the maids were asleep, leaning on their brooms; guests, with their undoubtedly aged suitcases, were collapsed on the stairs and balustrade.

We were ushered on, deeper into the dream world. Eight skaters in matching brown velvet costumes waltzed on a tiny ice-rink; a little girl in a red dressing gown led us down a woodland path carpeted with snow, through an avenue of fir trees; a band of sea-cadets marched towards us playing appropriately ghostly music. On and up: a hotel bar, the young man with the roses sitting disconsolate over an empty glass; a party of revellers – dancers in gold and bronze, balloons floating; a distant violinist, elegant in white and silver. A bedroom corridor: most of the doors closed but shoes left outside for cleaning – two pairs outside one and a wilting wedding bouquet. Through one half-open door we could catch a glimpse of a great Gulliver, tied down and surrounded by Lilliputians; and we could peep through large keyholes and see red shoes dancing, hear little screams – of delight or pain?

As we climbed to the fifth floor we peered over the balustrade and could see on the tiled floor far below the body of a young woman in a rose-coloured taffeta ball gown. Was she asleep, our Sleeping Beauty – or dead?

When we finally arrived on the top floor, our bedrooms were unavailable, (so we were informed by a provocatively officious hotel manageress): they had been booked by some other parties – perhaps long ago! Disgruntled, (we had to act too, you see!) we descended to the coffee-lounge again in order to find 'alternative accommodation'. En route, we passed once more the young man with his roses; now he was seated by the beautiful young woman in rose-coloured taffeta. Was she asleep? Was he too early or too late? How would the story end? The maids, at least, were living and now awake, polishing the windows briskly; and we could re-enter our 'real' world.

There we refreshed ourselves with real wine after our journey into the worlds of dream and memory and fairy-tale and nightmare, created for us so magically by the young actors, puppeteers, musicians, designers and electricians; and by the architect of the whole endeavour – Geraldine Pilgrim.

We were able to talk to many of the participants and to hear how much they had enjoyed the weeks of working together, of contributing ideas of their own, of entering imaginatively into another world, and of sustaining their performance so professionally. What a learning experience for them! And with what enthusiasm did they applaud their director who had given them so much. And we applauded, too! A great piece of theatre. Our thanks must go to everyone involved; and to the Mayor, Councillor Jenny Sands, for battling to fund-raise and promote such an event in her year of office.

Paul Williams



Wpc Sue Haynes

Community Contact Officer

Hello – I am the Community Contact Officer for Highbury and Gillespie Wards. I joined the Metropolitan Police in 1987 and after training at Hendon worked at both Chingford and Walthamstow Police Stations on the 24-hour response teams.

In September 1991 I was transferred to Holloway Division, which is part of Islington Borough Operational Command Unit. During the first couple of years at Holloway I was again attached to the 24-hour response team. In 1994-5 I worked in the Domestic Violence Unit. My duties included escorting victims to court if they were required to give evidence, helping them to be re-housed by the Council and putting them in touch with local support/counselling services.

In 1996 I returned to 24-hour response policing for a couple of years before joining the Highbury Sector Team. In January 2000 I became the Community Contact Officer for Highbury Ward and I now also cover Gillespie Ward. During the football season I also work at Arsenal's home games as well as attending some away games. I work in the Intelligence Unit where my role is to identify and monitor known football hooligans who attend Arsenal's games.

In 1989 I had attended a Sexual Offences Investigate Techniques Course which means I am frequently called out to interview and assist both male and female victims who have been seriously sexually assaulted. As a result of this I spent four months in 1998 assisting with an investigation into a paedophile who preyed on victims in the Holloway area. The man was convicted at the Old Bailey and received six life sentences.

I hope to provide a good service to the community of Highbury and Gillespie Wards and I have already started a couple of initiatives, which include improving the lighting on Highbury Fields in an effort to reduce crime and make the area safer for the community. I am looking into the plight of vulnerable people who hang around the Finsbury Park Area.

If you have any non-urgent problems to discuss with me, I can be contacted on (020) 7421 0645

Sue Haynes PC 383NI

Wildlife

Many residents will have seen a heron flying over the Fields. Some might have fed the urban fox cub, ravaging through the bins. Many birds.... too many of them disease-bearing pigeons sadly fed by some until "No Feeding" signs are installed by the Council! But where are our garden sparrows? We miss them: Chaucer wrote about them. *Cognoscenti*, do give us your ideas.

Maryse Jones

Bird pictures by Mary Kleinman



Islington tennis – the best!

Islington now has some of the best public access tennis facilities in London. Six indoor and eighteen outdoor courts (nine of which are floodlit) are scattered around all corners of the borough at five different sites. All now have excellent playing surfaces.

