



## GREEN BELT UNDER ATTACK FROM ALL SIDES

This past year has seen a flood of speculative planning applications by developers for Green Belt sites in and around Radlett, and elsewhere across Hertsmere. Although the current Hertsmere Local Plan runs until 2027, it seems developers think they might get away with such applications in advance of the new Local Plan, currently being drafted.

The largest application is for a Solar Energy Plant on 320 acres of agricultural farmland between Letchmore Heath, Radlett and Elstree Village, with around 170,000 large solar panels and associated equipment, including 20 shipping containers of industrial Lithium-Ion storage batteries. This application was rejected by Hertsmere but then was the subject of a Public Inquiry at the end of 2022 for which the final decision (to be made by Secretary of State Michael Gove) has yet to be announced. Challenging this proposal at the Inquiry has cost local Council taxpayers and residents around £250,000 in legal costs. If the Inquiry decision goes against the application, the developers have already made a second planning application to Hertsmere which will need to be processed, objections made by the Public and quite possibly go to another public inquiry.

An application to build 195 new homes and a “medical centre” on a Green Belt site in Radlett between Shenley Hill and Theobald Street was also rejected by Hertsmere. That has also led to a Public Inquiry, as reported later in this Newsletter. Recently a proposal to build an industrial Battery Storage Plant on 10 acres of a 30 acre site with 400 batteries



in shipping containers and associated equipment on the edge of Letchmore Heath has emerged. No formal application has been made to Hertsmere on this yet.

Just outside Aldenham Parish – but very much in the area we try and watch over – there is a proposal to add a further 110 new homes and a “medical centre” to the Organ Hall Farm estate along Theobald Street. Then we have seen a proposal in the new draft St Albans Local Plan to build up to 274 new homes and a nursing home for 50+ residents on the “Ivory’s” industrial site in Harper Lane next to the bridge onto Watling Street. Both are described further in the following pages.

Meanwhile, work on the “Strategic Rail Freight Terminal” at the old Radlett Aerodrome in Park Street has finally started after Hertfordshire County Council agreed to sell the land to developers SEGRO after a 20 year plus battle. The Verulam Estates and Tarmac have also sold some land for this project. A campaign group called Save St

Albans is intending to launch a Judicial Review of the Council’s decision to sell their land and the Radlett Society has contributed to their legal costs. A decision on this case will be made by the end of the year. If the project does go ahead it is predicted by the developers themselves that there will be up to 220 HGVs **per hour** as well as hundreds of smaller delivery trucks and vans using the terminal on a **daily** basis, all of whom will be using Watling Street and the A414 via the Park Street roundabout. It is not clear whether the developers have agreed to fund the costs of the roadworks to bypass Park Street and connect to the A414.

Contrary to popular belief – and common sense, surely – there is NO direct access from the site to the M25. The supposed “Rail” part of the project seems to be unfunded so seems unlikely to happen. The rail work would need to include lowering the rail lines through tunnels including Elstree Tunnel at a cost of £10s of millions and years of disruption to the Thameslink and East Midlands rail services.

We have also opposed a number of smaller plans to build on Green Belt sites including for new houses in Cobden Hill behind the existing cottages, for three large “Padel” courts at the Radlett Lawn Tennis and Squash Club and a road from near the Battleaxes pub in Elstree to the Northern part of Elstree Aerodrome where we expect to see new industrial units being built in future as “Permitted Developments” (which do not need any planning permission).

**Clive Glover**

**The Society’s AGM will start at 8.00pm on Wednesday 15th November 2023  
at the Vision Hall, Watling Street, Radlett.**

**Our Guest speaker will be Hertfordshire County Councillor Caroline Clapper, Executive Member for Education,  
Libraries & Lifelong Learning and also Hertsmere Borough Councillor for Aldenham West.**

**This newsletter has been delivered to all members**

**Additionally, to encourage new members to support our activities, it has been circulated to all residents of the  
Parish of Aldenham, who are invited to complete the membership application form on the back page. Thank you.**

***Members: if you pay your membership fees annually by cheque,  
please ensure you have sent this year’s payment in order to retain your membership!***

## From the Chairman

Welcome to the 2023 edition of our Newsletter. Two themes seem to characterise the last year: firstly, meetings are generally in person again (though Zoom makes it much easier to participate in Council and similar meetings). The second indicator is less welcome: planning applications for both small and large developments have really escalated, as if lockdowns allowed developers to work up ideas for new sites which are now coming into the open.

