



PRARA

www.prara.org.uk

Peterborough Road and Area Residents' Association
incorporating Clancarty Road, Daisy Lane, Hugon Road,
South Park Mews, Sullivan Road and Settrington Road

NEWSLETTER

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1 - Newsletter by e-mail - message from Jonnie Godfrey, Membership Sec.

Many thanks for the recent deluge of donations, all very much appreciated; we now have enough in the tin for the next three newsletters.

As you probably know, we ran very low on funds recently. Our major expenditure is the printing of the newsletter. To keep our costs down (and to stop me from asking for donations too frequently!) would you mind moving to an electronic newsletter in future? The newsletter would be delivered as a .PDF file, which can be opened and read on just about any phone, computer, or tablet.

Some of our members already receive an email newsletter, and past newsletters can always be downloaded from our website if you accidentally delete the email before reading it. Apart from saving money on printing, we can also include internet links within the .PDF - you would just have to click on the links to get to the web pages referred to, rather than typing in an internet address, which can be tedious and prone to typing mistakes.

If we have your e-mail address, I will shortly be sending out an email about this, or you can email me direct if that's easier (jgodfrey@icuknet.co.uk). If you haven't given us an email address but would like to receive the emailed newsletter, or think we might have an out of date email address for you, please send me an email from your current email address. I will reply, update our records, add you to the email newsletter list, and remove you from the printed newsletter list.

Many thanks in advance.

2 - Neighbourhood Watch - by Lance and Sue Pierson

The main development affecting policing at the moment is the Mayor's travelling roadshow, consulting on the latest proposal for police numbers in London. It is visiting each Borough,

and you may have seen the report of the meeting at Hammersmith Town Hall in the H&F Chronicle of February 8th. There had been apparently contradictory advance rumours that the plan was both to cut and to increase the number of police in the our Safer Neighbourhood Teams. In the event it turns out that both are true!

The plan is to increase the number of police on the streets: in the case of H&F, to have 92 more officers on the front-line. But at the same time the basic minimum in each ward will be reduced to one PC and one PCSO, under the direction of a Sergeant who will probably continue to oversee more than one ward. The pool of 'spare' staff will be allocated to areas of greater need or of special emergency. Our immediate reaction – before the chance to discuss it in committee – is that at a time of exceptionally low crime in both our wards, we can hardly complain at resources being transferred to where they are more needed. At the same time we have the lurking unease that we have achieved low crime figures through the presence of the teams; and that to reduce them may reverse the trend again. We shall keep all this under observation.

We salute the policy and intention to have more police on the streets at a time of budget cuts. The police are having to reduce their overall expenditure as much as any other public body. Their proposal for squaring the circle is to reduce the number of senior managers and to sell off some of their administrative buildings. If this last bit rings a local bell, note that Stephen Greenhalgh, who was formerly H&F Council leader, is now the Deputy Mayor for Policing and developing this policy. There is no intention to close any of our three Borough police stations, though there would be a reduction in opening hours at their reception desks. Hammersmith's would stay open 24/7; Fulham's during the day; but Shepherds Bush's would be closed. As the public now contact the police far more by phone or online than by a personal visit to the station, this seems to us a sensible move.

3 - The Thames Tunnel - why it's money down the drain

Thames Water's justification for the 'super sewer' is that it is needed to deal with London's sewage problem, implying that the existing system can not cope. This is a misleading statement. The real problem is the removal of rainwater. Only 5% of the overflow is actually raw sewage - 95% of it is water. The 'super sewer' should more accurately be called a 'rain drain'.

The removal of this rainwater is only an issue for the limited area of inner and eastern London which has a single pipe sewage system, where the same pipe removes both rainwater and sewage. Even then, the problem only arises on 60 days a year when there is excessive rain. The existing sewage system copes fully on the other 305 days of the year.

To deal with this limited problem, Thames Water wants to spend £4.1 billion (in 2011 prices, excluding inflation) and to pay for the scheme plans to charge all its customers - including the hundreds of thousands of households that would not 'benefit' from the sewer in any way - £70-80 per year for decades to come.

