

## Conclusion

There is a growing sense of unease that the SRFI is a 'stalking horse' for developing this part of our local **Green Belt** for purposes other than the SRFI. Aside from the overwhelming local opposition to the proposal, there are huge and costly infrastructure works necessary to road and rail services to serve the development. St Alban's MP Anne Main proposed we be open to using some of the site for a residential development of local need and anything is better than the SRFI!

## Footnote

Throughout the long campaign, **Elstree and Borehamwood Green Belt Society** have supported STRIFE, the action group formed to fight the proposals by Helioslough.

We are also grateful for the support that our local MPs Oliver Dowden and Anne Main are giving to fighting this development.

## Hollybush Pub

The Hollybush is a 15C hostelry with a Grade11\* listing. It is very picturesque and some consider it to be the oldest building in Elstree. It was sold some years ago to a Jewish charity for a synagogue but when the Artichoke came up for sale that was considered more suitable and the Hollybush was left to fall into decline. The committee of the Elstree Village Preservation Society, which is a new offshoot of the Elstree and Borehamwood Green Belt Society, was concerned that it would collapse and wrote to Herts County Council about it. They informed the owners that it must be repaired it but they then decided to sell it. Shortly before Christmas it was auctioned and bought by a property developer. The main building, adjoining the road, has to be restored and kept in good order. It could then be suitable for a dwelling, office, restaurant or something similar. We understand that at the moment

it has been put in reasonable order and two people are living in it. We wait to see what the new owner decides but believe there is a possibility the car park, now closed, may be developed.

It is a noteworthy and a much loved landmark in this neighbourhood and EBGBS will be watching out for future plans.

Jenny Jacoby

## Ann Goddard, Chairman

**The Elstree and Borehamwood Green Belt Society continues to campaign for the preservation of our countryside and the protection of our twin settlements during a time of rapid growth and change.**

**> We are particularly concerned over the preservation of Aldenham Reservoir which we believe constitutes the 'Very Special Circumstances' which would justify building houses in the Watford Road site opposite.**  
**> We work with Elstree Village Preservation Society, Radlett Village Society and Shenley Village Society on common interests.**

**> Our AGM is on Wednesday 11 May at 7.15pm to 9.15 pm in Room 3 of Allum Hall Manor House. 2 Allum Lane Elstree WD6 3PJ. Our speaker will be Professor Martin Bigg, an expert on Environmental Issues. We are very fortunate be able to hear his presentation.**

**> After the Meeting refreshments will be served.**

**> If you care about your environment do please join us. All are welcome.**

**> Ann Goddard Chairman E&BGBS**

[www.ebgreenbelt.org.uk](http://www.ebgreenbelt.org.uk)



Elstree & Borehamwood Green Belt Society



## Newsletter 2016

### Our View of 2015.

We live in a particularly endangered area of Green Belt principally because of the astronomical rise in house prices. Hertsmere, 80% Green Belt, is scarred by major motorways. Enough of the original peaceful countryside has remained to make this a pleasant place to live but we feel the effects of increasing traffic and pollution resulting from the rise in population. Schools, medical services and the infrastructure are becoming overloaded.

The greatest environmental threat the **Park Street Rail Freight Interchange** seems to have been quietly shelved presumably because of the massive cost and disruption it would cause. A huge gravel extraction works by Brett Aggregates is being considered, another nightmare prospect and we must all oppose it. The alternative of a housing estate is hardly better. Why not keep the site as it is as a memorial to the local World War 2 history and a wildlife refuge!

The waters of **Aldenham Reservoir** are very troubled still. The granting of planning permission for an estate of 70 houses along Watford Road appears to be the only hope of saving this historic and well-loved local treasure. Now that IS a Very Special Circumstance! We continue to fight for **Elstree Village** through Elstree Village Preservation Society. The fire destruction of the Gamekeeper's Cottage on Silver Hill is another local tragedy.

If you care about your environment please do join us in the unceasing struggle to preserve it. Our membership is declining as

our faithful supporters succumb to the passage of Time. If we want a green and pleasant Elstree and Borehamwood for us and our children we must rally round and fight for it.

### Woodcock Hill Village Green

Last year Alex Melson organised monthly working parties for the WHVG Committee. The tasks were varied, as was the attendance.

Volunteers put up bat boxes, cleared paths, brambles and non-native species, made a dead hedge to provide a habitat. Volunteers also dug a pit then inserted pieces of pipe and covered it again to attract voles and reptiles.

Our biggest working party was on Mitzvah Day when members of the Jewish community joined us. Our volunteers are mainly members but sometimes the Town Youth Councillors are able to help.

The Committee decided not to fund raise this year as we had hopes of Section 106 money from a Taylor Wimpey development.

This housing development was given planning permission by Hertsmere in November 2014 but to date has not received permission to build so close to the railway.

### Grants

- From Health & Wellbeing we received a grant to buy tools. They have been very useful for our working parties.
- £600 from borough Councillors Bright, Kelly, Sachdev and Turner



contributed half towards another Interpretative board. This board has information about the Beacon compiled and designed by Museum volunteer John Woolston. It will be unveiled on Saturday 11th June 2-4pm at the annual Woodstock Music and picnic.

