

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I am pleased to be able to report some successes in the area of planning since the last issue. These are more reprieves than final decisions but nevertheless welcome.

26 New Brighton Road

Following the ERA representations to the Inspector at the appeal against refusal of the application from Churchill Retirement Living, the appeal was rejected. We made representations along with the Borough Council and some residents. We had professional advice in advance of the inquiry, which was most helpful, particularly that we should ask to be present at the Inspector's site visit and endeavour to get the building outer wall positions marked out. This made it very clear that the northern walls of the proposed building were very close to Westbourne Avenue and also that the trees and shrubs on that side of the site would be extremely close to the walls. This could damage them or create restrictions on views from the windows of the building, leading to requests for the trees to be cut, contrary to the objectives of the plant screening. The Inspector's Report focused on the reason for rejection being the nearness of the building to Westbourne Avenue and that it was not close enough to the building line on the south side of Westbourne Avenue. While we were pleased about the rejection, we had raised some other issues associated with car parking, over development of the site, aspects of the suitability of the site for access to Emsworth shops and railway station for users of buggies etc., most of which were not supported by the Inspector. The expectation is that another application will be presented before long with a different design.

A27 Site (Interbridges West)

The A27 Site application, which included the approach road, was withdrawn just before the Development Management Committee (DCM) meeting. This was because of the Borough Council decision to ask for a letter from the developer saying that they owned the land for the new road junction. Of course they could not produce such a letter. They are now in discussion with the Highways Agency to try and get them to sell. I am concerned that the Highways Agency may be weakening. There has been a meeting with the developers in the last few days and I have asked my contact to keep me informed of the outcome. At the time of writing, the Agency was reviewing its title documents.

Council News

Local flooding in New Brighton Road and Westbourne Avenue

Following recent persistent heavy rainfall, a build-up of surface water on these roads resulted in some highway flooding. Hampshire Highways have conducted extensive investigations, which seem to confirm that the gully connections to the main sewer are blocked and in some cases damaged along New Brighton Road. Highways are undertaking repairs to the gullies and are consulting with Southern Water who has responsibility for the main sewers. I hope this work will lead to a resolution of the problems experienced before Christmas.
Brendan Gibb-Gray (Councillor)

Emsworth Business Association (EBA) News

2007 was a busy but fruitful year for the EBA. We have achieved much for the benefit of business people, residents and visitors and our projects have all been funded from our member's subscriptions. Most people appreciate the beauty and charm of the town but shops and services need more and more local support to maintain business in an increasingly competitive and hostile environment.

Our two main projects in 2007, 'Eastern Approaches Boat' and 'Cotton Paratroopers' (see page 1 of this issue of The EMS.), were aimed to make a significant contribution to the civic realm and to help reduce our dependency on plastic bags. Our work was recognised by The News in December when the EBA were runners-up in the Environment category at the awards ceremony in Portsmouth Guildhall.

Whilst the EBA is promoting environmental considerations, we also want to remind residents at a time of massive supermarket expansion that Emsworth provides independent and a first class alternative, where shopping and service provision can be found to be an enjoyable and relaxing experience.

The EBA committee would like to thank the many people who helped in the organisation and distribution of the cotton bags to residents. This has been a real community effort and we look forward to seeing you and these attractive bags in the town! See also: 'Christmas comes early' page 9
Brendan Gibb-Gray; Chairman, EBA

We had contacted those residents on our list who agreed to attend HBC meetings, but of course had to call them off at the last minute due to the withdrawal notification occurring on the night before the meeting. If the land is sold, we will be objecting most strongly to the Highways Agency. Should we get to the point of another application being presented, we shall mobilise as many residents as possible to write objections. And if it gets to the DCM then we will try to arrange a mass show of concern.

Of course, there is still the parallel application continuing for the service station and hotel, now 78 bedrooms. I have commented on that before and our views remain unchanged.

In other areas of planning we see the continuing pressure to build.

Two applications in the Conservation Area

An appeal has been made by the developer (Seawards) of 50 Bath Road against the first application for this site, previously rejected by the Council. This was the one for 8 flats. We have written to the Inspector giving our objections to this appeal, as have many local residents.

Another application has been made inside the Conservation Area at 2 Creek End. This is very close to the 50 Bath Rd site. The plan is for the demolition of an existing garage and office and erection of a 2 storey domestic extension with double garage. In our view this is an over development of the site inside the Conservation Area and appears to be a potential separate dwelling from the existing house, rather than an extension.

Oak Tree Drive Development

The proposal was formally refused earlier in the year and this refusal is now subject to appeal. We shall be seeking advice to strengthen our case in fighting the appeal.

Interbridges East

Interbridges East site application has been re-presented with some modifications. I had a letter from the Head of Planning; Jackie Batchelor to say that they could not grant a Tree Preservation Order on the group of trees east of the Interbridges junction, because the request came in after the outline planning permission had been granted, a few years ago. They would be liable to damages if they were to do so. In our objection to this planning application, we have pointed out that the junction to the west has not been approved and consequently the application to the east, which relies on the new junction and traffic lights should also be withdrawn. We also request that the site be better screened from New Brighton Road.

Other Sites

There are numerous other locations either at the planning application or appeal stage, too numerous to detail here. Many are relatively minor and do not present Emsworth with significant changes or set unpleasant precedents but those detailed above are picked out for their significant impact and because many of you have raised concerns about them with the ERA. For other planning applications which are a cause for concern, see Planning Roundup, page 4.
Chris Curry

Emsworth Needs You



Would you like to have a say in the future development of Emsworth? Would you like to be consulted on the planning and monitoring of services provided by Havant Borough Council and Hampshire County Council?

If so, you could be one of the five people who live, work or study in Emsworth that we would like to welcome as new members of the Emsworth Community Board (ECB) at the AGM to be held on Thursday 24th April 2008. Everyone is welcome but we would especially like to be joined by one or two young people.

The ECB comprises 15 people and holds a public meeting to review local issues in the evening of the second Thursday of each month at the Emsworth Community Centre. Its members are part of small focus groups which review planning applications and monitor environmental, transport and community issues and liaise with council officers on such matters. One of these groups has been monitoring litter and graffiti problems and liaising with HBC to ensure they are dealt with promptly. Another has been conducting a detailed audit of the key roads and paths around Emsworth and will be presenting a comprehensive report to HBC and HCC which spells out the improvements needed to provide safe and easy routes for pedestrians, cyclists, wheelchair users and the disabled.

The ECB was established in 2004 to represent the views of the community and to work towards improving the quality of life in Emsworth. It played a major role in selecting and supporting recent major projects such as the Skate Park, Memorial Sculpture and Memorial Garden in Jubilee Park and the many improvements to the A259 pedestrian underpass and its access route from Palmers Road car park.

If you are interested in supporting our efforts, or would like to know more about them, please contact me by phone 01243 431615 or email steve.pearce@btinternet.com
Steve Pearce, Chairman, ECB



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