

EGRA Newsletter - November 2021

Although we seem to be in a kind of unlockdown, we are still not convinced that this would be a good time to organise a proper face-to-face AGM for EGRA. If all goes well, we would like to have a proper meeting in the New Year but we have all seen how the best laid plans . . .

We would love to have some new Committee members to bring a new perspective to things and to share the workload. If you like reading planning applications and especially if you like cheese which features very heavily at our Committee meetings then please contact us.

In the meantime, it is time for another update on the myriad things going on locally - some of them good and, inevitably, some of them less than desirable. We try to keep up-to-date information on the EGRA website but with so many developments going on locally it is easy to miss things. If you think there is something that needs coverage, please let us know and send in any information that you think could be circulated to members.

Council Ward Boundaries

Many people will be unaware of the radical changes that have been made to the Ward Boundaries. The population has expanded so dramatically with the ever-increasing numbers of new builds that Peninsula Ward now has over twice the normal electorate. Consequently, from May we will have two Wards. East Greenwich will more or less follow the boundaries of the EGRA membership between the A102, the railway line and the Thames. Peninsula will encompass the Knight Dragon and Greenwich Millennium Village areas on the east side of the A102. There are similarly drastic changes in West Greenwich where one Ward will become two; Greenwich Park and Greenwich Creekside. The most important thing about these changes is that none of the political parties have a clue as to the likely impact on next May's local elections with such a mix of new residents alongside others who have endured a lot of careless development which does not seem to have contributed much to the well-being of anyone.

Some Hot Topics for quizzing potential Councillors about:

- Air quality and how to improve it rather than just monitoring a deteriorating situation.
- Lack of play space, particularly for older children.
- Lack of green space and public amenities particularly in new developments where the promised public realm has never been delivered.
- Pressure on schools and health services.
- Pressure on public transport.
- Why have pedestrians been the lowest priority in all the recent road alterations with fewer crossing points on Trafalgar and Woolwich Roads and longer waits everywhere?
- The scandalous number of new homes with cladding, fire safety and build quality issues. What pressure are parties putting on the government and developers to implement a "polluter pays" principle so that the taxpayer does not end up picking up the tab?
- Why do we have some of the ugliest new builds along our historic waterfront? Why are the aesthetics of new developments never a priority even though we know this has implications for everyone's long-term mental and physical well-being?

- Lack of visible policing despite serious gun and knife crime incidents and on-street drug dealing. How to reassure people about their personal safety?
- How can we retrofit our many old houses for a zero-carbon future?
- How is XYZ political party proposing to deal with the increasing flood risk with rising sea levels? What plans do they have for new flood defences for London once the Thames Barrier become overwhelmed?

Licensing

Angle 90

This restaurant on Trafalgar Road had applied for longer hours for food sales rather than alcohol sales. However, at the licensing hearing it was clear that there would be no way to monitor the sales of alcohol. There was a long history of complaints from neighbours and there had been a very serious incident a couple of years ago involving firearms. The police were very firmly against any extension of hours and it was turned down.

Trafalgar Tavern

Greenwich Licensing Sub-Committee at its meeting on 1st November 2021, decided to refuse a variation of the Trafalgar Tavern's premises licence. The Trafalgar had applied to vary the current licence to cover two more floors of operations despite not offering any conditions of mitigation against additional noise, waste and other public nuisance issues. The decision notice makes interesting reading and we recommend residents have a quick read - see attached.

No doubt the Tavern will appeal the council decision at the magistrates' court so we wait to hear the final outcome. However, it is apparent there is an unhappy relationship between the Trafalgar Tavern and its neighbours. Some of this stems from how it uses its external area with residents particularly angry about closures of the Thames Path, a public highway, during Euro 2020 with no consent from the council to do so.



