

Summer 2000 Newsletter

Message from the Chairman

Please note that the newsletters contain un-edited extracts which have not been updated

REPORT OF THE 31ST AGM HELD AT EALING TOWN HALL ON 6 APRIL 2000

The Chairman, Bob Gurd, observed that 1999 had been a relatively quiet year for the Society, but he wished to speak about the following:

EALING TOWN CENTRE

The controversy about the work of Ealing Centre Forum had been discussed in the Spring newsletter. The Society was represented on the Forum's Board by Brian Harris and Corinne Templer and he, as Chairman of the Society, also attended full Forum meetings.

He referred to the risk of two huge shopping developments underway at Uxbridge and White City, together equivalent to a 'new Bluewater Park' for West London, which could draw shoppers away from centres like Ealing. The Borough's main centre must evolve to meet this new challenge or risk decline, but must retain its unique character.

FUTURE GOVERNANCE OF L.B. EALING

A new structure was coming into operation in May 2000 - intended to increase public awareness in local government and greater democracy, but it could be at risk of doing the reverse. Most committees (though not those for planning or licensing) were to be scrapped and replaced by an Executive Cabinet, Scrutiny Committees (to develop changes in policy) and a series of Area Committees to act as forums for debates on local issues. The Advisory Committees, on which the society is represented, would however be retained.

EALING STUDIOS

These world-famous studios were put on the market last year as a going concern for film production and the new owners, Fragile Films, were reputed to be keen to put Ealing back at the centre of the film and media industry.

The Society, in common with most local people, wanted to see the retention of the principal studio buildings if possible, but there were many problems, not least concerning

access, traffic and parking. Fortunately the site was considered to be within Ealing Town Centre and the Society would be pressing for imaginative solutions.

LICENSED PREMISES

Applications for new licenses premises had now dried up and were mainly for the enlargement of existing premises. This reflected in part the Society's success in achieving a partnership between the Council, residents' associations, the Civic Society and the licensing magistrates - unique in this country he believed.

Bob Gurd concluded by forecasting that 2000 would be a busy year and made a plea for new members to ensure that new blood was introduced into the Society.

The meeting was shown the Open University video "Who Plans Ealing" made in the 1970s featuring the Council's original town centre proposals, successfully fought off by the Society and others. Most present agreed that there were some parallels - and some important differences - between then and now!

WHAT IS ACTION ACTON?

Action Acton is a partnership of agencies (including Ealing Council), businesses and individuals working together to make Acton a better place to live and work.

The Partnership has won substantial Government funding from its SRB (Single Regeneration Budget). A working strategy is shortly to be presented for comment following a consultation exercise this Spring.

Enhancement of Acton Town Centre will be a key element of the strategy and, although significant environmental improvements have already been carried out by the Council over the past few years, there is much more to be done.

Please phone John Templeton on 020 8997 8886 if you would be willing to monitor this exciting project for the Society. Further information may be obtained from Caroline Moldonado, Action Acton, 21 Horn Lane, Acton W3 6NJ (020) 8993 9605 (E-mail Address: action.acton@ealing.gov.uk)

OVER TO YOU!

Ealing Civic Society is always keen to receive your views and, space permitting, to print your letters on matters of concern. Here is an extract from one in response to the Chairman's Spring message in which he reminded members that the Society covers more than just the centre of Ealing:

"I was disappointed that you did not mention Greenford or Northolt as being significant sub centres of the Borough. Although Greenford now has its own Town Action group, the

Civic Society should still take notice of it (Mrs. I. Ovenden).

Chairman's response: "Quite right; Ealing Civic Society is indeed concerned with the environment of the whole Borough- Greenford and Northolt included."

GRAND UNION VISION

Taylor Woodrow no longer require their office headquarters and industrial site at Ruislip Road, on the borders of Greenford and Southall, and wish to redevelop the land as a canalside "urban village". A firm of Community Planners, Urban Designers and Architects (John Thompson & Partners) has been engaged to draw up plans for the development based on the outcome of community planning discussions and workshops.

The concept of community planning was likened to the tradition of garden cities/suburbs, in contrast to comprehensive redevelopment, estate development and high rise blocks. The idea of Urban Villages is based on mixed development: social and private housing, offices, retail and leisure facilities. Ideas for the plan and layout came from local communities (Greenford, Southall, Hayes etc.)

Ealing Civic Society was represented at a Community Planning Weekend held on 10/11

March 2000 which included work by local schools. Summaries of the proceedings led to a set of proposals presented later as "The Vision".

Focus groups have now been set up to study various aspects of the development and a steering group formed to progress the work. We will follow the proceedings with considerable interest.

Margaret Gold

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