



## CORONAVIRUS

Significant restrictions are now in place to reduce the spread of Coronavirus. Our focus is on staying well ourselves and watching out for those at risk in our community – both family, friends and neighbours.

May we suggest – if you have not already done so - that you take this opportunity of exchanging contact details with your immediate neighbours – particularly the over 70s and those with health conditions. It is important to know who is 'self-isolating' – especially those who are asked to remain at home for 12 weeks. If you don't have/can't get their contact details, then a 'postcard through the door' is a good idea. We know one local road which has set up a Whatsapp Group. This has proved invaluable in giving security alerts, but it can also now be used to identify households asking for support.

Turning to the broader picture, schools and local businesses (small and large) are closing. We are all preparing 'for the long haul' but we are urged to do 'responsible shopping'. Life is beginning to feel very strange. Charities have been set up to help to get support out into the community – the National Care Force (<https://www.nationalcareforce.co.uk/>) for example, has been specifically set up to help people volunteer to support the most vulnerable members of our society. No-one has necessarily to take the initiative to start something new – they just need to sign up. The Hillingdon Food Bank is massively short on essential supplies. This is where we can give real support. They need both food and volunteers – not necessarily to come into contact with others – but to bag up supplies, etc. for distribution.

NURA has taken two steps. We have set up –

**A CAMPAIGN FUND** – see later. This will be used to support voluntary initiatives in the current situation. Please bring to our attention any that you know.

**A HELP LINE** - No. 07413 231999 - intended to be available for such groups as the elderly, those living alone, or those without internet/e-mail. Two of our members – Sheelagh and Sushma – have offered to take turns to operate the help line. They say 'A compassionate and caring approach is essential to get us through this difficult time'

# OUR NURA GENERAL MEETING OF RESIDENTS PLANNED FOR THE END OF APRIL HAS BEEN CANCELLED

## SMALL NEIGHBOURHOOD EVENT

During the Christmas holiday, at an 'At Home With Mince Pies', one neighbour said to another 'I hardly know anybody in our Road.....' The reply was 'Why don't you do something about that?'

This was the start of a meeting of a few residents to plan a 'meet your neighbours' event. A venue was arranged – the Scouts Hut in Gatting Way. Light refreshments would be provided and it was billed as 'Family Friendly and Free of Charge'. A colourful Flyer was printed and distributed to neighbours from Belmont Road, Belmont Close, the Hermitage and Mead Road. When it was reported to our NURA Committee, we gave it our enthusiastic support – but the Coronavirus precautions came into place and the event will be re-scheduled for a future date.

The opportunity exists – maybe not this year – for other groups of Roads in North Uxbridge to organise something similar. There is no need to wait for another Jubilee to get people to meet and get to know each other. In fact, the recent crisis makes it even more important that we get to know our neighbours better.

## SAVE UXBRIDGE POLICE STATION

On 22 January we wrote to the Mayor with our Petition – 1352 signatures and 600 comments. On 1 February we held a photo-shoot outside Uxbridge Police Station [photo]. On 5 February the Uxbridge Gazette printed a front page headline 'FORCE THE ISSUE' which covered out Campaign, but also drew negative comments from a 'MOPAC Spokesperson'. On 24 February Shaun Bailey – Conservative Candidate for London Mayor – came to meet us. He is promising to open the Police Stations Sadiq Khan has closed – if he is elected. We also arranged a visit from the Independent Candidate, Rory Stewart, but this had to be cancelled because of Coronavirus.

On 27 February we had a reply from Sadiq Khan to our Petition. He gives a long justification for his approach – most of which we challenge – but there is one slight glimmer of daylight in his sentence '.....decisions on the future of the Estate will be made in due course'. Two days later he visited Uxbridge Town Centre as part of his re-election Campaign. Nick Johnson managed to put several questions to him, but didn't get any satisfactory answers. In her Bmail the following week, Barbara Fisher comments – '.....how disappointing to hear that our London Mayor, Sadiq Khan, spent Saturday posing for photos outside Uxbridge station rather than listening to residents who wanted to ask him to take our Police Station off the closure list. People who tried were shooed away. If he could re-assure us that he could rise above Party Politics, swallow his pride and accept a Conservative Hillingdon Council offer to pay to keep our Police Station open – what a great example he'd be to us all'.

We are preparing a full reply to the



Mayor's letter. We had hoped, with the Mayoral Election due on 7 May and the visits of mayoral candidates, that this would give impetus to our campaign and the decision we seek. However, the Election has been postponed and we are planning the next steps in our campaign.