The large speculative proposals are mostly on Green Belt sites. Most seem to include 'sweeteners' in the form of a Medical Centre or Care home. The Society has focused on these plans and there are fuller reports on some elsewhere in this newsletter.

Developers have claimed there is no Local Plan – except we have one in Radlett and the current Hertsmere one runs to 2027. As we all know, the draft new Hertsmere Plan, intended to run 2022-38, was shelved in April 2022, following massive opposition. We were therefore particularly pleased to welcome Ross Whear, Head of Planning and Economic Development at Hertsmere Borough Council, to our AGM in November 2022. Ross gave us a very useful presentation to update us on the draft Local Plan.

For major projects, we have worked with Aldenham Parish Council. We attend some APC and indeed Hertsmere planning meetings; we write with our views and sometimes speak. Do bear in mind that residents are encouraged to put their own views forward to the Council on specific applications affecting them or the community. You can write, but any resident is entitled to speak at meetings – though only for three minutes!

We work with neighbouring groups, particularly Letchmore Heath Village Trust and Elstree and Borehamwood Green Belt Society and have been represented at their AGMs. The Society belongs to CPRE (the Countryside Charity) and we have drawn on their advice on the large Green Belt applications.

It has been pleasing to have contributions from our MP, Oliver Dowden, who has spoken out against Green Belt encroachment. We often inform him of our views and concerns.

I must record our appreciation of the help we've had from Laura Davis who has managed the delivery of our Newsletters admirably over many years. Lisa Lobb has taken on this franchise and we look forward to working with her.

Finally, an appeal – which I will repeat at the AGM. We need more help on the Committee to spread the work. If you care about Radlett and its environs, do please consider showing that you care by getting involved with our work. It is important – and it has an impact!

**Rosamund Gray**

## The Shenley Hill Appeal

This site – 'beyond Newberries' – has been regularly targeted by developers but always turned down. The latest application, by Fairfax Acquisitions Ltd, is for some 195 houses; also included is a medical centre and land for expansion of Newberries School. RSGBA and many others objected and Hertsmere rejected the application, twice; but the developers went to appeal.

### Why object?

This application fails in many ways: it affects the openness of the Green Belt, encroaches into open countryside and, importantly, erodes the clear undeveloped gaps between Radlett and both Shenley and Borehamwood. The Hertsmere and Radlett Local Plans do not contemplate such a development, the Radlett Plan laying stress on protecting and enhancing the leafy and biodiverse nature of Radlett's neighbourhood.

The site would inevitably generate considerable extra road traffic. The entrance to the new estate would be on the sharp bend in Shenley Road – not the safest spot, to say the least. The developers talk piously of new residents walking and cycling into Radlett – but many more car journeys will be created, putting more pressure on the Shenley Hill/Watling Street junction.

### Any benefits?

Yes, there are new homes; but are they in the right place – and would they be of the smaller size that we really need? Extra land for Newberries school sounds attractive – except that the school does not need it. A new Medical Centre sounds a nice idea... except that, unlike the central Red House site, it would be in completely the wrong place, necessitating car journeys for most.

### The Appeal hearing

The developers' appeal commenced on 21 August with site visits; four days of hearings started on 22 August with two or three further days in October. The Inspector hearing the Appeal noted that 1400 letters had been

## SOLAR PLANT CAMPAIGN

As residents will be aware, there has been a major campaign, culminating in legal hearings, against the plan to construct a 'solar farm' on 320 acres of agricultural land South of Radlett. Many individuals and organisations contributed to the legal fees incurred in the appeal; as we reported last year, the Society agreed to contribute up to £50,000 to the campaign. This was on the basis that the proposal represented the biggest threat to the green belt around Radlett for many years.

In the event, the majority of the £110,000 of legal fees and expenses for the public inquiry was covered by donations, including Gift Aid, and fund raising but the Society met the balance of just under our £50,000 budget.

received regarding this proposal: 1398 objections and 2 in favour.

An important factor in appeals is getting local residents to speak out: that was a key lesson from the successful objections to the



recent Shenley Harris Lane Appeal. RSGBA were one of 18 speakers to give residents' and local groups' views. We made forcefully (in our three minutes!) the Green Belt and Radlett Plan points referred to above. Other speakers included Alison Robinson, Graham Taylor, Alfred Boyden (drawing powerfully on his construction industry experience) and September Beck (from Manor House Pharmacy); we had been well coordinated by Stephen Balsam of the Save Hertsmere group. Many of us were questioned in response by the KC representing the developers but our points have hopefully registered well with the Inspector. Counsels for both Hertsmere and APC were able to build on what we said.