Construction work is not provisionally planned to begin until 2016, by which time the cost will probably have gone up. This will not be a great worry to Thames Water as the Treasury has now agreed to provide "contingent financial support". This is DEFRA's unexplained wording; it might even mean tax payers bailing out the whole projects if costs go out of control. The project will take about 6 years to complete so any benefit will not take effect for another 10 years. Long before this date existing schemes, such as the Lea Tunnel, will have come into service and further reduce the 'problem' the tunnel is designed to solve.

Alternative measures recommended by a growing number of experts and concerned pressure groups, would start to deal with the rainwater problem much sooner and at far less cost. These 'green' measures retain and recycle rainwater (as happens with the growing number of roof gardens), as well as letting more of it sink into the ground as nature intends by, for example, having porous asphalt road surfaces.

CTNA (Clean Thames Now and Always, in which PRARA Committee Members Lance Pierson and Ann Rosenberg are key figures) have found 15 statements in Thames Water's explanation of why the Thames Tideway Tunnel is needed, which they believe are either misleading or inaccurate. Attached to this newsletter is an Appendix which provides detailed response to all 15 statements and elaborates on the points summarised in this briefing,

Our local area is still under threat from the proposed tunnel and more pressure is needed to make the Government re-think its support, both of the need and financially. More lobbying is needed and if you have not already done so, we urge to you to act now as suggested at the end of the Appendix.

4 - Parson's Green Club redevelopment

Following some minor amendments to the original application, planning permission for the full redevelopment was granted on 6th February. All the existing buildings and sports areas will be upgraded or replaced. A new club house building will contain a modern range of sports and social facilities. These will be surrounded by a number of new flats which, together with new houses in Sullivan Road, are providing the funding for the scheme. The start date for work is not yet known.

5 - Peterborough Road bollard

The bollard, which has been working erratically for a considerable time, has been permanently out of action from the time the road was re-surfaced. This is because the contractors mistakenly removed the underground control system which recognised the buses. The system is scheduled for reinstatement shortly (at the contractor's expense) at which time a CCTV camera will be installed temporarily to try and establish why the bollard does not function correctly all the time.

6 - The Community Library

We have been pressing for the - now long delayed - community opening of the new library in Hurlingham & Chelsea School. This was promised by the Council a year ago as a replacement for the facility in the Sands End Community Centre. Condition 13 of the planning permission for the development required a public access statement which was only submitted earlier this month. This has revealed that the book stock will primarily be for students aged 11-16, but heavily supplemented by adult texts and suitable texts and activities for children under 11. To gain access community users will need to sign in every time and be given a photo security badge. An opening date is not yet known.

7 - South Park - a report on the February AGM

The Chairman of the Friends of South Park (FOSP), Alex Schniewind, gave her last annual report at the meeting on 11th February before stepping down, although she will remain on the committee. Limited communications from FOSP have given the impression that very little had been happening but the report covered an impressive array of activities and achievements during 2012. Committee member Lance Pierson, also giving his last report on non-horticultural park maintenance, explained that huge progress had been made in the second half of the year following a change of council officer. Numerous comparatively minor repairs had been undertaken which cumulatively were making a significant difference. Both reports can be found on the new FOSP web site www.friendsofsouthpark.co.uk

Vice-Chairman Andy Jones is the new chairman and details of the other officers and committee members elected for the coming year are also available on the web site.

The main part of the meeting was a presentation by Rocks Lane Leisure (RL) who have expressed an interest in taking over the management of the sports facilities in the park. RL

are a Fulham family business that operates sports centres on council land in Barnes and Chiswick and, since 2011, the tennis courts in Bishop's Park. In a lively Q&A it became clear that local residents did not feel that the RL style of enclosed sports centres, which utilise artificial court surfaces, would be appropriate or practical in South Park, which is an open recreation park and garden. FOSP will be party to any decisions that might be made about the future management of the park facilities; nothing is imminent.

8 - Diary date: 2013 Annual General Meeting

To hopefully make it easier for more people to attend, this year we are combining our annual social gathering with the Annual General meeting. The date is Wednesday, 26th June. Following the formal business there will be short, illustrated talk by Sue Pierson on the history of Peterborough House, whose grounds occupied what is not the Peterborough Estate. More information in due course.

