

SOUTH CANTERBURY RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

APRIL 2016

EDITORIAL

With apologies for the long pause since the last Newsletter, Happy Easter to all SCRA Members.

We held a lively and well supported AGM, and elected a smaller committee group than previously - of which more below - but your 2015-16 committee is:

- Tim Carlyle - Chair
- Nick Riding - Secretary
- Alison Culverwell, Treasurer and Membership
- Tom Dobrashian.
- Pat Edwards
- Hugh Miall
- Helly Langley (Coopted - interest in student issues)

There are two very significant events for our Association this year

- The possible merger with The Oaten Hill and District Society
- The start of implementation of the Local Plan

These are both discussed in detail below, but will clearly have a large effect on how we go forward. The merger would create a new set of opportunities for increased activity and a wider membership, but also constitute a modest change of direction, while work on the Local Plan - studying and commenting on the large number of newly proposed housing sites will occupy a large amount of our time. With regard to the latter, we unfortunately find ourselves more or less unable to agree with any of the initiatives for the future of Canterbury that the Council are sponsoring and endorsing, and indeed have permitted in the last year. We will have to consider carefully what is the most productive role for the Association to take up. We welcome your views.

However, we are determined to offset these labours with our own community social events and have had increasing success with these. So, we hope to see you at one soon.

Tim Carlyle

POSSIBLE MERGER WITH OHDS

We sent a notification to Members in March- pointing out that at the 2014 SCRA AGM, there was considerable difficulty in finding people able to take on the task of becoming committee members, and in anticipation, a motion was put to members suggesting that SCRA explore the options of amalgamating with our colleagues in the Oaten Hill and District Society. This was passed.

Since then, the work and activities of SCRA have expanded and seem more secure, but our committee remains small, and the demands on individual committee members have grown.

Meanwhile, there are those who are members of both the Oaten Hill and District Society and the South Canterbury Residents Association (there are about 40 in this category) have long been puzzled as to why there are two groups with quite similar objectives operating in the same part of Canterbury. The SCRA geographical area of activity is in fact totally within the OHDS defined area, covering the south-western half, which inevitably results in duplication of effort, for example in the weekly researching of planning applications for this area of overlap.

Both groups also have difficulties in finding enough people to join their committees so those that do join find they spend too much time in administration rather than in being free to take part in activities which will improve the quality of life in our community.

Accordingly, following approval by both the OHDS and SCRA committees, a joint working group has been meeting to reconsider whether a full merger between our organisations would be a rational and beneficial step.

The working group has had three constructive meetings so far and it is planned to present a draft report for both committees to consider in April of 2016. If this report is approved, and members give it their support, we will continue to develop the ideas for a joint operation, and put this to the SCRA membership for a formal vote at an EGM in the autumn, and OHDS will do the same.

Your committee is about to review progress, and will issue a further statement.

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PLANNING ISSUES - Notes from Tim Carlyle

The Local Plan

Background

The Public Enquiry for the Draft Plan is still suspended, while the Inspector considers the new submission recently made by CCC in , offering new housing sites to make up what the Inspector considered to be a shortfall. They offered up new land including Ridlands Farm and the Thanington Sites, which had a consultation ending in January. SCRA Committee submitted objections to all the new sites, on the grounds that the Transport Plans were inadequate, and that the total number now likely to be built was in excess of the already high number CCC thought necessary.

We await the announcement of a date for new consultations.

Mountfield Park.

The big event is the detailed planning application for the 4000 houses at Mountfield Park, which was lodged in March, and which was featured in the Kent Gazette. This is able to be inspected as physical documents at CCC offices, or online at the CCC planning website, (go to search planning applications, advanced search, enter the reference no 16/00600).

The period for community consultation lasts until 13 May, but we have hopes that CCC can be persuaded to extend this, considering the massive impact it will have on the city.

STOP PRESS - Date now extended to 25 May.

This follows the application that CCC granted in Thanington for 750 houses with another 350 to follow.

You may ask how the Council can give permissions for new housing that is to form part of the Local Plan allocations before the Plan is approved? It is enough that the Inspector wrote an interim letter of support in August, accepting both the Mountfield Site and the Transport Strategy in principle.

