

Protect Clandon



NEWSLETTER NO.1: 1 June 2014

Introduction

This is the first newsletter from “Protect Clandon”, the action committee of the Clandon Society, which is dedicated to fighting the Guildford Borough Plan (the ‘Local Plan’), but is focussing especially on the proposed development of Clandon with the building of a large school and other developments in the Clandon Greenbelt.

Background

Probably the most destructive policy ever to be imposed on the population of Surrey is in the process of being ratified by Guildford Borough Council disguised under the title of the ‘Local Plan’. The Plethora of additional documents can be found at <http://guildfordlocalplan.info/portfolio/evidencebase/>. The outcome of the Plan for us in Clandon is as follows:-

1. Three sites in West Clandon have already been suggested/committed by Guildford Borough Council for infill development:-
 - **Cuckoo Farm, next to the station:** A very large Secondary school will be built to accommodate over 1,000 pupils and teachers most of whom will come from outside of Clandon. They will effectively double the population of West Clandon every weekday resulting in serious traffic problems and related issues;
 - **Between Green Lane and Lime Grove-** housing which will take away an important open space in the village for dog walkers, runners and many more;
 - **Rear of ‘Summers’** more houses.

When the Plan was first published it was suggested that development on these sites should not occur. The school was not mentioned in the first draft of the Plan and was added following a meeting of Surrey County Council officials and Guildford Borough Council planners only a day or so before the latest draft was presented. Apparently, the developers have refused to have a secondary school on their newtown sites because they would lose precious housing stock. Keith Taylor, Chair of Surrey County Council Planning and Regulatory Committee who lives in Send Marsh, has suggested that if the school was built at (say at Gosden Hill or Wisley) then the housing it displaces should be built elsewhere, perhaps in Clandon. Of course, we in “Protect Clandon” believe the housing target is grossly inflated and far fewer houses are required. Finally the revised Plan appears not to have earmarked the land between Green Lane and Lime Grove and behind Summers, for development, but after deciding to build a school on Cuckoo Farm, nothing is certain.

2. Gosden Hill Farm between West Clandon and Burpham, will if GBC has its way, be developed into 2,000 houses, primary school, doctor’s surgery, shops, travellers’ pitches and possibly light industrial. The plan contains a proposal for changing the junction of the A3 at Burpham to provide access. It is likely to be the first phase joining West Clandon to Guildford.

3. At Wisley Airfield a development the size of Burpham is planned with 2,500 houses and accompanying infrastructure, again there will be a road link to the A3. The developers have already unveiled their plans. Large scale house building is also planned for beside the A3 in Ripley.

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4. Over 10,000 homes are planned to be built in the borough of Guildford in the next 16 years with numerous sites on Greenbelt as well as a very large set of areas 'set aside' also in the Green Belt for further development beyond the next 16 years; Currently, GBC's annual house building target is 652. This is being reviewed by Guildford Borough Council, but the number is not expected to be reduced to 300 to 345 as recommended by the Guildford Greenbelt Group ("GGG").

5. Required house numbers, based on inflated assumptions, (which drive the whole Plan), have been aggressively promoted by the Executive Committee of GBC for reasons we cannot understand. The council executive has steadfastly refused to alter its projections until recent strong representation from GGG and others (see attached Press release). We await the new projections to be announced on 4 June but do not hold out much hope that we will see sufficient reduction to take away the threat to the green field sites.

6. We need to challenge these hugely inflated projected housing numbers, ensure Brownfield sites are sensitively developed as a priority resulting in a more vibrant Guildford centre, and retain our Greenbelt heritage for everyone in Surrey and importantly for our children and their children.

7. When the Greenbelt was established, it was stated that it should only be built on in exceptional circumstances. Instead, GBC is proposing that the Greenbelt is the highest priority for development.

8. A number of villages are to be removed forever from the Greenbelt, namely the Horsleys, Ripley, Shere and Gomshall.

The Plan: what is happening next?

1. 4 June: Special meeting of the Executive, revised housing figures announced
2. 19 June: Extraordinary meeting of the council
3. June 2014-Sep 2014 Consultation of the Draft Plan
4. For subsequent events and timeline please go to the GGG website and click on 'Action's tab.

"Protect Clandon": what is happening next

1. We hope to set up a meeting in June in West Clandon to agree actions to fight the proposals. To obtain background to how the Plan and proposals such as building the school on Cuckoo Farm, originated. The Committee will invite our local county councillors and the entire West Clandon Parish Council to attend so we can co-ordinate our response.

Your First Actions

1. Please send/give a copy of this NewsLetter to any neighbours, friends and concerned Guildford Borough residents so we can disseminate this message and get as much support as possible;
2. Join the Clandon Society if you are not a member. Please put £2 in an envelope together with your name, address, email and phone numbers and drop them through the letter boxes of either, Chris Dean, Littlecroft, The Street, or Katherine Cornwall, Vine Cottage, The Street.

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3. Make sure you are signed up to the West Clandon email Group as this will be our main channel of communication in the village. To do this send an email to cbarrass@aol.com requesting to join the Group;
4. We would urge you to volunteer your help with "Protect Clandon" **Anyone with specific ideas, skills and resources to combat this threat are particularly welcome. To do so email either: cbarrass@aol.com, timanderson@tsapartners.co.uk, davefassom@stellarlimited.com**

What do we want you to do and when?

Once we have the numbers on the revised housing plan (shortly after 4 June) we will issue an update note but we expect we will recommend that you write/email to one or all of the local MP's Anne Milton (Guildford-Con. anne.milton.mp@parliament.uk), Sir Paul Beresford (Mole Valley Con. molevalley@btconnect.com), Michael Gove (Surrey Heath Con michael.gove.mp@parliament.uk) and others with your views. The following hyperlink provides contact details for each MP. <http://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/mgMemberIndexMP.aspx>

We suggest you make it clear to them your feelings and if you feel inclined, inform them that if they do not oppose the building on Greenbelt (and by inference do not challenge the Plan's housing numbers robustly) then in 2015 you will be voting either for an Independent Candidate put forward by a Greenbelt protection group or some other party that is against any building on the Greenbelt (they will know this is either the Greens or UKIP).

Letters/emails can also be sent to your local councillors Jenny Wicks (Jenny.Wicks@guildford.gov.uk), Andrew French (Andrew.French@guildford.gov.uk), Jennifer Powell (Jennifer.Powell@guildford.gov.uk) and Terence Patrick (Terence.Patrick@guildford.gov.uk), however it appears that these councillors are coming over to our viewpoint so we suggest the tone to them is constructive and supportive as we want to encourage them to push our case.

We will alert you to other key dates and when we need your help in the forthcoming weeks.

Protecting our Green Belt for our Children.

For further information go to: <http://guildfordgreenbeltgroup.co.uk>. GGG has brought together local protest groups from all over Guildford Borough.