

## BRACKENBURY TREE PROJECT GROWS

### Claire Harris writes:

The seeds were sown in April, with a guided walk around the Brackenburg area by Gavin Simmons, Hammersmith & Fulham's Chief Arboricultural Officer.

As a result, 10 of our new trees were immediately "adopted" by residents, who promised to water them through the summer months of their first year; the money thus saved by the Council has funded one new tree for every four trees watered. A number of residents are also sponsoring new trees (at £175 a tree), and we have financial support from both Shoots & Leaves and Stenton's Family Butchers offering to sponsor trees in Trussley and Aldensley Roads. The Brackenburg Residents Association is also contributing funds towards new trees.

### "The first batch of large street tree pruning has been taking place in Marco, Iffley, Amor, Hebron, Agate, Benbow and Beauclerc Roads."

Gavin was guest of honour at our September social event and we were able to announce that more than 15 new trees will be planted in our area over the winter. The Council replaces trees that die or are coming to the end of their life, but no extra funds are available to increase the tree stock. So it is very heartening that residents are enthusiastic about greening the neighbourhood in this way.

A number of potential and tree-sparse sites have been identified for our new saplings, and these are currently being evaluated by Gavin's team to ensure they are indeed suitable for planting. In the meantime, the first batch of large street tree pruning has been taking place in Marco, Iffley, Amor, Hebron, Agate, Benbow and Beauclerc Roads, with a second batch taking place mostly in Agate Road once Thames water has finished its works.

BRA would like to thank all our waterers and sponsors - and we look forward to our tree project continuing to flourish in 2008, when we will be continuing in our quest to add new trees to the area.

### BUY YOUR CHRISTMAS TREES FROM SHOOTS & LEAVES HELP THE WOODLAND TRUST

Hew Stevenson of Shoots & Leaves is again offering BRA members an opportunity to buy a Christmas tree and, at the same time, help the Woodland Trust. Anyone can order either over the phone on 020 8563 7733, on the web: [www.shootsandleaves.co.uk/xmas](http://www.shootsandleaves.co.uk/xmas) or in person at 235 Trussley Road, W6 7PP. If you mention the Brackenburg Residents Association, Shoots & Leaves will donate £5 per tree to the Woodland Trust.

## A NEW SERGEANT FOR HAMMERSMITH BROADWAY



PS Paul Goulden has been replaced by PS Gareth Winnard. Gareth is keen to continue the good work undertaken by Paul and the Safer Neighbourhood team. He will be concentrating on local objectives - theft from motor vehicles, drug dealing and use, and theft of pedal cycles. If you have any information in relation to these, or any other, crimes, please contact the team on Tel: 020 8246 2638 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

## NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

With the help and guidance of BRA's committee members, Lesley Spires and Toni Raybould, NW in our area has been growing steadily.

Recently, a joint Alwood/Perrers Road NW has been set up and Ann Awkian has had a great response from over 20 residents in Alwood Road. If you are interested in setting up NW in your street, please email Cllr Belinda Donovan who is in charge of promoting NWs in the borough, at [belindadonovan89@aol.com](mailto:belindadonovan89@aol.com). Lesley and Toni can also offer valuable advice (Tel: 020 8741 8126, or 020 8741 5279 respectively), as can the NW website: [www.neighbourhoodwatch.uk.com](http://www.neighbourhoodwatch.uk.com)

## DOUGLAS & GORDON SUPPORTS BRA

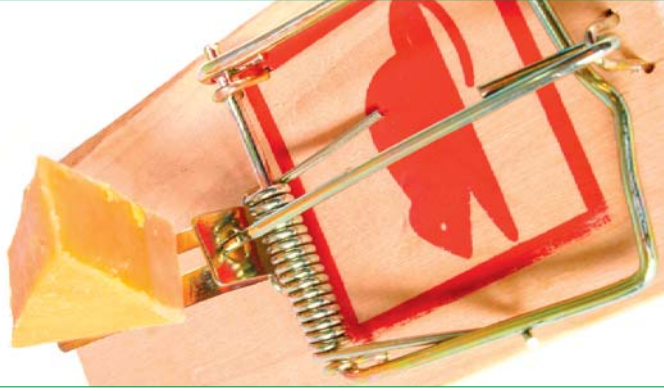
We're very happy to say that estate agents Douglas & Gordon, which joined with local Royston in the summer, are continuing to support BRA. This new-look newsletter is their contribution to your residents' association.

## USEFUL WEBSITES

Report rubbish, graffiti, uneven paving slabs, etc, and your report will be forwarded to the relevant Council: [www.fixmystreet.com](http://www.fixmystreet.com)

This site is free and alerts you to planning applications in your area: [www.planningalerts.com](http://www.planningalerts.com)

# PIED PIPER REQUIRED



**B**ack in September, BRA sent out a questionnaire to members asking if they had any mice or rat problems. The results were surprising – nearly 90 members reported one or more sightings of rats or mice. It seems that the rodent population in our area is on the increase.