9 - Minutes of 2012 AGM held on 27th November at 7pm at Hurlingham and Chelsea School

33 people were present with apologies from Anthony Williams, Melissa Longley, Alistair and Vanessa Robertson

Co-ordinator's Overview

Sue Oriel reminded everyone that PRARA is now 10 years old and one of the most active Residents' Associations in the borough.

She then spoke about all that we had been involved in during the past year which included:

- Making consultation submissions on the South Fulham Riverside SDP
- Participated in the consultation on the Carnwath Road redevelopment scheme
- Arranged the open meeting for local people to question Phil Stride of Thames Water about the Super Sewer
- Responded to the consultation on the future of Charing Cross Hospital
- Participated in the licensing review for the Duke on the Green
- Met with the architect for the development of Peterborough School and expressed our concerns about the volume of traffic
- Held the council to account over their failure to consult on works in Peterborough Road and persuaded them to deal with trees adversely affecting members
- Supported the planning application for the redevelopment of the Parson's Green Club
- Circulated numerous crime alerts, advice and information to those who have supplied email addresses
- Re-activated our membership of HACAN, the campaign against the third runway at Heathrow
- Published 5 newsletters to keep members updated
- The standing committee met 6 times and communicated on numerous occasions by email

Finally, Sue thanked Penny Mitchell our 'Bollard Warden' and Bill Silvester our 'Webmaster'

She also thanked the committee and especially Anthony Williams for all his tireless efforts at responding to council issues and drafting responses.

Treasurer's Report

Before the start of the meeting, our finances stood as follows:

we have £239.91 in hand

since the last AGM, we have received donations of £396.52

since the last AGM, we have spent £457.14 on expenses, primarily the printing of newsletters and £74.98 for two years of website hosting

We have a couple of printing receipts outstanding, which would bring our funds down to approximately £100.

We have 146 members (households not individuals).

Before and after the meeting, many of those present generously made donations, which are not included in the above figures, but which should cover the cost of the next three or four newsletter printings.

As always, donations are always welcome and very gratefully received.

Election of the committee

The standing committee were re-elected en bloc.

Open Meeting

The guest speaker, Roland Gilmore, from the CTNA (Clean Thames Now and Always) then spoke about the proposed Super Sewer and the 'Green' alternatives (a fuller report will follow later). Members were urged to sign the petition against the Super Sewer.

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Hon. Secretary & Peterborough Road South: Ann Rosenberg, 72 Peterborough Road, SW6 3EB Tel: 7731 5151 Email: anntony@which.net

22nd February 2013

Appendix: The Thames Tunnel – why it's money down the drain by CTNA (Clean Thames Now and Always)

Thames Water (TW) say they have informed all their customers that they will have to pay for the proposed Thames Tideway Tunnel (TT); and that that payment will start this year. You may not remember this communication; you may well not have read it, as it was one page of the glossy booklet accompanying your bill at some point during last year.

We would like to remind you what it said (*in italics below*); to suggest that it contains 15 misleading statements or inaccuracies [numbered below]; and to urge that we all take further action to challenge TW's very dubious case.

The proposed Thames Tunnel is a major new sewer, which is urgently needed to capture untreated sewage that currently overflows into the tidal River Thames from London's Victorian sewers when it rains. In some cases as little as 2mm of rain can trigger an overflow into the river.

[1] Urgent? Yet as they admit lower down, construction work is provisionally planned to begin only in 2016 and take about 6 years to complete. So it wouldn't be active for about 10 years at least. By contrast, the green alternative measures recommended by a growing number of experts and concerned pressure groups have already begun to take effect, and would continue to do so incrementally from the moment they are applied.

[2] To say the sewers overflow 'when it rains' implies that it is every time it rains. The truth is that the sewers overflow when it rains heavily. There is rainfall in London an average 145 days a year; the sewers overflow on only 60 of them.

[3] The claim about 2mm (1/15th inch) is virtually meaningless; it would have to be an incredibly short, sharp shower to overflow. Normally that amount of rain does little more than wet the ground and evaporate.