### Conclusions

Our submission at the hearing was that the benefits of this proposal are largely illusory – and certainly not enough to outweigh the damage to the Green Belt and hugely short of constituting 'Very Special Circumstances'. It is depressing that Hertsmere and APC have had to spend a considerable amount of Council Taxpayers' money on battling the scheme, despite there being clear reasons to reject it. It has taken a lot of work from us and a good number of residents as well: if we want to preserve the character and attraction of Radlett, we need to be prepared to fight for it.

**John Whiting and Rosamund Gray**

## AMAZON SMILE - GIVE AS YOU LIVE

Last year members were asked to use Amazon Smile to make purchases so that the Society could receive a small donation from Amazon on each transaction. The committee thanks all the members who did so.

Earlier this year Amazon decided to close this scheme and such donations are no longer available. Instead, Radlett Society and Green Belt Association is now registered with Give as you Live and members who wish to earn small donations for the Society can do so by using the Give as you Live website. We encourage members to use this service.

## New Retailers

We welcomed a number of new retail outlets opening in Watling Street over the last year. These include Fressdeli who have taken over from Yummies, Brass Monkey coffee shop who have already expanded into a second shop, Gails who have taken over the previous Costa premises and the award winning Per Tutti Italian restaurant.



## Slightly further afield...

Two significant housing proposals have arisen recently which, whilst technically both outside Radlett's boundaries, would both have a real impact on Radlett. As you would expect RSGBA is taking a keen interest in both schemes.

### Organ Hall extension

As all will know, some years ago the old Organ Hall farm buildings area on Theobald Street was developed. Permission for development was clearly influenced by arguments about this being previously developed 'brownfield'. Recently an application went in for a large extension northward of the existing site: 121 dwellings, a 75 bed care home and a medical centre. This would be on pure Green Belt land and we objected strongly (as did many others). Neither the care home nor the medical centre seemed necessary.

The developers duly revised their proposal and submitted plans for 110 dwellings, no care home but still a new medical centre plus provision for a designated open space. The open space may appear welcome – except that the space is already open and, being on the extreme edge of Borehamwood, is surely in the wrong place. But the core objection is over the Green Belt: there is no justification, no 'Very Special Circumstances' to justify taking over undeveloped land and making a major erosion of the open space between Borehamwood and Radlett.

As for the proposed medical centre, anyone driving into Borehamwood down Theobald Street will pass two existing medical

centres! How can a third be needed – and in a place well away from the population centre which would mean a 2km walk or cycle from the town centre (just thing for unwell or elderly patients!).

We have, as you would expect, objected strongly.

### Ivory's site

Anyone turning into Harper Lane from Watling Street passes this site: the entrance is immediately after the railway bridge. Probably few will have ventured into the site which is really quite extensive. Like the Harperbury Hospital site, it falls under St Albans and they have identified it as a site for housing with a proposal for around 274 housing units plus a 50+ bed nursing home.

Unlike the Organ Hall site, this is not Green Belt; as it has been developed it counts as brownfield. We support the principle of building on brownfield sites. However, developing this particular site does raise real concerns – the first of which is simply around what happens to the existing businesses on the site.

The next issue is access to Radlett: despite being technically in St Albans it is clear that people living on this site would come to Radlett for shops, medical care, trains etc. Have proper assessments been made of the impact of 500+ new people on our facilities – will St Albans really take account of such issues? How are people going to get to Radlett? There are suggestions that people will walk or cycle and if that is really going to happen, there is a serious need for a proper cycleway down Watling Street (and one that is used, unlike the Harper Lane one

where most cyclists seem to use the road rather than the expensive cycleway).

Inevitably most residents of this site would use cars to go places – and that means even more traffic going over the Harper Lane rail bridge. Adding in the Harperbury Hospital site traffic and factoring in the Rail freight terminal HGV traffic and there is an inescapable conclusion: a new, two-lane bridge is sorely needed. That was a key point we made in our response to St Albans; sadly, it is unclear where the funds for such a new bridge would come from.