Islington Council is in partnership with Aquaterra Leisure (the Charitable Trust managing the Islington Tennis Centre in Market Road). Together they will ensure that these fabulous facilities are used to their full potential.

The level of interest in tennis is already starting to bloom with junior development squads already taking place on the eleven courts on Highbury Fields and at the Islington Tennis Centre. Also eleven schools are now regular users at the Centre although we have been open only since April. It is this level of interest and commitment that we hope will produce a future tennis champion.

For those of us who are never going to be a champion, do not despair. There is a whole range of junior and adult activities programmed at the various tennis venues catering for all levels of ability.

If you would like to discuss any tennis-related issue, please feel free to call Robert Achille, the Islington and Camden Tennis Development Officer or myself.

*(020) 7700 1370 Anthony Jarrett
Islington Tennis Centre – Manager*

Highbury Pool – much more gym!

As you are all probably aware, there has been some building work happening at Highbury Pool. This work is for the new gym extension, which when complete will double the size of our existing gym facility. We hope to have this project completed by the end of July.

Currently the existing gym is still operating but all customers, including those for the pools and health suite, have to enter through a fire exit door located in our car park, as the builders need our front entrance to access the building site.

The new gym will, in many ways, replicate the existing gym, especially the lovely wood tongue and groove ceiling. We are replacing all the equipment and introducing four large plasma TV screens.

This Premier gym will be staffed full time. We have wanted to do this for some time as this means customers will get a more personalised service, including individual programmes and other health and fitness advice. Aquaterra will also be able to relaunch the 'Healthy Walks' and 'Jogging Club' schemes with the increased staffing resources.

In a few weeks we will be closing the gym for a short time so that the connection can be made between the old and the new gym. Our current members will be notified about this by letter. After that the old equipment will be moved out, the floor carpeted and then we move the new equipment in.



Other news from the pool includes our normal gear-up for the summer months when we are one of the busier pools in London. We still operate our paddling pool on the rear patio on hot days and during the summer holidays. Our holiday programme also includes intensive lessons every morning for four weeks (book in advance) and Funsplash (floats and toys) every afternoon.

Aquaterra have also worked with the Council's Greenspace Team and other interested parties (such as the Highbury Fields Association) to produce a combined information leaflet about the Fields. The leaflet includes basic information about the pool, how to book tennis courts and football pitches and details about the other facilities found on the Fields. All those involved hope to use this exercise, as a springboard to encourage more low key but progressive and organised use of the Fields, especially by family groups and children in the holiday periods.

I hope you can all visit the pool some time towards the end of July (or before) to see the wonderful new gym and maybe speak with the gym staff, including Geoff Reid the Highbury Gym Manager.

We look forward to seeing you.

Andrea Keeble - Manager

Corsica Studios

Corsica Studios is a Short-Term Regeneration Project that has recently transformed 10 Corsica Street into a creative multi-functional art space. The building now provides studio and office space for a number of artists, musicians and arts-related businesses. In addition the space features an exhibition gallery, a large rehearsal studio and also houses Neon photographic studios. The directors, Amanda Moss and Adrian Jones are working with project Manager, Marcelle Ben-Haque, to create an exciting, vibrant environment for both professional companies and community groups to enjoy.

(020) 7288 1495 Amanda Moss

A creative journey

Summer art workshop for 7-13 year olds

At Corsica Studios, 10 Corsica Street, three practising artists will provide a fun and informative introduction, via projects, to drawing, printing, collage and model making, concluding with an exhibition. There is a very valuable role for art as a serious investigation of life, design and science. It can develop focus and a unique language of understanding and enquiry for a child.

Two Courses:

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 1. 9.30 – 3.30 | 31 st July – 4 th August |
| 2. 9.30 - 3.30 | 7 th – 11 th August |

For Information Pack:

(020) 7263 0128 Sally Davies

Pedestrians Association

Whether we drive, cycle or use public transport we are all pedestrians some of the time. Yet compared with the expenditure on facilities for other road users, walkers get a raw deal. Further, pedestrians include disproportionate numbers of the most vulnerable: the old, young and the disabled. The Pedestrians Association, founded in 1925, campaigns for a safer, more attractive walking environment. Last autumn with another member we formed an Islington branch of the Association, drawing attention in the Islington Gazette to the inadequacy of many crossings, including that at Holloway Road and Highbury Corner roundabout. We have been lobbying the Council for better facilities and an increased share of expenditure on pedestrian improvements.

A local issue concerns widening the pavement in Corsica Street behind the proposed housing development on the HG Rent site. This was agreed at the Planning Committee meeting on 11 January, to be done under a Section 106 Agreement with the developer. I understand that the pavement will be widened (not clear by how much) but by **narrowing the road**. The planners think 'for streetscape reasons' that the new building should be in line with existing buildings and the Borough Engineer says the traffic flows are low.