- A grant from HBC to celebrate the Queen's official 90th birthday enables us to hold the Woodstock event. Please bring a picnic and join us.

**Other expenditure** Existing funds enabled us to have a new vinyl skin added to the shield depicting the Town, Borough and Woodcock logos. Thank you to Andy Hayward and Clive Butchins for removing and then replacing the shield. Thanks to Mike Rollins for his design and to Bob Redman for making the arrangements and ensuring manufacture and collection. We also purchased some aggregate to make a path at the Carrington Ave entrance which ensured that revellers at the Beacon event could avoid the quagmire that existed previously.

### **Celebrations**

**June 2015** In conjunction with The Town and the Royal British Legion WHVG Committee hosted an event to celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE Day. We were all entertained by Borehamwood Brass and the concert was MC'ed by Nick Male and Paul Welsh. Several local organisations provide attractions and information stands.

**April 21<sup>st</sup> 2016** A celebration of the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday culminated in lighting the Beacon as part of the National chain. This event was a joint venture of the Town and WHVG Committee. The evening started with David Boakes and his Michael Jackson tribute Act, then Borehamwood Brass entertained with a selection of music. After Town mayor read the address from Prince Charles, and other dignitaries spoke, the Band played a patriotic

sing-a-long. This will be remembered for Nick Male leading all 8 verses of Rule Britannia and 6 verses of the National Anthem, backed by a boy band consisting of the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire Stuart Nagler, Oliver Dowden MP, Town mayor Richard Butler, Deputy Borough Mayor Pete Rutledge, Borough Council leader Cllr Morris Bright along with Fred Grimes proudly holding the Royal British Legion Standard. After the Beacon was lit the band led us in singing Happy Birthday. A big thank you goes to the WHVG Committee and Town staff for their hard work to make the impossible possible.

### **Future projects**

We have submitted an application to the Tesco fund to cut the meadows and encourage more diversity of meadow flowers and habitats and to make the footpath across the top of the Hill more accessible to all. This will be done using environmentally friendly materials.

We also want to have better signage from Furzehill Rd in the form of a Brown sign to mark a place of special interest.

We are producing a Memories booklet to commemorate the Beacon Event.

Committee: Pat Strack (Chair), Clive Butchins, Jo Kay, Yvonne Harris, Sandra Parnell, Pete and Sue Williams.

### **Rail Freight Terminal – the Battle continues**

#### **Brief background**

The first any of us knew about the Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI) was in 2006 when HelioSlough submitted a planning application to St Albans District Council for its development on 300 acres of land at Park Street designated as **Green Belt**.

The proposed development is huge, equivalent to 50 international football pitches and includes 5 enormous warehouses, the biggest of which is more than 1 million square feet and 4 railway tracks. The development would generate at least 3000 extra lorry movements 24/7 on our already congested local roads plus an additional 1665 cars for employees travelling to the site.

#### **2014**

Eric Pickles MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, informed St Albans City & District Council of his decision to grant planning permission for the Strategic Rail Freight Interchange at Park Street by letter dated 14 July 2014.

St Albans MP Anne Main added that 'Just because you have permission to develop doesn't mean you have to develop and we have to secure the land. I will be urging Hertfordshire County Council to sit down with St Albans District Council because it is still very much up in the air what **Green Belt** land St Albans wants to release for development.'

#### **2015**

Earlier this year St Albans City and District Council unsuccessfully challenged the decision by the Secretary of State to grant planning permission for the SRFI at Park Street in the High Court and has been ordered to pay the Secretary of State's costs of £13,269.

On the night of Thursday 9 July, Anne Main MP attended a public meeting on the future of the proposed rail freight site at Park Street. In a well-attended meeting in Chiswell Green, Anne was a member of a panel that included STRIFE, local politicians and Green Belt campaign-

ers.

Anne said, 'I felt that the meeting gave local residents the opportunity to further air their views, and get the most up-to-date information on the current state of affairs.

'I think it's clear that we have to look fully at a range of alternatives. Given its green belt status, unless there is a suitable proposal that is likely to be approved, the County will inevitably find itself in a difficult place.

Anne said that 'We need to be realistic about what we can achieve in Park Street, and how best we can continue to fight against the SRFI. After a clear decision by a High Court Judge, and the County Council's fiduciary obligations, we need to balance this against the needs of the area, and what is realistically achievable. We need to think about the art of the possible and look at all viable alternative proposals.'

One of the issues raised at the meeting was the petition against the rail freight terminal. The St Albans MP said in relation to this matter, 'I am urging you, if you're a Hertfordshire resident, to sign the petition to have the matter fully debated by the County Council. We owe it to St Albans to have the County discuss this matter in full. We only have until September to reach the required 10,000 signatures.' In response to the most recent announcement by the Department for Transport (DfT) to mothball Network Rail's capital expenditure projects, Anne wrote to the Transport Secretary, asking if this announcement will affect funding for the rail freight site. 'There have always been questions surrounding funding for the site' said Anne. 'I am seeking clarity on this following the DfT's announcement.'