*The Crane Street Obstacle Course -
Courtesy of the Trafalgar Tavern*

Thank you to the councillors who spoke on behalf of residents to voice their concerns and to the councillors who then made the decision to refuse the application. This was noted and much appreciated. One last plea, now please ensure the Trafalgar move all their waste bins to their large yard just a few metres along and adjacent to Trident Hall. No other commercial premises or indeed domestic dwelling would be allowed to leave out a long train of bins 24/7 on a public highway let alone within a World Heritage site! The bins can then be moved out of the yard on the day of collection as everyone else has to do.

Data Protection

An alarming issue that arose from the Trafalgar Tavern licensing application was the startling revelation that personal data from objectors is passed to the applicant with no redaction of names, addresses or email contact information. This is the law and not something that Greenwich Council have any control over. In the era of Data Protection this seems to be an extraordinary anomaly and one that has had some very serious impacts recently with objectors receiving threats and intimidation so that at least one person withdrew an objection.

This is a matter for national government so that the same rules apply to licensing as to all other handling of personal data. We have contacted our MP, Matt Pennycook, and hope that his office will take this up. In the meantime, we can only recommend that anyone objecting to a licensing application should consider whether they think there will be any unpleasant ramifications and, if this is the case, submit objections via a Ward Councillor rather than directly.

Morden Wharf - Change of Developer



Courtesy Karin Tearle

Less than two months after getting planning permission for 1500 property units and associated commercial and retail space at Morden Wharf, property company U+I has now sold out to mega-development company LandSec for a cool £190 million. The lucrative Morden Wharf planning permission no doubt played a part in procuring this early Christmas present for U+I's directors and shareholders. It makes a mockery of the "local company with long term links to Greenwich" spiel that Councillors seemed so impressed by at the planning hearing in September. Clearly, LandSec has no historic links to Greenwich and is primarily interested in the profit that can be generated from the exploitation of this important riverside site. Whether they think this project is shovel-ready, as Richard Upton, the Chairman of U+I claimed, is not clear so we may be seeing some more land-banking particularly with the current shortages of labour and materials.

Ikea Car Park Site

We have a meeting scheduled with the developers, London Square, which will also include The Westcombe Society, The Greenwich Society and Aldeburgh and Fearon Street Neighbourhood Watch. Following the granting of planning permission for towers up to 36 storeys at Morden Wharf, we are concerned that other potential developments may come back with plans for higher buildings.

Sivyer at Morden Wharf - Ref: 19/3298/F



Sivyer digger close to Thames Path

There is still an outstanding planning application originally submitted two years ago for the industrial northern end of Morden Wharf occupied by demolition materials processing company, Sivyer. Following a damning Geotechnical Report in 2019 which accompanied the original planning application - with its worrying concerns about collapsing revetements and unexploded ordnance, Sivyer has now produced a plan to rebuild the riverbank with reed beds. Unfortunately, the plans do not include widening and improving this narrow (four foot wide) section of Thames Path with its attractive willow trees.

Sivyer intend to take over the public jetty at Primrose Pier to move material by barge which will connect with the site via overhead conveyors. The wharf "flip" will rely on the developers on the southern site opening Tunnel Wharf to the public, although this has not even been surveyed yet to see if it is useable. There is also no clue as to how these works will be done without closing the Thames Path. Please add your comments to the RBG Planning Portal if you have concerns about this.

Angerstein Roundabout Advertising Signs - Ref: 21/3544/A

There is a new planning application for two 22-metre-high electronic advertising hoardings on either side of the elevated road over Angerstein roundabout. They will be built on the small green space outside the old fire station and in the little park adjacent to Aldeburgh Street. Advertisements will be aimed at drivers on the A102 in both directions but will tower over the surrounding houses below the roadway. There has

been no consultation with neighbours about potential light pollution or the noise from the signboards which is considerable.

Given that drivers will eventually be confronted with a barrage of travel information to get them into the correct lanes for either Blackwall or Silvertown Tunnel, it seems very strange that they might also want to assimilate giant advertisements at the same time. Unless of course the advertisers already sense that the traffic will usually be stationary here, with or without a new tunnel. Take a look at the proposals and submit your comments if you think this is a bizarre idea.