This is not an ideal solution for pedestrians as traffic will increase with the new housing and that part of Corsica Street is already a nasty, narrow little rat-run. I am continuing to argue the case and also to ask that the agreement is not made without local people being informed of what is proposed so that we are faced with a *fait accompli*.

If you would like to know more about the Association do contact me.

Christine Mabey
(020) 7359 0609

Islington Walks

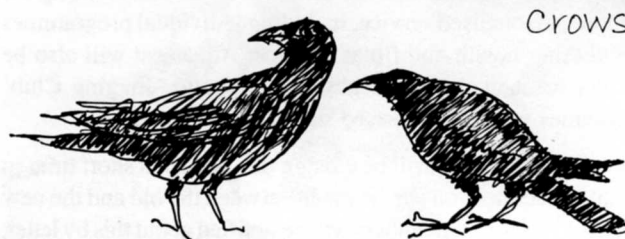
Many of the residents of Highbury Fields will have seen, over the last fifteen years, groups of people from all over the UK and the World, being led onto and around a lot of the area, by a now grey-haired and bearded gent called Peter Powell, that a lot of you may know personally. The particular walk in question is called 'George Orwell's Islington', and is one of four regular walks that Peter does throughout the year, under the general title of Literary/Historical Walks. There are others including Hampstead and Highgate, but they are usually special bookings.

Walks usually start at a station and end in or near a pub, which is of course an option – but one the guide always takes, for medicinal purposes of course... They usually take about two hours and are taken at a leisurely pace, so children and older persons can enjoy them without undue fatigue. The usual fee is £5.00 and concessions are available.

There has been a great cross section on the walks of people from all countries and quite a few celebrities, including Richard Blair (son of Orwell) and Orwell's nephew Henry Dakin; many stage, film and TV actors, - Peter is an actor himself – and at least five Mayors of Islington. Groups can book Walks for times to suit them; there have been touring companies from Sadlers Wells, office outings and many regular groups. The latest innovation have been bookings by people holding dinner parties who book Peter to do special one hour walks for the guests, finishing at their home, (Peter is usually invited in for at least a drink!)

The maximum number is 25, but he has done larger groups for special occasions.

Details by telephone on (020) 7226 8333 or in 'Time Out' and 'What's On'. Notes can be taken, tapes, videos and cameras are welcome.



HIGHBURY FIELDS ASSOCIATION: COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Martin Jones, *Chairman*
Anita de Lotbiniere,
Membership Secretary
Maryse Jones, *Treasurer*
David Boniface
Jeannie Burnett
Victoria Ellington
Jean Engel
Muriel Feder
Bay Hodgson
Kate Hodgson

Carrick James
Ian Kelly
Randal Keynes
Mary Kleinman
David Knight
Liz Lydiate
Robin Mabey
Jennifer Purchase
Miles Thompson
Paul Williams
Nicholas Witter
Ginny Worsley

Nominations for new members (proposed and seconded by members of the HFA) should be made to Martin Jones (see above) by Monday 10th July. Appointments to the Committee will take place at the AGM on 12th July.

A Rescue Operation

I have heard it said that to achieve the impossible one needs a single-issue fanatic on the team. I have just experienced it! I want to pay tribute to a remarkable woman who is capable of this total dedication. Lucinda Lambton has been passionate about Coles/John Perry Wallpaper Manufacturers of Offord Road in Islington, since she first discovered them. To her horror she recently heard that it was being dismantled and the wonderful Victorian machinery was being shipped off to Loughborough. She wrote an impassioned article in the Evening Standard about the impending loss of the last British producer of hand-blocked wallpaper. The article inspired me to do something too.

I had been told that there was a very able consortium of people who wanted to buy the factory, but there had been no response to their offer. I contacted Councillor Jenny Sands who was aghast, and despite her very demanding teaching job, and being, at the time, a very active and successful Mayor, she found time to contact Chris Smith, Secretary of State for Culture. He had been told that the manufacturing would continue as before but in a new venue.

We knew this was not possible, as the very skilled workforce, whose homes are in Islington, did not wish to re-locate. It takes five years training to be able to use the machinery and to know how to do the hand-blocked wallpaper printing. There seemed to be an impasse.

English Heritage were alerted and would have liked to List the building – but the building as such did not justify Listing: the machinery and the vital, priceless printing blocks were moveable objects, which made it difficult to 'Spot-List'. In the meantime, Walker Greenbank, the holding company that owns Coles/John Perry, made it known that they wanted the machinery cleared out and the building emptied by 8th May. I wrote to Chris Smith, giving him the facts as I saw them and I like to think that seeing a copy of my letter inspired Lucinda to make one last push.

