

The QEP Chronicle No 7

Spring 2010

Dear Fellow Residents,

STOP PRESS News! (Except 'Stopping the Press', as such, is probably out of date in today's era of computers and direct printing) – **The Green is safe and the Planning Committee voted to Approve the Tilehouse Proposal!**

We are moving from winter towards what will hopefully be a warm and sunny summer. I have been trying to get some advance practice and rest in Florida, but sadly was unable to escape as my e-mail succeeded in catching up with me! Thanks to everyone for their comments on the LEAP Application and for support with last year's petition. This week, on 18 May, there was a very good turn out at the Planning Committee Meeting. With tremendous support from our Ward Councillors, we persuaded the Committee to endorse the Application to vary the S106 and, instead of building a LEAP on the Green, invest funds in the larger Tilehouse facility for all ages.

We would also urge you to make a special effort to support the AGM. Details are given below; do come along to exercise your democratic rights as members of the QEP Community.

It is good to know that some volunteers have banded together to ensure that, if at all possible, we will have a Summer Fayre to be held on the Green on Saturday 11th September. There are a few key matters to resolve; I know an appeal has already been circulated for assistance, and for volunteers to help on the day. Please respond and help if you can.

Attached is a list of useful contacts – please keep them for future use.

QEPRA AGM

The QEPRA AGM will be held on the 30th June at Esporta commencing at 7.30 pm. The Esporta bar will be open for refreshments. If you haven't visited Esporta before, this an opportunity to have a look around. We have carefully avoided all World Cup matches; please put it in your diary now!

The Draft Minutes of the last AGM are enclosed, if you have any comments please forward them to the Secretary: qep.residents.sec@ntlworld.com. If you are able to forward comments before the Meeting, it will save time on the night.

Please submit any Resolutions you wish to have discussed at the AGM. The closing date for their submission is the 5th June. Resolutions will be included in the Agenda which will be sent out two weeks before the Meeting.

At the AGM a Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer and 10 General Committee Members will be elected, and will hold post until the next AGM.

The current Chairman and Secretary have indicated their intention not to seek re-election, so we would particularly like to hear from residents who might be interested in taking over these roles (ideally, ahead of the Meeting).

We also welcome interest from residents who may be willing to become General Committee Members. There have been expressions of interest during the year which haven't been followed up. Please accept our apologies; but get in touch again now, and we will follow them up.

QEPRA's work is moving into a new phase. We set out with five key issues which concerned purchasers, alongside the day to day management (as quasi-directors). Of the five issues, bus route, Goddard Close access, hard play area, LEAP and Community Centre, the first four have been resolved and it is expected that the last one will be resolved shortly. From this AGM onwards, the focus will be more on managing the Estate (with the approval of the Directors appointed by the

Developers and with the assistance of the Managing Agents, Hazelvine). Getting ready for the transition from developer appointed directors to resident appointed directors will present some significant challenges.

So, it's becoming more about looking after where we live, and less about arguing against the things we didn't want. Please come forward if you are interested in playing a part.

The LEAP

Thank you to all residents who opposed the LEAP when we asked; supported the Developers' most recent proposal to be relieved of the obligation to provide a LEAP on QEP, and instead make a significant financial contribution towards play facilities elsewhere. Thanks to massive efforts by many, including speakers from QEP, and despite some opposition, the Developers' Application was approved. The GBC Officers did not submit a supportive report and, in view of what happened last time, there was no certainty that it would be accepted by the Committee. Our Ward Councillors did sterling work - aided by the Council Leader, two good supporting speakers, and a large presence of QEP Residents at the Meeting.

Community Facility

The accommodation was widely advertised and attracted a good level of interest. In the end, only one bid was submitted which met requirements. The Developers propose, therefore, to negotiate a lease with the New Life Baptist Church (NLBC).

NLBC's vision for the building states: "Our vision is for the building to become a focal point for the QE Park and the wider Stoughton community. We are committed to operating the facility in as inclusive a way as possible, working in partnership with a wide variety of community user groups."

And their concluding statement ends: "We would like to reiterate, particularly in response to any reservations which there may be about appointing a church group to take on responsibility for this building, that we are keen to ensure diversity in the range of programmes, activities and user groups operating from the facility and we would make every effort to be as socially inclusive as possible. Our commitment is to operating the facility in partnership with other user groups and in consultation with local residents, for the benefit of the community as a whole".

Representatives of the NLBC requested a meeting with us to clarify Residents' concerns. We told them, noise, parking, a bar licence, and attracting anti-social behaviour. There was, of course, the major concern that the Residents might be held to have some liability for the external maintenance of the Building. I am glad to say that the Developers have told us that QEP residents will not have this liability.

In considering our concerns, NLBC have stated that they will restrict the hours of use. They plan to be open between 9.00am to 10.30pm, with an 11.00pm curfew for any special events. This should contain any noise within reasonable hours.

At present the Centre only has 6 allocated parking places. NLBC is seeking access to more and we understand this is being discussed between the Developers and GBC. There are supposedly 24 spaces available for this building which, if shared fairly, should normally be sufficient. Presently several spaces are being used by the Parklands office workers during the day. There may be some displacement parking as a result during 'office hours'.

The NLBC do not propose to hold a permanent alcohol licence, but potential users may apply for an occasional licence for specific events.

Regarding attracting anti-social behaviour; the NLBC team includes people with experience of dealing with young people, so we expect that they will do their best to contain behaviour within their

jurisdiction. The Police are still interested in having accommodation within the Building and, if this comes to pass, we might see a more regular police presence in the area.