But this sentence does identify the real problem, without drawing the right conclusion. The problem is no sewage: the existing sewers can cope perfectly well with that. The problem is excessive rain. [4] So the proposed TT would not primarily be a sewer at all, and it certainly would not be super (in any sense except 'outrageously large'); it would be a Rain Drain. So a much better solution than pumping millions of tons of concrete under 20 miles of London would be to stop the rain going down the gulleys at all; it would also be cheaper, greener and create more local employment. The method is collectively known as 'green infrastructure' (GI). It is a range of measures to retain and recycle rainwater (one example is the growing number of roof gardens), as well as letting more of it sink into the ground as nature intends (porous asphalt road surfaces are an example).

This would mean a very significant increase in charges for all Thames Water's sewage customers. We want to explain why this investment is necessary.

[5] It would only mean a price rise for us if they are allowed to charge us for it. That has become normal practice; but Sir Ian Byatt, the first chairman of OFWAT, has pointed out that it was not the intention at privatisation. The rationale then was that the company's investors and shareholders would pay for infrastructure projects; customers only for their water and its treatment. And as Simon Hughes MP, Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrats, has demonstrated, the company's profits of the last few years while it has been planning the TT could have made a major contribution to paying for it. He has now tabled an 'Early Day Motion' (a request for a debate) in Parliament, challenging the idea of a surcharge for customers.

The estimated capital cost of the project is £4.1bn (in 2011 prices, excluding inflation). The project's construction would not have any effect on customers' bills before 2013 at the earliest. Bills are then

Appendix: The Thames Tunnel – why it's money down the drain **by CTNA (Clean Thames Now and Always)**

likely to rise gradually, with the maximum impact a few years later, estimated to be in the range of £70-80 per year, again expressed in 2011 prices.

Note various things! All costs are expected to increase by inflation (and in reality, of course, by more than that over 10 years, which will throw up costs beyond what has been budgeted now); so the proposed hike to our bills would be more than £70-80, and it would increase each year. They tell us that our bills would rise to that point, but nothing about them falling again – because they wouldn't! The Government have confirmed that the surcharge would continue for decades, to pay interest on the capital cost, as well as expensive operation and maintenance. [6] Simple maths then reveals that the £4.1bn price-tag is a smokescreen (and it is gigantic enough in all conscience; it is more than the US spent to put the rover Curiosity on Mars, and would fund 10 new hospitals). The actual amount we would pay, on these figures, is at least £13bn. Even allowing for the interest and maintenance, does this not sound like a tidy profit?

The vast majority of London is served by a combined sewerage system, collecting sewage (for example, from toilets, sinks and washing machines) together with rainwater run-off from roads, roofs and pavements.

[7] On any modern understanding of 'London', the claimed 'vast majority' is not just exaggeration; it is simply untrue. Combined sewers serve only the old Inner London Boroughs, including us in H&F of course, but perhaps 20% of the Greater London area.

In a typical year, 39m tonnes of sewage enters the river via 'combined sewer overflows' (CSOs) which were built into the original 1850s sewer network. That's enough to fill the Royal Albert Hall 450 times.

This is wilfully misleading, and doubly so. [8] The 39m tonnes are not 'sewage'; they are excess-rainwater-mixed-with-sewage. In another context TW have admitted that the amount of foul water in the overflow is about 18%, less than 1/5. And of that 18%, only 5% is solid sewage; the remaining 95% is contaminated water. [9] And TW include this 39m figure in what they have called above their 'justification' for investment in the TT. But the Lee Tunnel, already under construction and scheduled for completion in 2015, together with sewage treatment improvements already under way, are dealing with 21m of the 39m. So the TT, not even due to be started at that point, would only be dealing with 18m tonnes of rainwater, with an 18% component of foul water and .9% of solid sewage. 3.2m tonnes of foul water / 160,000 tonnes of sewage is still a nasty problem and must be dealt with; but only a fraction of the claimed 39m. And could it ever be worth the exorbitant expense proposed? Very rough calculations suggest that the TT would cost about £72 per cubic metre of discharge captured; porous asphalt reconstruction of roads (a possible GI alternative) would cost about £7 per cubic metre of discharge prevented.