She telephoned the chairman of Walker Greenbank and berated him for being responsible for such vandalism. It appears that he was unaware that there had been a worthwhile offer made for the factory and said of course it must be considered. It now seems possible that there may be a happy outcome from what had been by all accounts a doomed situation. The conclusion is: never take 'No' for an answer; if you care enough, something can be done.

Jeannie Burnett



Northampton Lodge

Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art

The Estorick Collection, based in Northampton Lodge, Canonbury Square, is firmly established as one of the most sought after Islington venues two years after opening. A series of outstanding exhibitions have attracted excellent press coverage, and in the case of the Morandi show last year, record attendances. In November 1999, the Collection won the NPI/National Heritage Museum of the Year Award in the Best Museum of Fine or Applied Arts category. It is currently shortlisted in the London Tourism Awards. Local people love the café, run by Euphorium of Upper Street, and the Zwemmers book and gift shop, where stylish, original presents, designed and made in Italy, can be found.

The current temporary exhibition, by the distinguished Slovenian artist Zoran Music, *We are not the Last*, opened on an idyllically balmy June evening when members of the Estorick Collection and other invited guests spilled out into the delightful walled garden for wine and talk. Music's hauntingly evocative memories of his wartime experiences as a holocaust survivor are on display until October and will be followed by *Fortunato Depero, Carnival of Colour*. Depero's multi art form 'House of Art' was an Italian equivalent to the Omega workshop.

Other events for the summer include a series of lunchtime chamber concerts organised in collaboration with Musical Arrangements. Attend them for free, and also enjoy free and unlimited entry to the museum, by becoming a Member. For details, please contact Elizabeth Mellen on (020) 7704 6677

Arsenal – on the move?

Progress Report

In April the Council [LBI] approved planning briefs for a new 60,000-seat (up from 38,000) Arsenal [AFC] stadium in Ashburton Grove and for the redevelopment of the existing stadium at Avenell Road. A draft planning brief had also been prepared, but never passed, for the Lough Road site to the west of Holloway Road. Lough Road is the place, which might be used to accommodate businesses and facilities, required to be relocated from the Ashburton Grove area.

These would include The North London Waste Authority's waste transfer station and the LBI vehicle depot. A through-road leading from Caledonian Road to Holloway Road, bypassing Mackenzie Road, would be built to safeguard adjacent areas.

AFC consultants submitted a draft "Scoping Report" to LBI in the middle of June. The scoping is to determine the opinion of the LBI as to the potential significant impacts on the environment. The Environmental Impact Assessment addresses the following:

- alternative sites
- economic and social impacts
- traffic and transport impacts
- urban design impacts (including visual impact on the surrounding area)
- environmental impacts (including micro-climate, atmospheric, nature conservation, contamination and noise)
- electronic interference (TV, radio and mobile telephone reception)
- soil conditions, geology and hydrology (including contamination)
- construction impacts

Various groups within the area are concerned about all of the above issues; some concentrating on those that might affect them most and each group is represented on a Progress Review Group. Because of pressure from these groups, LBI have imposed strong conditions on AFC in the planning briefs.

On the question of Transport and Access Effects, for example, LBI have insisted that AFC must achieve a very substantial reduction in the number of fans arriving by car, going down from a present figure of about 45% to only 20% or even less. So AFC must work with London Underground, all the various train and bus companies, the Traffic Director for London and other interested bodies.

They must determine whether public transport can be improved to such an extent that it can carry the large increase in passengers (up from about 21,000 to 48,000 – an increase of 128%! ... so far the transport operators seem doubtful) and the likely impact on the surrounding area.

The possibility of electronic interference, caused by the height and bulk of the new stadium, will worry many local residents. It is thought most likely to affect TV, causing weak signals or 'ghosting' or resulting in certain stations being impossible to receive.

One very local impact that I have asked to be assessed is that of the increasing thousands of arrivals at Highbury and Islington Station. They will tend to change their route from walking up *beside* the Fields. They are likely to walk diagonally *across* the grass either to Ronalds Road or to Framfield Road to access the new stadium. The grass we have nurtured lovingly over the years could soon largely disappear under their feet.

The AFC must prepare an Environmental Statement as part of their Planning Applications, which they still hope to submit this October. This must also cover the proposed redevelopment of Highbury Stadium to produce expensive apartments and (some) affordable dwellings. Because of the extent to which the plans for Ashburton Grove break the rules of LBI's Unitary Development Plan there may well be a Public Inquiry. Furthermore the new Mayor for London has the right to intervene.

Even if AFC, with their host of consultants, manage to sort out all the various issues, the new stadium could not open before the end of 2004. Only then could the North and South stands of the existing stadium be demolished and redeveloped.

Martin Jones

