

ELLENBROOK UPDATE

The Newsletter of the Ellenbrook Area Residents Association

February 2016

Message from the Committee

It's been a bit of a challenge to keep up with everything happening near the Ellenbrook area since the September newsletter.

On the planning side,

- The development of the **Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan** is continuing with the Council currently doing the background work in preparation for publication of the final draft for consultation in the summer.
- **Gascoyne Cecil Estates and Goodmans**, owners of land in Hatfield, have run exhibitions and workshops on proposals for **house building in Hatfield**.
- **Brett Aggregates** have submitted plans for a **gravel extraction quarry in the area of Ellenbrook Fields**.
- **Cemex** have submitted further information on their plans for **infilling** the existing Hatfield Quarry.
- The **St Albans** Local Plan is out for consultation.
- Proposals to remodel and extend the **Comet Hotel** with student accommodation have been rejected, but appeal cannot be ruled out.

You can find more detail on these overleaf. We've also included links to information so you can take a look if you would like to read further.

BUT we really want EARA to be about more than just dealing with threats to the area.

So, we are trying to get the website running, expand the number of residents on our mailing database and think about some community-based projects. You don't need to be on the committee to be active in the Association and if you have any ideas for our area, please tell us.

Contact us on

info@ellenbrookresidents.co.uk

About Us We are a group of local residents who aim to keep residents in our area informed of developments and help to make our area's voice heard. We have no political affiliation.

Our Chairman is Doug Tibbles.

Social media

We hope to launch the EARA website and Facebook soon and are looking for more content.

- We want to record the history of the area. Do you (or someone you know) have old photographs we can use or stories we can tell? We will just need to scan the photos, so they will be safe.
- Let us know if there are any local events.

In the meantime you might want to take a look at the local Streetlife sites (Ellenbrook and Smallford) which are a source of local information and contacts on the internet. The more of us that join, the more useful it will be!

<https://www.streetlife.com/>

Do we have your email address?

We will be sending out updates in the coming months and particularly when the new Local Plan consultation opens. If you haven't received this newsletter by email but would like future email updates, please send your details and email address to

membership@ellenbrookresidents.co.uk

We'll add you to the mailing list - don't worry we don't share your details with anyone else.

Help! Clean up Hatfield

Some of you may have seen on Streetlife that there will be a town wide litter pick up from March 1st - 5th. We are trying to get some groups together to cover the Ellenbrook area.

Please let us know by replying to the info@ellenbrookresidents.co.uk email if there are any areas in Ellenbrook which you feel ought to be targeted and are able to help.

Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan

Welwyn Hatfield Council <http://www.welhat.gov.uk/localplanbackground>

Some local residents met Sue Tiley, Planning Policy and Implementation Manager for Welwyn Hatfield recently. Council staff are working on analysing almost 6,000 responses to the draft Plan, assessing 61 new or amended sites, receiving and updating evidence, and liaising with service providers on matters such as infrastructure. The timetable has been extended to allow completion of this work:

Spring 2016 Complete evidence, site assessments, etc. Draft final Local Plan.

Summer 2016 Consultation on final draft.

Autumn/Winter 2016 Review responses to consultation and submit for examination.

Early 2017 Examination in Public

Spring/Summer 2017 Examination of Inspectors Report and Adoption

Various sources are now suggesting that Welwyn Hatfield may be looking to build 15,000 homes, significantly more than previously proposed. So the pressure to release Green Belt is not just from the owners of the land, but from the Council wondering how they can reach these numbers.

Ellenbrook Fields (Hat 2)

It was encouraging to see so many local residents making their views known at the recent exhibition of proposals for 1,100 homes in three villages at Ellenbrook Fields. It was not so encouraging to find that an area which we believed had been designated as a Country Park as part of the Aerodrome agreement is now being treated as “up for grabs” for house building.

Great Nast Hyde House/Bramble Rd (Hat3) <http://www.welhat.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=10424&p=0>

We thought that the land adjoining Nast Hyde House (Hat 3) was out of the running, but there is now a new proposal (called Hat19) for 50 houses accessed through the closed off end of Bramble Road. The area is 1.2 hectares running between the backs of houses in Bramble Rd and the Great Nast Hyde House driveway. There is limited information at present and we will have to “keep our ears to the ground” on this one.

Ellenbrook Lane/ Wilkins Green Lane (Hat4/5)

Some members of the committee met representatives of GCE, owners of land along Ellenbrook Lane/ Wilkins Green Lane (Hat4/5) and most of the Hatfield land outside of the Aerodrome. It was clear that their proposals to build in other areas of Hatfield are well advanced and that they are “less enthusiastic” about Hat4/5, because of the many problems a developer would face, such as flooding and access.

Gascoyne Cecil Estates (GCE) <http://www.gascoynececil.com/>

We attended a workshop run by GCE on the transport implications of building 1,650 houses at Stanboroughbury (Hat1) and 1,100 houses at Symondshyde Village, an additional proposed site since the last Local Plan draft. It is really difficult to see how the area could cope with the traffic from these developments, on top of the Ellenbrook Fields and Oaklands College houses- nearly 5,000 dwellings altogether! Many of the affected roads are in or near our area: St Albans Rd West, A414, Sandpit Lane/Oaklands Lane, Coopers Green Lane etc. There was much discussion of possible solutions, but they need either a complete change in lifestyle (using cycles and public transport) and/or considerable investment in traffic infrastructure. One participant suggested there was danger of putting “the cart before the horse” by allocating sites without any clear idea of how to fund the transport to make them viable. It will be interesting to read the transport proposals in the next Local Plan.

