

Dear EFRA member

Welcome to the spring 2021 e-newsletter from Ealing Fields Residents' Association.

It has been a while since the last EFRA newsletter. As for most of us, the last year has been a challenge for your EFRA Committee, but we have done our best to adapt to the difficult circumstances of a Covid-affected world. The Committee has continued meeting every six weeks or so, via video-conferencing, and has continued to be active in local affairs, attempting to represent the interests of local residents, as you will see from the contents of this newsletter. We have also continued our financial contributions to organisations that support our aims and objectives – or that we support, such as The Log Cabin Charity.

It has been a period of change for the Committee, with changes in personnel and some members relinquishing particular roles or portfolios, after many years of valuable service, for which we are grateful. We currently have vacancies for Committee members and for roles within the Committee. Please see below for more details on this.

Our thanks go in particular to the following committee members who have stepped down from their roles: Roger Jarman (former Chair) and Wendy Hallam (Secretary). Both Roger and Wendy remain on the Committee. And our thanks also go to Rosmarie Matter (our Heathrow portfolio holder), James Guest (Planning and Licensing) and Trish Judd (Community Safety) who have left the Committee.

### **Waiver of 2020/21 Membership Subscriptions**

It has obviously been difficult – and undesirable – for our street reps to knock on their neighbours' doors seeking renewal of memberships for the 2020/21 membership year in the circumstances of the last year. In the light of this, and the other circumstances above, the Committee has decided to waive membership fees for the 2020/21 year. We would be grateful, however, if you would renew for the 2021/22 year. Details of how to do so are at the end of this newsletter.

### **Could you help EFRA serve its local community?**

We are always on the lookout for new members to join the Committee, and take on roles within it. Please consider taking on one of these roles. In particular, we are keen to hear from anyone who has expertise in planning matters, or at least an interest in the subject. If you would like more details on what is involved in being a Committee Member, Street Rep, or taking on a particular role within the Committee, please contact Roger Jarman (former Chair) on [jarmanpad@aol.com](mailto:jarmanpad@aol.com), or 07776 187044.

### **Northfields Community Library**

At the time of this newsletter, and after a lengthy, Covid-enforced shutdown, Northfields Community Library (NCL) has been open and operating for several weeks, but still in a restricted and Covid-secure way. A 'click & collect' service has been in operation, run by four volunteer teams on two half-days per week, plus there have been several online events and activities as detailed below.

The aim is to open up more fully from mid-April onwards, in terms of both lending capability and opening hours. The original volunteers (which numbered 100+) have recently been contacted about their availability for one session (half-day) per fortnight. Full training is to be provided beforehand and each team will have a competent Team Leader on hand. Further volunteers will be welcome, both now and in future.

Through lockdown there have been many other library-led events and activities (mostly online) such as book clubs and reading groups, story-time sessions for children and families, Italian and Spanish language classes, and mindfulness sessions and there will clearly be plenty of scope in the future once classes and meetings can fully reconvene.

There is a website and a frequent newsletter with all the details:

website: <https://northfieldscommunitylibrary.org.uk>

email: [getintouch@northfieldscommunitylibrary.org.uk](mailto:getintouch@northfieldscommunitylibrary.org.uk),

Facebook: @northfieldscommunitylibrary

### **Low Traffic Neighbourhoods**

Since our last newsletter we have seen the introduction of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) across the borough of Ealing. There is little doubt this has caused much controversy, and there have been strong views put forward on both sides of the debate.

EFRA is aware that there has been considerable opposition to the LTNs. Nevertheless, EFRA is a non-political organisation, seeking to represent the interests of all residents in its area. We have therefore not taken an official position on LTNs, but rather concentrated on process. Given the direct day-to-day impact of LTNs, we consider that consultation with local residents should have taken place prior to implementation. In addition, the current LTNs have not addressed the issue of “rat running” near local schools.

For the past 5 years, EFRA has campaigned for the introduction of traffic calming measures (but not LTNs), a reduction in “rat-running” across local roads, and measures to promote better air quality near local schools. More needs to be done to tackle these issues across our area. EFRA is keen to maintain an open dialogue with Ealing Council to see how such measures could be introduced to benefit all members of the community.

### **Blondin Park**

The Blondin Consortium, into which Friends of Blondin has now been incorporated, is a charitable body with the aims, in close cooperation with the Council, of improving and maintaining facilities in Blondin Park for both sport and recreation and encouraging voluntary participation from local residents.

It has already installed containers in the central sports field for storage of equipment for the annual Brentford Festival in Blondin Park and maintenance and sports equipment. Sufficient funding has now been raised through grant applications and the regular weekend refreshment sales, to install a pavilion, which will provide much improved facilities for sport and other users, including toilets and a cafe to be run by volunteers. It is hoped that the first module of this will be installed in July 2021.

