

SRA Acting Chairman's Report 2009-2010

Margaret Whitehead, our previous Chairman, was elected to the County Council in May, and as Vice, I have been holding the fort since then. I would like to thank Margaret for her year and a half as Chairman; she was super efficient, and is now applying that efficiency to her role as County Councillor for Chichester South.

I am pleased to be able to tell you that we now have a very able volunteer, from within the committee, for the post of Chairman, but more of that later.

This time last year, we did not know how the County Council planning committee would vote on Tarmac's application to extract, process and transport gravel from the Hunters' Way site. As you all know, in March the application was refused.

I think we can say that we as a community played no small part in forming the planning committee's opinion, and I congratulate them on accepting our arguments. We have said it before, but it is worth saying again, it made all the difference that so many of you actively joined in public protests. It was a proper community effort. I treasure the Observer's photograph of so many orange posters and banners, & all the men women, children, prams, dogs, bicycles etc on the steps of County Hall on 17th March.

But we must not fool ourselves that the threat of gravel extraction at Lavant has gone away for good. It hasn't, and I think Mike Hall will want to bring us up to date on that in the Open Forum.

The application at Hunters Rest, just south of the garage, was eventually withdrawn at the last minute, mainly because the District Council was able to demonstrate that there is already the required 5-year landbank of suitable residential sites. We shall monitor carefully whatever else may be proposed for that site.

We were I think all disappointed with the footway (one can hardly call it a pavement) which was eventually produced for Brandy Hole Lane. We will be pressing for improvements.

Parking in Summersdale Road: we all know how unsatisfactory the present traffic flow is, but have argued that we do not wish parking to be banned completely. That would a) make traffic drive far too fast causing danger to pedestrians on the very narrow pavement, and b) drive parking further out into the residential areas. This item comes up before the County Local Committee South on 23rd February, and anyone can speak at this meeting. The SRA committee will be there, and I can give details to anyone else interested in attending.

This year has seen the start of development at Graylingwell. Richard Plowman led a, thankfully, successful campaign to keep the name Graylingwell. The first show homes will be open at the end of March. Linden Homes have set up a consultative group, to which Barry Aldridge goes, and the District Council have a North East Forum to which he also goes on our behalf, and he will keep a keen eye on

developments there on behalf of SRA to make sure that the scheme does not impinge adversely on Summersdale.

He will also do the same for the Barracks development. I hope many of you went to the presentation by the developers, ZeroC, last weekend at the Assembly Rooms. They have used Barry's Neighbourhood Character Appraisal to get a flavour of Summersdale, and I think that will be reflected in their designs. They hope to put in a planning application around about June, with building starting this time next year. If they deliver on their aims, it will be one of the most eco-friendly developments in the country, both in terms of beneficial for the planet, and also economical for residents.

The Police have set up a series of Neighbourhood Management Panels across Chichester, to which Gillian Berry is our contributor. She seeks suggestions from the SRA committee to take to the Panel, including road safety, parking, dog-fouling, anti-social behaviour etc. Three issues have priority each period between meetings. One such issue this year was parties being held late at night in Brandy Hole Copse.

Diseased Chestnut trees in the Drive and Chestnut Avenue: we met with the tree warden and the county council, and the county have agreed to replace such diseased trees with disease-resistant chestnut trees.

You may be aware that the District Council is developing what is known as the Core Strategy, and within that is the Local Development Framework. We have responded to this, as have other Residents' Associations, and have all independently concluded that the immediate Chichester *City* area should be spared from major schemes, as the present resources would be inadequate to cope with large developments. We argue also that the attractive, small scale nature of the city would be changed if it became too big. Unfortunately it is an edict passed down from the Government that 9,600 houses be built in the area south of the Downs. This will be an ongoing occupation for our committee over the next year.

To end on a cheerful note, and on a topic which is not entirely SRA business, but which affects us all, our MP, Andrew Tyrie, confirmed last week that at last the A and E Department at St Richard's Hospital is safe from downgrading or closure. It has definitely been decided that A and E departments at both St Richards and Worthing would be kept fully operational. This is hugely significant for the whole hospital, and a great relief.

That concludes my report on the last year's activities, but.....[and then I shall pay tribute to all the committee, Barry, and John Yates]