We had the opportunity to speak to GCE’s architects and planners in their design offices. There was encouraging evidence that they are looking to work with the community, revising designs following comments by Hatfield Garden Village residents and studying English villages to influence their designs. It was very interesting to see them at work. GCE will be publishing a summary of their findings from the series of workshops they held, and we will let you know when it is available.

Neighbourhood Watch www.owl.co.uk

One of our residents, John Jackson, has recently taken on the role of Area Coordinator for the Hertfordshire Police's St Albans Road West Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) Scheme. This covers the whole Ellenbrook Area.

It would be great if we could increase membership of this scheme: if you would like to join, please go to www.owl.co.uk and simply follow the signing up instructions.

The site includes links to report non-crime matters such as street lights not working, potholes, fly tipping etc. via a link "fix my street". It also provides a link to send messages to our elected representatives such as councillors and MP, links to local planning applications and trading standards approved local contractors.

John is also trying to increase the membership of EARA, adding as many people as possible to our mailing list, and making sure we have details of residents who prefer a paper copy of newsletter – we don't want anyone left out!

Please be assured that we will never use your information for anything other than EARA matters. If you know of any family members or neighbours we're not in contact with, please ask them to email membership@ellenbrookresidents.co.uk with their details. John is happy to take your details for registering with NHW on the same email address if you find that easier than going via the owl website.

Hatfield 2030 <http://hatfield2030.co.uk/>

According to their website, "Hatfield 2030+ is about engaging with as many individuals and groups as possible across Hatfield's diverse community to understand what Hatfield should look like in 2030, and how we can get there." Hopefully many residents completed the questionnaire for the project, and several of us attended the workshop, along with representatives from the Council, University, local employers, land owners etc. The outcome is expected to be a strategy for renewal.

Parking Rules

We are often asked what the parking rules are around the area, so we have asked local officers to provide some guidance. The full guidance will be available on the website shortly, but a couple of key points:

- * The restrictions are enforced by Civil Enforcement Officers, not by the Police, PCSOs or Street Wardens.
- * If you wish to report a parking breach, please email on the day of the breach only

parking@eastherts.gov.uk

- * For long term issues, email parking@welhat.gov.uk

Verge damage

A number of residents have complained to the County Council about verge damage. The Council have advised that if damage to the verges by vehicles continues they will consider erecting posts in the damaged areas when funds are available. If it comes to this, residents will consult on whether it could spoil the appearance of the area, but it will obviously make it extremely difficult for residents who have widened their driveways but not dropped the corresponding kerb. In the meantime we might all want to try our best to avoid churning up the grassy areas and discourage visiting cars and lorries from doing so.

Other News..

COMET HOTEL <http://planning.welhat.gov.uk/plandisp.aspx?recno=63122>

The application to remodel the hotel by removing the 1970's extension and adding 370 student rooms in 4 blocks surrounding the Hotel was recommended for approval but has been turned down by the Planning Management Committee, after consideration by councillors. It could now go to appeal, we will wait and see.

QUARRY <https://cloud1.atriumsoft.com/HCCePlanningOPS/loadFullDetails.do?apllid=24891>

A number of residents attended the exhibition by Brett Aggregates on proposals to extract gravel from the Ellenbrook Field area, and you should have received a letter on the planning application. The proposals are to work small areas at a time, over a thirty year period. Access is proposed from the main road, near Notcutts, with estimated lorry movement of 170 per day. We are working with Smallford Residents Association to look at the plans with a view to making a submission. If anyone is interested in being involved, or has any comments, please let us know.

CEMEX HATFIELD QUARRY <https://cloud1.atriumsoft.com/HCCePlanningOPS/loadFullDetails.do?apllid=22870>

Through our links with Smallford, we discovered that the owners of the existing quarry, on Oaklands Lane, are asking permission to bring in "engineering materials comprising inert waste and soils" to restore the site. We do not yet have all the details, but have heard that the permission would be for 300 vehicle movements per day.

ST ALBANS STRATEGIC LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION

http://stalbans-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning_policy/strategic_local_plan_2016/slp2016

St Albans' plan also impacts this area due to proposals for 1,000 new homes at Oaklands College. We have met with Smallford residents to look at the plan and are looking at making a short submission to the consultation regarding the impact on the Hatfield/St Albans border area and traffic. We are not expecting to ask for individual submissions from residents, but if anyone has any comments on this, please let us know.

COUNCILLORS <http://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/eastern/hertfordshire/welwyn-hatfield>

The Local Government Boundary Commission has recommended that Ellenbrook should become part of the Hatfield Villages ward, joining the area which takes in Salisbury Village, Hatfield Garden Village and Lemsford. This seems a sensible adjustment, bringing the Hatfield areas to the west of the A1 together.

OLDINGS RETAIL PARK (Tesco/Homebase, etc.) <http://planning.welhat.gov.uk/plandisp.aspx?recno=63718>

Residents may already be aware of a further application for change of use for the Homebase unit to two large retail units - one described as a toy/baby type store e.g. Smyth's Toys/ToysRus/Mothercare, and the other a premium food store e.g. Marks and Spencer Simply Food.

The earlier application was rejected, but the new application has a much more detailed appraisal as to why it should be approved this time. Even if successful, there is no guarantee the use will change soon - the application is from the owner of the unit, not Homebase who still have some years to run on their lease.

TOWN CENTRE

The largest empty unit opposite Boots is to become a Savers store selling cut price brand named toiletries. The Borough has applied to purchase no 17c, one of the new units at the end of the arcade. We do not know for what purpose but it could be to transfer the housing office from White Lion Square as the lease runs out shortly.