The NLBC is adequately funded and have a sound business plan.

In reality, while some may dislike it, the building is here (and will be finished one day!) so it is best that it is put to good use. The proposal from the NLBC offers much to the Community and I hope residents will welcome them to QEP.

If you still have concerns please let us know; qep.residents.sec@ntlworld.com

The NLBC are happy to brief residents and outline their proposals, if there is sufficient interest. (Please let us know by e-mail as above). We will seek to organise a presentation after the AGM if enough residents ask.

Wheelie Bins

GBC changed from rubbish sacks to wheelie bins last October led to complaints from residents. Some could not get the bins around the backs of their homes, and were forced to keep the bins in their front gardens. As well being unsightly, which is why they complained, ***it is in breach of Residents' covenants***. At the time, GBC Recycling were inflexible. Following QEPRAs discussions with them, Recycling Managers joined us for a walk around the Estate. The problem areas were identified and GBC agreed to discuss a course of action with the residents concerned. We believe that no homes now need to leave their bins in their front gardens, and either have access to the rear or have an arrangement with GBC to use sacks.

Despite this QEPRAs has recently received complaints from residents that wheelie bins are still being left in front gardens. *This is in breach of a covenant* and is unsightly; please put your bins away when they have been emptied. If you consider that you have special needs, that prevent you putting your bin away, please contact GBC Recycling; recycling@quildford.gov.uk direct and copy to; qep.residents.sec@ntlworld.com

Paths and Lighting Bollards on the Greens

Work is already underway to repair the paths on the Greens and remove the redundant lighting bollards. In addition, the Developers will make a contribution to our Management Company for ongoing maintenance.

Marking and Signs at Road Junctions

Following consultation last year, we have tried to take forward the wishes of residents to put "Give Way" markings and signs at 5 junctions. SCC initially suggested that the cost might be shared but this was a 'casualty' of their budget review.

Whilst SCC officers have been helpful, they are now being more demanding in their technical requirements for marking the junctions, making the work more expensive (presumably in line with SCC policy). They are also unsure, but are checking, whether SCC will allow entirely privately funded works. They say: "these are not really dangerous road junctions, they have been built to modern day standards." Residents take a different view. Once SCC tell us their proposals, we will give residents an opportunity to decide, at the AGM, whether or not they wish to bear the cost and proceed.

Planning Control for Development and Tree Works

Residents have asked about changes to their properties. As more than 5 years have passed since many purchased their homes this would appear to be reasonable in terms of permitted development. **This is not the case in QEP** as the original planning consent for the Development (another clause in the Transfer) over-ruled it. The rights were withdrawn in perpetuity.

Works to trees, hedgerows and shrubs are also restricted until 5 years after completion of the Development. The question relating to 4 below, was asked in the context of the trees maintained by the Management Company, but the answer will also apply to home owners with trees in their gardens.

We sought advice from GBC Planning who responded:

"As general advice, I would suggest that house owners intending to carry out works to their houses should contact Planning Development Services (West area team) to get confirmation as to whether planning permission is required or not. In response to your specific questions I would respond as follows :-

1. Permitted development rights were removed on the original outline permission and this applies in perpetuity. Therefore all extensions etc continue to require planning permission on QEP.
2. The alterations to an external balcony and balustrade changes you quote are most likely to need planning permission because of the removal of permitted development rights.
3. Whether or not the house fronts a highway is not relevant to QEP , as permitted development rights have been removed across the whole estate. Whether roads or paths are adopted or not is not relevant due to the removal of permitted development rights across QEP.
4. With regard to condition 27 of the outline p.p. 01P 0881 , I consider that this applies to the end of the final phase –i.e. five years from the completion of the final phase 9. In this context I consider that the open space management company will still need to obtain permission for tree maintenance works which propose tree felling operations and other major crown reductions and thinning , but that minor maintenance and dead-wooding etc would not need to be agreed in advance."

The last sale for Phase 9 was in April 2008; tree works will need consent until at least April 2013.

Use of the Greens

Our Greens are much admired and are for the enjoyment of all in a reasonable manner. At the last AGM we suggested - following guidance from the Directors of our Management Company - that some essential rules should be displayed. There was some reluctance to have a lot of formal signage, but we hope to be able to offer residents some proposals at the AGM.

Users of the Greens, whether residents or others, should be aware that any organised activity requires the approval of our Management Company. Approval will not be withheld unreasonably, but will seek to ensure that insurance arrangements are adequate, and that any damage to the Greens is rectified at the organisers' expense. Approval can be given by our Managing Agents; Hazelvine Ltd, Unit 4, Station Road, Bourne End Bucks. SL8 5QH.

Damage by Refuse Vehicles

Sadly our grass verges and edges of the Greens are often damaged by large vehicles. Whilst they are by no means the only culprits, GBC refuse collection vehicles are often cited. If you see, or can verify, that a refuse vehicle has caused damage, please report it to GBC Recycling; 01483 444499
Email: recycling@guildford.gov.uk . They will repair any damage they cause.

Summer Fayre

Saturday 11th September: A small group of residents is already looking at possibilities regarding organising a Summer Fayre this year. Whilst the scale may vary from those of recent years, the Group will be doing its best to organise an event, and is already looking for volunteers.

I look forward to seeing you at the AGM if at all possible.

Grace Blake