As well as fundraising, the Consortium has already been instrumental in obtaining lots of bulbs and trees for planting and organising volunteers and community payback team to plant these.

In addition to the regular football training and matches organised by FootyFun4Kids and our very own local football club, Northfield United FC, discussions are ongoing with local schools about making more use of the sports field, which now has an artificial cricket table installed with the support of Middlesex CCC.

### **Site at rear of Overdale Road**

Land at the back of Overdale Road adjacent to the tube lines at Northfields Station has been subject to a range of development proposals over the last few years. Initially a housing development was put forward by the landowner but because of unresolved issues over ownership of part of the site this was abandoned. In the summer of 2019 the landowner submitted a planning application to demolish the garages on the site and - subject to certain conditions - the Council approved this application. Late last year a further planning application was lodged with the Council seeking continued use of the site for storage purposes.

We have now been advised that all garage users have been given notice to vacate their premises by 30 April. New secure gates plus a pedestrian gate are to be installed shortly. This will restrict vehicle access to the site. The four houses that have garage access on to the site will have temporary access until the legal position is resolved. Letters were sent in late March to affected households and the landowner is awaiting their responses. The land owner has planning permission to add further fencing and gates to that already agreed.

EFRA will continue to monitor the situation and work with residents and our local Councillors to ensure the land at the rear of Overdale Road is used for a suitable purpose which is not detrimental to the interests of local people.

### **Ealing Fields High School**

The Ealing Fields High School (EFHS) site development continued throughout 2019 and much of 2020, with numerous challenges continuing throughout much of this time, including vibration damage to some of the neighbouring residences, dust pollution exacerbated by long periods of hot, dry and windy weather during the summers of 2019 and 2020, and various changes to original planning specifications.

From the outset, EFRA's representatives sought to foster a good working relationship with the contractors and the school personnel, and the EFRA Planning lead worked forensically to ensure that planning requirements and commitments were upheld. This, however, proved not to be straight-forward, and some changes were approved by the Planning Officer from the original approved planning application.

Tensions felt by some neighbouring residents were not allayed due, in part, to a lack of adequate communication from the contractors, initially, and then the school after the hand-over of the site. Most of these issues now seem to have been resolved.

Covid-19 caused additional delays to the construction programme, which was not finally completed until 31 October 2020, even though the site had been handed over to the school during August 2020 to be prepared for the first day of the autumn term on 8 September. We are aware that there are some ongoing “snagging” issues to be dealt with, along with completing the planting scheme

Under current plans, EFHS will comprise five forms over five years, i.e. a total of 750 pupils, and not the 850, including a sixth form, for which planning permission was given, despite the limited size and restrictions of the site. Current pupil numbers are 630 (4 x 120 pupils + 1 x 150 pupils).

Only time will tell what impact the school and its pupils will have upon residents in the EFRA area and, in particular, those living alongside the site, when the school reaches its maximum numbers and when Covid-19 no longer places constraints upon the running of the school. To date, the school appears to be running smoothly and not adversely affecting the neighbouring residents.

## **Transport and Parking**

Although we have witnessed quieter streets during the past year, work needs to continue to make our streets safe.

It is welcome that schools are now fully open. Since our last newsletter, we have seen new bollards erected on the corner of Hereford Road and Weymouth Avenue to stop motorists parking dangerously by Little Ealing School. Also, the roadworks on South Ealing Road are finally coming to an end and this will provide an opportunity for the Council to undertake traffic surveys to examine hotspots and “rat runs”. This is really important given that there are two primary schools, a high school and a nursery in our catchment area.

## **Orion Park Redevelopment**

Demolition of the buildings behind the vacant shops on Northfield Avenue (across from the underground station), on the former Orion Park industrial site, began in October 2020 and was completed in January 2021. To ensure the site is secure large concrete barriers have been installed behind the hoarding.

Ealing Council has approved an application for 76 flats but the developers intend to submit an amended application at the end of April 2021. The new application aims to increase the number of flats from 76 to 99, which will be a mix of shared ownership and affordable rent units, together with retail space fronting Northfield Avenue.

Apart from the proposed increase in the number of flats there has had to be a redesign following the discovery of a major sewer pipe, which has resulted in the planned blocks having to be located further back towards the Tube line. This discovery means the footprint of the proposed blocks is smaller than originally planned and the only way to gain the additional flats is to make each of the four blocks considerably taller.

