



Dear Member/Resident

11 February 2010

Hollymount School Expansion- an update

Following our letter of 21 January, we are writing to you with an update.

On 22 January, London Borough of Merton hand delivered a statutory notice of consultation for the permanent expansion of Hollymount to nearby residents. It is unclear how widely this notice was distributed but the circulation was wider than the original planning notice issued in early January. As many of you will have seen, there have been a number of complaints about the planning process, the timetable and the general approach by London Borough of Merton ("LBM") in connection with the proposed expansion. The planning timetable has been extended whereby the closing date for objections for the phase 1 is now 26 February. If you have objections on the proposed plans and have not already done so, please send your objections to Tony Ryan at London Borough of Merton Planning Department at Merton Civic Centre, London Road, Morden, Surrey SM4 5DX or by email to: planning.representations@merton.gov.uk by 26 February.

The statutory Consultation notice is also seeking comments on the expansion which it seems could include comments from a planning perspective and also an educational perspective. If you have comments/concerns, the closing date for these comments is also **26 February**.

As many of you will know, a pre-planning meeting was held at Hollymount on 4 February to enable neighbours to hear about the proposed expansion. The meeting was well attended and a number of concerns were expressed by the attendees. The presentation was focussed on the expansion from an architectural view point. One might have expected to see a slide covering the advantages/disadvantages of the proposal for the pupils and the wider community. Sadly, this did not feature.

In our last newsletter, we identified a number of initial questions which arose from the proposed expansion. Following the presentation most of them remain unanswered. Why?

The Astroturf MUGA and outside play space

During the presentation, it was confirmed that the Astroturf will be relocated to the fence line running alongside the Pendarves Road properties. According to the architects, the total outdoor area available for the pupils will increase by 116 Sq metres, but as the number of pupils will double, the plan therefore envisages reducing the outdoor space available for the pupils by half.

Holland Garden

The Headteacher confirmed that Hollymount would continue to use Holland Garden on an informal basis during school hours in the future. It is already evident that the school has insufficient outdoor space based on the current number of pupils as the School has found it increasingly necessary to use Holland Garden. Doubling the number of pupils at the school will only increase the usage at the expense of the public. We believe that the current usage is in breach of LBM's Byelaws relevant to Holland Garden. In addition, for those of you who are unaware, Holland Garden was conveyed to LBM in 1929 by Lady Holland. The conveyance was subject to certain covenants, one being that Holland Garden was for the use and enjoyment of the public and for no other purpose. We believe that LBM may be in breach of this covenant.

Extended Schools Programme

At the meeting on 4 February, a question was raised as to the traffic consequences of Hollymount being part of the Extended Schools Programme. For your information, an extended school provides a range of services and activities that can be accessed by children, parents and the wider community. This is a central Government initiative and further details can be found on the following websites:

<http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/socialinclusion/children/extended.html>

<http://www.ursulinehigh.merton.sch.uk/docs/Sarah%20Pearce/West%20Wimbledon%20Cluster%20Newsletter.pdf>

Hollymount is currently a member of the West Wimbledon cluster of schools but it only currently participates in a breakfast club. In answering the question, the Headteacher indicated that the traffic impact from running the breakfast club would be insignificant. However, it has subsequently been brought to our attention that if the school is expanded, it will have more indoor facilities to offer and may increase its offering under this scheme. As LBM will receive a financial incentive for participation, there must be a risk therefore that Hollymount will increase its participation in the scheme as to do so will enable LBM to reduce its direct cost of running the school. Under the extended schools scheme, a school would be open from 6am (for breakfast) and close at 10pm. We further understand that the extended services would be available for 6 days a week and 48 weeks of the year. **If this happened, the impact on the neighbourhood would be significant.** It is disappointing that the original question about the traffic impact of the extended schools scheme was answered with such brevity!

Traffic and congestion

From a review of the responses to the planning application posted on LBM's website, there have been many comments made about the volume of traffic/congestion that already exists. The School has developed a travel plan which we believe to be based on a mixture of theory and hope rather than reality and, therefore, is misleading and flawed. It would be inappropriate for the Transport consultant to use such a plan as the basis for any informed analysis or opinion and we will advise LBM to that effect.

Next steps

The closing date for comments to LBM Planning (on the planning application for phase 1) and to The Children, Schools and Families Department in respect of your response to the Statutory Consultation notice is **26 February**. We understand that a decision will be made in mid March whether to proceed with the statutory notice to permanently expand Hollymount (subject to planning approval).

If you have not already done so, you are urged to submit your views to Tony Ryan at LBM Planning and to the Children, Schools and Families Dept in respect of education issues by 26 February with a copy to your Councillors and MP whose email addresses are as follows:

Cllr Linda Scott - linda.scott@merton.gov.uk

Cllr Rod Scott – rod.scott@merton.gov.uk

Cllr Margaret Brierly – margaret.brierly@merton.gov.uk

Stephen Hammond MP – hammondsp@parliament.uk

If there any matters which you would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact us at the following email addresses:

Alan@friendsofhollandgarden.org.uk or Iain@friendsofhollandgarden.org.uk

The Committee

Friends of Holland Garden