Responses

SCRA and OHDS are cooperating in their scrutiny of and response to the submitted material, which is extremely voluminous. The essential element in our opinion is the Transport Assessment, and Design and Access Statement. These are accompanied by some key plans showing how local roads would be adapted at the developers' cost, to ease the congestion caused by 4000+ new car users accessing Canterbury and beyond - eg streamlining Nunnery Fields by removing some of the parking, , or, making Old Dover a bus priority road. Local users will thus pay the price for the new estate transport needs.

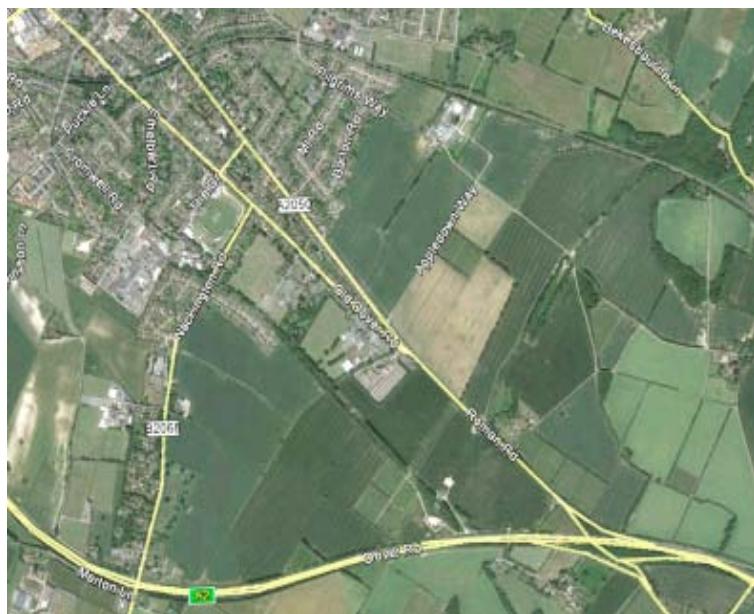
Much is made in the Assessment of the possibility of persuading drivers to switch to public transport and the new fast bus route that the road changes will facilitate. We think the assumptions are deeply unrealistic, and even if partially successful, will just bring new buses and private cars to the jammed ring road quicker.

We therefore are planning to object, particularly to the congestion impact with its inevitable consequence of serious air pollution. We will be demanding that the scheme be reduced in impact, that the impact of the increased traffic is properly dealt with, and that assurances are given that the supposed benefits - eg more social housing - are actually delivered.

We will keep you further informed, but urge all members to study the plans, and take the opportunity to lodge their own comments.

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OTHER PLANNING ISSUES

Student Impact Review

- We are participating in this review being run by CCC, to study the ways in which the large student population affects particularly housing, and cultural life in the city. The review aims to identify ways where and why negative impacts occur, as well as looking at where impact are good and could be improved, with a view to guiding CCC future policy.

Planning Applications -

We continue to monitor these with OHDS.

Local Traffic -

We are currently discussing with KCC Councillors problems with traffic and pedestrian crossings in Nunnery Fields and Upper Chantry.

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SOCIAL EVENTS

AN INVITE FROM OHDS

SCRA members are invited to an OHDS Talk on May 25th 2016

“The Cathedral, the Local Community and Visitors: The Future”

A talk by Canon Nick Papadopoulos and Martin Crowther, the Cathedral's Community Engagement Officer, to be held in the Hall at Augustine House, 7.30pm on Wednesday, 25th May 2016. The talk will focus on visits and visitors to the Cathedral, enhancing their enjoyment, increasing accessibility for local people and expanding facilities available to them. There will be an opportunity to ask questions after the talk and the evening should finish around 9.15pm

SCRA SOCIAL DIARY 2016 - Notes from Hazel Vane Wright.

Monday 30th May Plant Swap 10.00-12.00

Hosted this year by Claire and Hugh at 45 Ethelbert Road.

An annual event at which local gardeners and their guests can swap excess(ive) plants with friends and neighbours.

Sunday 26th June SCRA Little Lunch 12.30-2.30.

Hosted this year by Michael and Sarah at 8 South Canterbury Road.

We invite SCRA members and their guests to bring some food to share with others.