## **Environmental issues**

EFRA has continued to keep an eye on green issues within our area. Both of our main green spaces, Bramley Gardens and Blondin Park, over which EFRA members keep a

watchful eye, were awarded prestigious Green Flags for the second year running. We were pleased to get new benches in the park and nature reserve, after some pressure from our members.

EFRA has also continued to help to maintain the plant beds at the Plough junction, which brighten up this junction, in spite of having to do battle with electric cable trenches. The Council has even put up a small plaque to recognise the work we do to maintain the beds!

Flytipping, and dumping of domestic waste in street litterbins, is an ongoing problem and EFRA has worked with local councillors to try to find a solution to improve the situation. We will be back on to this after things return to normal.

We recently successfully objected to an application for a 20-metre-high G5 mast with eight accompanying box structures, to be installed in Blondin Park. There is still a possibility of an appeal so we need to keep alert. Please contact the Committee if you hear of any such applications as we do not always get notified directly.

## **Heathrow Airport**

At the start of 2020, pre Covid-19, there were two major Heathrow expansion proposals with the potential to have significant adverse effects on our area.

### Background

Our local concerns with Heathrow are to do with noise and air pollution. On top of this there is the global warming threat. Since Heathrow started as a commercial airport in 1946 the number of flights has increased enormously and, although modern planes are indeed quieter and more fuel efficient than their predecessors, the steady increase in numbers has led to today's situation (pre Covid-19) of almost constant background noise along with poor air quality, caused by the planes themselves and associated motor vehicles.

### Proposals

Heathrow has made two proposals to significantly increase the number of flights, at a time of increasing awareness of adverse effects on both human populations and the environment.

1. The step-change proposal is for a third runway to the north of the current two. This has the potential to increase the number of flights by another 50% up to around 750,000 per year. Being north of the current northern runway, the new one will bring the landing flightpath on westerly winds **much closer** to the EFRA area than it is now.
2. The additional proposal is that in the short-term new technology will enable new curved landing approaches to be used which will enable more flights to land in parallel on both runways at the time of peak need **which happens to be first thing in the morning**. Details of the new flightpaths have yet to be put out to detailed consultation, however the preliminary plans make an approach at low altitude over Ealing highly likely. This would apply to the airport whether the new runway is built or not.

Most of us use Heathrow, and know people working there, and we do not want to see its demise. However, in view of our modern understanding of its impact on all of us and the planet, the time is now to make it a better neighbour not a bigger neighbour.

### Latest developments

**Runway 3** – The Covid-19 crisis has led to a huge reduction in the number of flights. This has really brought home to us the price we pay every day for the ‘old normal’. Heathrow itself believes that there will no longer be sufficient demand for a new runway until at least 2030. In Feb 2020, the proposal for the new runway was thrown out by the Supreme Court on the grounds that it did not take due account of the climate change effects. The Government said that they would not be supporting an appeal, but Heathrow did proceed with their own appeal and this was heard in October 2020 with the judgement coming out in favour of Heathrow on Oct 16 2020. Heathrow can therefore continue its work on a full plan for runway 3 prior to a 6-month public enquiry with the result going back to the Secretary of State for approval to start digging. However, for now the expansion teams have been disbanded and focus is solely on rebuilding their regular business.

**IPA** – ‘Independent Parallel Approaches’. Although also likely not to be required for a while, if Heathrow does have runway 3 ruled out it is likely that it will push hard for the potential to increase current capacity by an extra 25,000 flights per year via this technology. As Ealing is already overflowed by many departure flights when on easterlies, then having a significant number of early morning landing flights almost overhead (say 20 between 6-7am!) on westerlies as well would not be good. This is a case that we are already fighting and will continue to do once the detailed proposals are tabled, probably now in 2022.

### **Renewing Your Membership**

As mentioned in the introduction to this newsletter, the EFRA Committee has decided to waive membership fees for the 2020/21 membership year. We would however be grateful if you would renew for the 2021/22 year, using the form [Link](#). Membership is only £2.00 for the first member at each address and a further £1.00 for each additional adult member at that address who wishes to join.

We are not able to take electronic payments through our website. However, you can pay by cash or by cheque. In either case, if you let us have your email address, we will send you a receipt. If paying by cheque, please ensure it is made payable to “Ealing Fields Residents’ Association” (our bank no longer accepts just “EFRA”).

You can send it direct to our Membership Secretary **Clive Herring** at 75 Bramley Road, W5 4ST or just pop it through his letterbox.

Or, if you prefer to send or drop off to your local street rep, and don’t know who it is, then please email Jane Cocking at: [jane75cocking@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jane75cocking@hotmail.co.uk) and she will reply with the address of your nearest street rep, or ring her on 020 8568 6159.