Population growth and the continuing loss of undeveloped land in the capital available to soak up rainfall mean it's an increasing problem.

This sounds such an automatic half-truth that it's easy to convince people of. [10] But of course population growth has been in outer London, mostly beyond the reach of the TT. In the area covered by the Victorian sewers, the population is lower than in Victorian times with their large families and crowded homes. [11] And what is this 'continuing loss of land'? Metropolitan Open Land (i.e. undeveloped) in London is rigorously protected. And all new business developments from this year, and some residential ones too, are required by law to contain water-recycling and water-retention features which 'soak up rainfall' and prevent it running into the drains and causing overflows. [12] TW give no evidence that the problem is increasing, and it's a dubious claim. The Thames is in fact steadily improving its quality, and is now the 10th cleanest river in Europe. Of course we could and should do better; but surely not at the cost admitted above.

Appendix: The Thames Tunnel – why it's money down the drain by CTNA (Clean Thames Now and Always)

To protect the river and everyone who uses it, the proposed Thames Tunnel needs to tackle the overflows from the 34 most polluting CSOs.

[13] There are 60 CSOs identified altogether, so 26 would be unconnected. There are also many dozens of SOs (surface water overflows) that discharge either directly or through tributaries into the river. Their pollution includes things like car oil / diesel and pet faeces. The TT would not be protecting the river and its users from any of these, so it would only ever attempt to deal with part of the problem. GI, by diverting the rain, could deal with all of it.

The tunnel would also ensure the UK meets legal environmental standards set by the EU.

[14] The implication is that the TT is the only way to reach the standards. But GI would do even better and sooner. It is likely that by 2022 – the earliest that the TT could become active – GI would have met the targets, and the TT would not be needed.

Following two phases of consultation with people directly affected by the work, we are provisionally planning to begin construction in 2016. The tunnel would take about six years to complete. We are working hard to minimise the disruption this would inevitably cause and to carry out this work in the most cost-effective way.

[15] Excuse me? *Minimise* disruption, with drill-sites in residential areas? *Cost-effective*? See above.

Someone we know is a friend of a man employed by TW to ensure that their public statements are correct. He must have had an off-day when this one came out. It is a classic case of 'argument weak, so shout louder'. How could they stoop to misleading us 15 times on one page? The most charitable answer might be that having embarked on this TT project, they don't want the effort of changing course. But we suspect the real answer is the tidy profit we surmised earlier. TT's shareholders, mostly overseas, stand to make huge financial returns from selling us a pup.

We hope you feel motivated to do something, instead of lying down and letting it happen. Now is a very good time to act, as TW are due to present their final proposal to the Government on February 28, and it will come up for public debate. Here are our suggestions:

- 1) Sign the 'Clean Thames Now and Always' (CTNA) petition, if you have not done so already. This is not the 'protect Carnwath Road' petition of a year ago, which many of you kindly signed. This is a new 'Stop the TT and replace it with GI' petition started in November. You can find it at <http://bit.ly/stopSS>; or if you prefer a paper signature, ask Lance Pierson (7731 6544; lance@lancepierson.org). If you can't remember if you've signed it or not, just try again; the system will automatically stop you signing it a second time.
- 2) Tell neighbours and friends to sign the petition, including *all* who live in the TW area (Cheltenham to Dartford, St Albans to Guildford). They would all have to pay for the TT; those who live outside London would get no benefit at all. (All UK taxpayers are involved as well, as the Water Industry (Financial Assistance) Act 2012 commits the Exchequer to underwrite any overspend, and indeed bail out the project if its finances fail.)
- 3) Join CTNA's mailing list, so that you hear the latest news and further initiatives. Sign up on <http://cleanthames.org>.
- 4) Write to our MP, Greg Hands, House of Commons, SW1 (mail@greghands.com). He is personally opposed to the TT, but cannot say so publicly as a Government whip. But the more constituents he knows are resistant, the more he can keep informing the Government ministers who will make the final decision.