

NURA NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2021

COVID 19/Coronavirus

We look forward to the ending of Lockdown over the next few months and the completion of the vaccination programme. The pandemic has caused enormous damage to the economy, the livelihoods of households, loneliness experienced by many in isolation and the loss of loved ones. It remains to be seen what work patterns will emerge and what Uxbridge Town Centre shopping will look like when it 'awakens' again. In the meantime, it is important that each one of us does not let down our guard – whether or not we have been vaccinated.

With restricted travel, people have 'discovered' the countryside around us – walks along the Frays River, the Grand Union Canal, the Celandine Way running along the River Pinn and many others.

The Frays behind Harefield Road is now revealed as a fine, broad river after the removal of the floating weed. The most positive outcome we have witnessed is the upsurge in community spirit and the strengthening of bonds between friends and family.



Daffodils on Uxbridge Common

Guild Living

NURA welcomed the Guild Living Scheme for 'later-living' on the Wickes/ Halfords site, which would enable older people to downsize into an attractive setting with a good range of facilities. NURA did, however, express reservations about the overall size of the Scheme, in particular the height of the 8 storey block. Since then, the NURA team has held meetings with Guild – both face-to-face and virtual – to maintain our concerns. We are very pleased that Guild have now taken these on board in their Amended Planning Application by –

- Reducing the height of the tallest building from 8 to 7 storeys -by reducing the number of apartments from 194 to 182.
- Removing a top part of the building along Harefield Road to create stepped massing up to 5 storeys.
- Setting back the building, offering space for landscaping and tree planting along Harefield Road.

NURA has now given its full support to the Amended Application and is encouraging residents to give their views. This can be done by visiting the Hillingdon Council Planning Website under reference 16299/APP/2020/3313 to make comments. The closing date was 25 March, but comments received later will still be taken into account until Committee Reports are written. If you wish to view the latest changes, you can 'view documents', scrolling down to those dated 10-03-21.

Save Uxbridge Police Station

In Autumn 2018 NURA raised a Petition to the Mayor of London to save Uxbridge Police Station, which attracted 1,352 signatures. In his reply dated 27 February 2020, the Mayor said that, in the light of additional Police Officers which had been promised by the Government, the Metropolitan Police Service would review its estate strategy to ensure it can meet future requirements. "These decisions on the future estate will be made in due course, but the approach of having one 24/7 front counter in each Borough will remain".

His preferred option for Hillingdon is Hayes End Police Station, which – as everyone living in the Borough knows – is a wholly unsuitable location. On 11 March this year NURA wrote to the Mayor to enquire –

- The outcome of the Review.
- The conclusions, as they relate to the London Borough of Hillingdon.
- His plans for the use of the Uxbridge Police Station premises.

His reply is awaited. Shaun Bailey, the Conservative Candidate for Mayor of London, has promised that if elected he will "re-open the 38 Police Stations that were shut by Sadiq Khan".

The Election for London Mayor takes place on 6 May. Whatever the Election result, NURA's campaign for the re-opening of the 24/7 front counter will continue.

HS2

NURA continues to monitor the impact of HS2 construction works by its representation on the Community Liaison Group. In their recent publicity, HS2 state that an 'expert team of ground engineers' will sink the first of almost 300 piles that will form the foundations of the Colne Valley Viaduct. This will be the UK's longest railway bridge "almost a kilometre longer than the Forth Rail Bridge and carry trains travelling at speeds of up to 200 mph". We will leave you to ponder that.....!



The London Plan 2021

Bob Parsons writes -

Residents' usual experience of planning at a local level is of nearby developments controlled by Hillingdon Council, or of central government national projects like HS2.

Between the two levels is the London Mayor who has responsibility for strategic 'diverse matters' projects over Greater London such as the emergency services, TfL and large house building schemes.

The current Mayor's plan was formally adopted in March 2021, which imposes a 10-year housing target for Hillingdon of 10,830 units. Until now, the requirement was for 599 per annum, which with developments like Saint Andrews Park, Hillingdon was easily able to meet. You will however be aware of the "densification" of recent housing schemes in the Borough, in response to Central Government pressures and the emerging London Plan.

An example is the **Inland Homes** scheme on the **Master Brewer** site which has the Mayor's approval for multi storey blocks. However, a late-on change in the Mayor's high rise housing policy (so as to be no higher than 6 storeys outside Uxbridge and Hayes) should, we trust, result in reconsideration. Hillingdon Council are considering a legal challenge, if necessary, to ensure that this happens.

NatureWatch by Ann Rix

Rainfall in January was 110 mm. much higher than the average, though less than the 133 mm in 1995 or 172 mm in 2014. The average over 20 years is about 60 mm. There was heavy snowfall on 24th January.



Frogs and spawn arrived in the Common Pond in week ending 13th March. This was the same week as last year but there was probably less spawn. Looking at the surrounding roads I was pleased to find no squashed frogs and hope this will be a countrywide situation as a result of much reduced traffic. The council has put up a Notice asking people not to remove spawn.

The distribution of birds on the Common has changed with much more human activity, both dog walkers and youngsters with footballs and goal posts. Pied Wagtails were regulars in the short grass and feeding Thrushes in the SW area have moved away. Wood Pigeons and Black-headed gulls are more resilient. A Mallard is back in the pond and Wrens sing. The RSPB Garden Birdwatch took place in late January, the results will be published in April. The most common bird in our garden is the Goldfinch but never a Chaffinch or Greenfinch.

Please let me know if you see hedgehogs.



House Numbers

A colleague from Ickenham RA writes as follows. "Taking exercise in Ickenham, I am surprised at the proportion of houses that either have no visible number at all, or a small plaque that cannot be read from the road. This could cost you your life in the event of a heart attack or stroke. Ambulance crews need to be able to read numbers from the kerbside. Numbers should be at least 3 inches (8cm.) high and mounted on an unobstructed wall facing the road".



Hillingdon Hospital Rebuild

A public exhibition of the plans for the new Hospital is promised for this April.

USROCK

NURA has been pleased to help the residents of Uxbridge South Rockingham Road Conservation area to set up a new Residents Association. We have also helped in their successful opposition to a proposed tower block in the Conservation area.

NURA Admin

During lockdown we are arranging commercial delivery of this Newsletter. The NURA Team meets by Zoom. No meetings of residents are yet planned – but we are hoping for a ‘proper ’ AGM this Autumn. No subscriptions will be collected this year – we are living ‘on reserves’.....! Our main expenditures are insurance, delivery costs and the maintenance of the Website. Camerons, Estate Agents, sponsor the printing of our Newsletters. The following roads still have vacancies for Road Representatives –

- Park Road, Montague Road Northway, Brookside and Honeycroft
- Hyde House and Fulmer House (126-128 Park Road)
- Laurel Court, Morris Avenue & Thomas Drive area
- Itea, Adina & Maple Courts, Cowslip Close and Hyacinth Drive

NURA Officers

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