Time for an East Greenwich History Trail - Rashmee Roshan Lall

People often think that the history of Greenwich starts and ends in West Greenwich - not so.

East Greenwich is rich in history, ranging from Chaucer to the Trans-Atlantic Telegraph Cable. This is why the Aldeburgh & Fearon Streets Neighbourhood Watch has put together a plan to represent East Greenwich's past and present by means of a mural under the Angerstein flyover, alongside a defined heritage and tourism trail. This would give residents and visitors some insight into the history of this part of Greenwich so much of which has been swept away by new development. The mural would be the initial element of a larger plan to make the history of the area better known to all via a history trail. The trail would potentially offer tourism, revenue and branding opportunities as well as artistic development for the area.

Some examples of things that could be included are:

- The little-known association of Horn Lane with Geoffrey Chaucer, mediaeval England's greatest poet. The Watch has been in contact with Chaucer experts and academics in the United States who have uncovered documentary evidence of Chaucer's property transactions in Horn Lane and the Westcombe area.
- The maritime industry along East Greenwich's riverfront. The Enderby family owned Britain's largest whaling fleet and appear in two chapters of Herman Melville's classic *Moby Dick*. The Enderbys also dominated rope and sail-making before Enderby Wharf became the manufacturing place of the first Trans-Atlantic Telegraph Cable - a technical association which continues to this day with Alcatel still located on part of the site.
- The pirate execution place at Bugsby's Hole.
- The four sluices that were in use 500 years ago to drain Greenwich Marshes - now home to GMV and the Knight Dragon developments.

Rashmee Roshan Lall is a journalist and co-ordinator of the Aldeburgh & Fearon Streets Neighbourhood Watch (Twitter: @AldeburghFearon) as well as an EGRA Committee member

Radisson Red Hotel



The Radisson Red Hotel on Tunnel Avenue, with its panoramic view of the Blackwall Tunnel Approach is now open after one of the longest running building sagas in Greenwich. For many years the site was abandoned and looked unlikely to ever get finished. The brand is aimed at young backpackers who presumably will not mind the extremely industrial setting or the bizarre cat model outside.

Silvertown Tunnel

Works continue apace at Silvertown Tunnel. As well as the portal building off Millennium Way, almost every site on the Peninsula has ancillary works underway. Over 130 trees have been chopped down and so far there is no word on how these will be replaced. Millennium Way is reduced to a single lane which has led to some considerable traffic issues when events are taking place at the O2 including lots of muppets trying to drive through the bus station causing chaos to the bus system. A bit more proactive stewardship from Riverlinx and TfL would be useful.

It seems ironic that this £2 billion tunnel is well underway while the lifts at both Greenwich and Woolwich foot tunnels are broken and unlikely to be fixed for months.

Traffic

Banning Street - Success At Last



No more of this.

We were delighted that, following years of reminders to RBG about the omission of Banning Street from the East Greenwich CPZ, the Council finally took action. The area behind the River Gardens development had, for some reason, not been officially handed over to the Council when the building works were completed. This meant that parking was a complete free-for-all with vehicles parking with impunity on double yellow lines, on the footpath and across the disabled access points. This was dangerous for pedestrians and also a shocking loss of revenue to the Council who could not collect parking fines. Our thanks to Councillor Chris Lloyd who finally took on this task and got the situation resolved.

Bollards and LTNs



Now you see it...

There has been a deeply depressing saga with the Pelton Road LTN where the bollard has been regularly removed. RBG claimed that they had no replacement bollards and the system would have to have a camera installed instead. They finally redeployed an old bollard from somewhere else but this has already lost its padlock. A traffic-cam solution seems ludicrously expensive to stop idiots driving down a route that serves three schools. And it is not clear whether the camera systems currently operating in West Greenwich are actually generating fines.



Now you don't.