So is anything being done? A parliamentary working group has been set up to get the local authorities and Thames Water communicating with each other. Currently Thames Water does nothing and has stopped baiting the sewers. However, in spite of the fact that Thames Water and the Council have a joint responsibility for the sewers, they tend to blame each other for any problems. Consequently, little gets done, except by BRA who recently had a meeting with Steve Hare, the Council's Rodent Control Officer to see if the problem can be solved.

Chris Allen, BRA's chairman, Toni Raybould and Jane Allen took along the data which had been collected by Rosemary Pettit from an e-mail questionnaire sent to BRA members in September. The results clearly illustrated the scale of the problem.

### What the Council will do

Steve Hare told us that Thames Water has set up a specific team responsible for baiting "hot spots". Unfortunately, this team has limited resources and covers 12 Boroughs, and Brackenburg is not on the list. However, he will now ask that it be treated as a hot spot, check our findings against the Council's own records and get back to us. He will also ask Thames Water if the rodents are actually coming from the sewers.

### What we can do

We too must do our bit to help reduce the problem. Steve has asked us to report any actual evidence of rodent activity, particularly of specific locations where activity has been witnessed. Ring the Council's Call Centre - 020 87531051 - and remember, the more specific the evidence the better. Reports of a general sighting in Such-and-Such Street is much less useful than reports of a sighting at (for example) No 99. The cost of Council treatment would be £93 for 3 visits for mice and £71 for rats.

Among suitable self-treatment measures are general good housekeeping ("limit their food source"), poison and/or traps, and filling in any gaps where they are entering with wire wool. There are permanent bait stations in Ravenscourt Park for the rats but the Council obviously can't bait the streets. Excessive rubbish and fly tipping are also worth reporting.

# SLUG MOVES FORWARD



As you will probably know by now, the Council has given the green light for the development of the giant slug on the NCP site in Hammersmith Grove. This was vigorously opposed by nearly 300 residents, but sadly, for reasons not wholly convincing even to the councillors on the planning committee, they pushed it through. For those who missed the saga, here is a report of the planning committee meeting which determined the application on 30 October, other related information, and the next step forward.

## Reasons for development:

Car park development long overdue (previously a coal depot). Concern that White City development, opening next year, will consign King St to a dump-bin. Interest in the proposed cinema.

## Why BRA opposed this development:

Too massive, featureless, overbearing, out of scale; not congruent architecturally with Lyric Square - unrelated to surroundings, no respect for neighbouring buildings, destroying urban context; against conservation terms of Unitary Development Plan (Development in conservation areas: Effect of development on the setting of conservation areas); intrusive on residential areas; concerns about road use, parking, public transport and pollution. Preference for mixed-use development of shops, offices and recreational as specified in the UDP.

## Planning applications committee meeting (personal report by Andrew Curry):

After a three-hour meeting the administration pushed through planning permission for the proposed giant slug at the end of Hammersmith Grove.

Cllr Andrew Johnson and the chair, Cllr Lucy Vivmy, both expressed concerns during the meeting but bit back their doubts by the end. Cllr Eugenie White abstained from voting. Result: 6 for, 3 against, 1 abstention.

Over 250 residents attended the meeting for this unpopular proposal. Cllr Mike Cartwright said it was the 'largest chasm' he'd seen between the judgement of officers and the views of residents in his time on the Council. In the presentation by officers, for example, it was hard to distinguish between what they said and what had been said by the developers at the public meeting the week before.

The traffic issues weren't bottomed out, although I have to say that, having known Chris Bainbridge (the officer who presented the traffic conditions) for some years, I'm willing to give him the benefit of the doubt when he says that the scheme will slightly reduce overall transport impacts. Under pressure on the size of 'planning gain' from the developers (previously in the order of half a million pounds) officers claimed this was now £4m, but this included local environmental and highway improvements needed to make the scheme credible.

Much was made of the officers' achievement in getting the scheme 'weaked' to reduce the overall mass by a whole 5%. The Council's architectural officer claimed that this was a signature building, even though it is a pale imitation of many others. Cllr White said it was not a building to be proud of.

The developers, under pressure from a public meeting, modified the road space issues and found new Section 106 money to open the Glenhorne Road car park to midnight and ensure free parking for cinema patrons.

There was criticism from councillors, including Conservatives, of the developers' failure to have a decent consultation process, although if I were in their position I'd be patting myself on the back for having played a shrewd game, making sure that significant opposition built up only late in the day, offering concessions which didn't cost me much, and getting my planning permission.