Hosted again by Alison and Francis at 26 Ethelbert Road. An opportunity to show your skills at games or simply to enjoy cakes and tea with friends old and new.

September 29th August Produce Exchange 10.30-12.30

As usual SCRA will be offering the chance to share your excess garden produce and plants.

Volunteer gardens/hosts welcomed.

SCRA GARDENING GROUP - Notes from Sally Perkins

The newly formed SCRA Gardening Group was set up following last autumn's Produce Swap where the names of interested people were collected. From the outset, it was envisioned that this would be a 'step up' from the regular annual plant and produce swaps and involve residents who are gardening enthusiasts rather than experts! It is an opportunity to share information, plants and gardening interests and to visit each other's gardens at different times of year for discussion about matters like layout, planting, conditions, as well as seeing that what grows in your neighbour's garden or maybe sharing solutions to weed problems!

The Group has met on several occasions including a visit facilitated by Tim Carlyle to his allotment near Toddlers Cove. Currently the Group has 18 members and is becoming a bit large to meet at somebody's house any more and especially as more people join. At the last meeting in January, it was decided that the primary contact of the Group would be via email. In this way, it will largely be a self organising group whereby individual members can take the initiative in suggesting or setting up Group activities such as advising on forthcoming garden 'events', useful website contacts and informal garden visits (please contact Sally Perkins for the latest Group email list). Examples of such visits could include your own rear garden and these could even take place during the working week (this would of course limit the number able to attend), or to regional specialist nurseries or gardens open to the public. Group members wishing to attend such events should confirm directly to the Group host/organiser of the specific event.

The SCRA Social Committee and I will liaise about the general arrangements for the regular neighbourhood annual swap events and, for members of the Gardening Group only, arrangements will also be made for the occasional weekend visit to residents/local gardens.

CONTINUED

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Swap dates in 2016:

- *The first was a new Seed Swap held on Sunday 13th March, as advertised on the SCRA website.
- *The annual Plant Swap will be on Bank Holiday Monday 30th May, 10.30-12noon, at 45 Ethelbert Road CT1 3NF (Claire Leggett and Hugh Miall). Please bring spare plants and seedlings.
- *The annual Plant & Produce Swap is usually in September, arrangements to be confirmed.

For residents who are interested in joining the Gardening Group, please contact Sally Perkins (sally@perkinsnet.plus.com) or Alison Culverwell (culverwell@greenf.fsnet.co.uk). Email addresses will be shared amongst members of the Group and with the SCRA Social Committee.

Residents who are interested in community gardening should contact Sophie Scott (sophie01@btinternet.com), the Oaten Hill Society representative in the Group; we will be part of the Oaten Hill submission for the RHS 'It's Your Neighbourhood' campaign (<https://www.rhs.org.uk/communities/campaigns/it-s-your-neighbourhood>).

Sally Perkins,
SCRA Gardening Group Coordinator

WALKING GROUP - Notes from Tim Carlyle

Despite some moderately grisly conditions, have carried out three walks this year already, with more to come.

Future Walk Dates - 1030 start unless notified otherwise

14 May - Crundale - Start from The Compasses: Cowslips, Crundale Church, North Downs Way

10 June - Dover Patrol - Start from BlueBird Café, War Memorial above St Margarets - cliff tops

9 July - Wye Downs - Start from public car park opp Devils Kneading Trough Café, Coldharbour Rd - walk & picnic

Our cold and windy joint exploration with OHDS of Old Dover Rd was very successful, using Mike Brain's OHDS Guide to the street, which he kindly explained to us on site. The long and varied process of the development of the street, with its numerous chalk pits and wooded parks has created one of the most varied roads in Canterbury.

Our misty moisty Stour Valley walk from Wye climbed up hill to Kings Woods and some sunken lanes, to even denser fog, before descending to walk back along the river meadows where the fog finally cleared. The fact that the Tickled Trout was so popular we couldn't get lunch was a mild frustration, but did not diminish the sense of achievement.

Our initially sodden April walk in Chilham, passed along Mountain Street with half timbered houses below the Chilham Castle grounds to climb another hollow lane to a different part of Kings Wood, where we discovered the first of the seasons bluebells. The anemones were still out, with masses of primroses on the woodland edge, plenty of celandines, and Herb Robert and trees just breaking bud.