One piece of good news is that the Uxbridge BID( Business Improvement District) has funded a full-time Police Officer to be based in the Town Centre. This is very welcome in the light of recent disturbances.

## **WICKES / HALFORDS**

We have learnt that this site has been sold to Legal & General and that plans are being formulated for the construction of a Guild Living complex of 220 'Later Living' (over 65s) homes. It would be a mix of independent and 'with care' homes. There are also plans for a Nursery on site, so that youngsters can interact with the more elderly residents. Proposed building height could be four to six storeys. Also proposed is an underground car park. Plans have not yet been drawn up, but it would be similar to the scheme proposed in Bath City Centre. Visit the website to see that and also for an interview with Eugene Marchese, the Founder, on Sky News. He readily agreed to come to talk to NURA representatives, but the meeting had to be postponed because of Coronavirus. We will keep you informed of developments.

## **HS2**

Now that the project has been approved, we shall see a big increase in activity at the main site at West Ruislip this year. The tunnel portal will start 200m west of the bridge at West Ruislip. For power supply to the TBMs (tunnel boring machines), they plan to dig up the roads all the way from Rayners Lane to West Ruislip. Work expected to start from April and to last up to 18 months. We have just learnt that the giant machines will need a new water supply to run along Kingsend, across the White Bear roundabout and along the High Road to West Ruislip. We have made strong representations that the power and water supplies will be co-ordinated – otherwise the traffic disruption will double (not to mention increased cost to HS2). On one night, in the not too distant future, the two giants will arrive at West Ruislip. The day before, all traffic lights, road signs and road furniture in Long Lane will be removed – so as not to be flattened.....

## **SAINSBURY'S CAR PARK**

Sainsbury's have rejected a scheme put forward by Hermitage Primary School and NURA for a pedestrian ramp to enable their car park to be used at School times. Boris Johnson made a direct appeal to the Chief Executive of Sainsbury's on our behalf, but to no avail.

## **HILLINGDON HOSPITAL - NEW BUILD**

We are very hopeful that, with the backing of the Prime Minister, the Health Secretary and a new energetic team at the Hospital, this project will actually happen. We have met the Executive in charge – who is preparing the Business Case/Appraisal of alternative sites for construction. The Government have made £5m seed-corn funding for this work. In the meantime, funding continues for keeping the existing structures in working order.

## **VYNNERS SCHOOL**

We circulated residents, alerting them that the Vanguard Learning Trust were preparing new admission arrangements, which could adversely affect availability of places at Vynners School for pupils from North Uxbridge. This proposal gave rise to strong opposition, both in North Uxbridge and Ickenham Wards. We now understand that the Governors have decided to defer a decision for a year.

## NATUREWATCH

Fill-dyke is a traditional name for the month of February when rain and melting snow fill ditches and overflow. The Anglo Saxons called it mud month. This year's rainfall in February in North Uxbridge has certainly met that expectation with 108mm compared with an average of 45mm. for the years since 1993.

The pond on Uxbridge Common filled rapidly and was overflowing by Christmas Day, crossing North Common Road and running down Gravel Hill. Council workers dug a deeper pond area by the roundabout and built a higher kerb. However rain accumulated and crossed West Common Road in a steady stream finding a drain to accept the water. Just imagine the problem if we had had a severe frost.



By 12th March the frogs were arriving and spawn was laid. A friend described the frogs as “confused” randomly finding floods and puddles elsewhere

to spawn before reaching their intended destination. It is likely that many of these temporary areas will be dry before the tadpoles become frogs.

Last Summer's drought seems so far away but as usual the wetter Winter restored water levels to a more normal depth.

## NURA FINANCES

We collect Subscriptions – in small brown envelopes circulated with the Newsletter – every two years, the next one being in 2021. Our funds are adequate for normal expenditure until then. The sponsoring of our Newsletter by Camerons Estate Agents is a big financial benefit. However, the NURA Committee felt it would be prudent – as we are currently active in a wide range of activities – to set up a Fund for any future campaigns, e.g. to protect the closure of facilities, promote good initiatives and protect our local environment. If you would like to support this, you may care to donate say £5 to the Fund. Our Bank details are set out below. You may care to donate on line, or by letting your Road Representative have a cheque. Please reference your donation ‘Campaign Fund’.

**Bank detail: NURA      A/c No. 32432751      Sort code 23-05-80**

## NURA Officers

### Chairman

Paul Johnson

### Subscription Secretary

Sheelagh Butler

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### Road Representative Vacancies

We have Road Representative vacancies on Hyacinth Drive, North Way and Brookside, Gravel hill, Montague Road and Morris avenue and the surrounding area. If you are able to help, please let Sheelagh know.

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