**John Whiting and Clive Glover**

## Footpaths update

There is little to report on our footpaths network this year in terms of developments or problems. They remain well used and Herts CC are doing useful maintenance, including strimming and mowing to keep them in good shape (many thanks to Dawn West at Herts CC for all her coordinating and follow up work). I am grateful to my colleagues in the informal monitoring group who keep an eye on our footpaths and report in any issues (Molly Barton, Jayne Carr, Allan Cole, Edward Cross, Lucy Jacobson, David Lambert, Scott McLachlan, Lawrence Peterman, Simon Pyzer, Chris Wilkins and Jane Williams). One point to mention is that the project to register a new footpath along the boundary of the rugby and cricket fields, driven by Graham Temple, is progressing. We have made more submissions to Herts CC so watch this space!

**John Whiting**

# ADMIN & MEMBERSHIP

## AGENDA for 47th AGM 15th November 2023

- 1 Apologies for Absence
- 2 Minutes of 46th AGM on 16th November 2022
- 3 Treasurer's Report for y/e 30/06/2023
- 4 Annual Reports and Discussions
- 5 Election of Officers & Committee 2023/24
- 6 Appointment of auditor
- 7 Resolutions
- 8 Any other business (*please notify Hon. Sec. in advance*)

Nominations for Officers and Members of the Committee should be made in writing, signed by the Proposer and Seconder, and bear the consenting signature of the nominee. The nominations should be received by the Chairman not less than 24 hours before the AGM, that is by Tuesday 14th November 2023.

To contact the Society on such matters please use "CONTACT US" on our website homepage: [www.radlettsociety.org](http://www.radlettsociety.org)

## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT for the year ended 30 June

Honorary Treasurer - Chris Parker

	2023	2022
	£	£
<b>INCOME</b>		
Subscriptions and Donations	3,007	2,844
Investment Income	1,617	1,722
Gift Aid Tax Refund	607	603
Gain on Investment Sales	1,282	0
	<b>6,513</b>	<b>5,169</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Administration and General	493	248
Newsletter and AGM	1,012	1,067
Other Societies	106	106
Solar Plant Planning Inquiry	49,690	
Donation		485
	<b>51,301</b>	<b>1,906</b>
<b>NET INCOME (EXPENDITURE)</b>	<b>(48,788)</b>	<b>3,263</b>

Join Us! Support Us!

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM 2023-24 with GIFT AID DECLARATION and STANDING ORDER MANDATE



**Radlett Society &  
Green Belt  
Association**

**Please print your details (CAPITALS)**

Title ..... First Name .....

Family Name.....

.....

Address .....

.....Postcode .....

phone .....

Email .....

@ .....

Date of application.....

**Annual** member subscription is at a level you choose; we suggest at least £10-£15\*.

\*Payment is preferred by **Standing Order**, which you can set up yourself, using the details in the next column. Please then inform the Membership Secretary.

Alternatively you are welcome to complete the mandate on this form.

Otherwise, please attach a cheque [minimum **£5.00**], payable to:-

'The Radlett Society & Green Belt Association'

You will be enrolled as a full member and receive details of the Committee and a copy of the Constitution.

### STANDING ORDER MANDATE

Instruction to your Bank/Building Society

NAME: .....

BRANCH: .....

ADDRESS: .....

.....

NAME on ACCOUNT .....

.....

SORT CODE: ACCOUNT NUMBER:

Please pay to The Co-operative Bank, Sort Code 08-92-99.

Account no. 67202812

for the credit of:-  
THE RADLETT SOCIETY AND  
GREEN BELT ASSOCIATION,  
the sum of £ .....

(.....)

Commencing (please allow 1 month) :

Day \_\_\_\_ Month \_\_\_\_ Year 20 \_\_\_\_

and **annually** thereafter until further written notice and charge such payments to the debit of my account.

Signed .....

Date .....

Gift Aiding your membership subscription and other donations means we reclaim 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate.

*giftaid it*

### GIFT AID DECLARATION

I want to Gift Aid any donations or subscriptions I make in the future or have made in the past four years to RSGBA.

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that, if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in a tax year, it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

**SIGNED**.....

**PRINT NAME**.....

**DATE**.....

*Registered Charity #280877*

Please post your completed application form to:-

**Hon. Membership Secretary,  
RSGBA, Little Orchard, Radlett  
Park Road, Radlett, WD7 7BQ**

*Please allow us up to 4 weeks to set up your membership.*

*Thank you*