## EXACTLY WHY IS THE COUNCIL SO COMMITTED TO THE SLUG?

### Here's what the Environment Director, Nigel Pallace, had to say:

The smaller building proposed eight years ago wasn't viable (although land values in London have been transformed since then); the Council has to respond to the proposals made by TfL - and Development Securities are TfL's preferred project developers.

If they turn it down, one of three things will happen: a) the site will be a car park for another 8-10 years; b) the developers will appeal - which involves a planning inquiry, barristers' fees, etc; c) the Mayor will commandeer it under new, enhanced planning powers next year which can overrule the Council.

On (c) I gather that this is a real concern among administration councillors, although I am slightly sceptical. I am currently doing some work with another London council where Nigel Pallace's equivalent (as Environment and Planning Director) said that the new rules would need some different skills - but not end the Council's ability to influence planning decisions. This was one of London's higher performing councils.

## How H & F Council Leader sees it:

Cllr Stephen Greenhalgh believes Hammersmith needs the regeneration, and this is the scheme to do it. As in his recent 'state of the borough' address, he sees Hammersmith as an office hub between the City and Heathrow. But one could get regeneration with a building two-thirds of the size - apparently originally contemplated by Development Securities - and the large corporate headquarters building is going out of style anyway.

## So where does this leave us?

Well, planning consent isn't the end of the story. Even when the developer has run rings round the Council, there's generally a whole raft of changes possible between initial approval to final design. I suspect that - as the administration realises that this thing will be going up, in all of its big, fat glory, at the time of the next council elections - they may be tougher with the developers than they have been so far, starting with the design and moving on to restrictions on vehicles during the construction phase.

## The way forward

The Council has agreed to consult BRA on the conditions attached to the development. The developer submits details, and we will be advised of this, as if it were a planning application.

BRA has applied for representation at the workshops on the public realm of the development run by Lovejoy landscape architects and covering such matters as landscaping, paving, materials and the entrance to the Hammersmith & City line station. Our representatives include Richard Winterton (BRA's architect and planning advisor), Nicola Lesbirel, a resident of Hammersmith Grove, whose company is Garden and Landscape Design, and Rosemary Pettit for the association.

## With thanks...

Although, as BRA's Membership Secretary, your first part of call has generally been Rosemary Pettit, we wish to acknowledge the work done by your committee and other members.

First of all, Richard Winterton, our architect and planning advisor, was invaluable in preparing the case against the development and, secondly, Stuart Blake, our newsletter editor, brought his advertising and design skills to publicising it. Chris Allen, our chair, gave sage advice on Council and planning procedures from his former experience as a councillor. Journalist and BRA member Jeremy Vine wrote a letter which everyone seemed to enjoy.

We thank all those who submitted - in total - 283 letters of objection or attended the public or planning committee meetings and, in particular, members who distributed leaflets or put up posters (and took them down again) - Toni, Lesley, Alison, Richard, Stuart, Dante, Chris, Julia, Michael, Tony, John and Nicola. And to residents who saw merit in the development - thank you for your questions and for helping to define the problems.

## Our thanks to other associations

Angela Clarke of the Hammersmith Society prepared a forceful objection, and Angela Dixon of the Hammersmith & Fulham Historic Buildings Group gave the case against on conservation grounds. Raj Ibhaitia of the Stamford Brook Residents Association drew our attention to planning issues. Thanks also to Annabel Clarke of the Cathor Park Area Action Group for her unwavering encouragement, and also Sam Covington of the Save Shepherds Bush Streets, John Grigg of the Wendell Park Community Association, and H&F Friends of the Earth for their support. The Cambridge Grove Residents Association and Andrew Curry of the Richard Street Residents Association were equally robust. By enthusiastically putting up posters our local shopkeepers encouraged us beyond the call of custom.

## Help from councillors

Our Hammersmith Broadway councillors responded fully to our requests for help. Cllr Stephen Cowan was tireless and worked unstintingly on our behalf, and he and Cllr Lisa Nancy spoke for residents at the planning committee meeting. Politics, of course, was a factor in the proposed development, but if Labour had formed the administration (rather than the opposition), we would have worked as well on a similar matter with our Ravenscourt Park councillors.

## Was it all worth it?

The answer has to be yes. By turning out in numbers residents helped secure, from the developers, these last-minute offers:

1. £250,000 to keep the Glenhorne Road multi-storey carpark open from 8.30pm to midnight, plus extra lighting.
2. Another £250,000 for free car parking spaces for cinema goers.
3. £85,000 for three years' maintenance/upkeep of Lyric Square (not an issue we raised).
4. The retention of two-lane traffic at the southern end of Hammersmith Grove.
5. A new pedestrian crossing/table to be incorporated into the planned traffic study.

It may not be much, in the overall scheme of things, but it's worth having, especially for the residents of Hammersmith Grove and nearby streets. It certainly seems to us better to engage than to stand aside while others make decisions on our future.

