



# R. A. D. I. O.

## RESIDENTS AGAINST DEVELOPMENT IN OTFORD

### JULY NEWSLETTER

Before we move on to local planning issues and other news, there is one matter of national importance that we would like to address. It is no exaggeration to say that the reforms proposed are a direct threat to our right to be heard both individually and as a community. **We urge you to take action on this matter.**

### **THE GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER ON PLANNING REFORM**

Following the publication of the Barker Report on planning policy and procedures, and the Ellington Report on transport, transport infrastructure and economic growth, the Government have produced a White Paper, "Planning for a Sustainable Future", containing proposed reforms to the planning system.

We are greatly concerned that the proposed reforms will leave local councils, community groups and individuals with no meaningful say in planning matters and in how their areas are developed. In brief, the White Paper proposes to:-

- Put decisions on major infrastructure projects such as roads, power stations, airports etc in the hands of a non-elected, independent panel of 'experts'.
- Limit the public's right to be heard at public inquiries.
- Threaten local businesses by making out-of-town developments (e.g. new supermarkets and retail parks) easier.
- Significantly widen permitted development rights, even in Conservation Areas.
- Remove the need for Statements of Community Involvement to be examined at public inquiries.
- Introduce a 'presumption in favour of development'.

These reforms are bad for local communities, bad for the planning system and bad for democracy and we would urge everyone to make their opposition heard.

**How can you get involved??** Please do one or more of the following:-

#### **1. Send an e-postcard to the Government.**

A coalition of civic and environmental groups, including the CPRE, the Civic Trust and The Woodland Trust, has been formed to oppose the proposed reforms. Follow the links on their website, [www.planningdisaster.co.uk](http://www.planningdisaster.co.uk), (click on 'Take Action') to send an e-card objection (wording provided) to the White Paper consultation team.

#### **2. Write a letter to the Government.**

Write a letter addressing your concerns. This should be addressed to The Planning Reform Team, Zone 3/J2, Eland House, Bressenden Place, London, SW1E 5DU. *We can provide you with a draft letter if this would be of assistance – please contact Keith Stockman on 07798 767770 or by e-mail at [stockers@dsl.pipex.com](mailto:stockers@dsl.pipex.com) if you would like one.*

#### **3. Write to your MP.**

Our local MP is Mr. Michael Fallon. Write a letter to him expressing your worries about the proposed reforms and urging him to oppose the White Paper. Letters should be sent to his constituency address at 113 St John's Hill, Sevenoaks, TN13 3PF, or contact him by e-mail at [fallonm@parliament.uk](mailto:fallonm@parliament.uk).





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### LOCAL PLANNING ISSUES

We are pleased to advise that the proposal to build an additional dwelling in the garden of no. 17 Greenhill Road (classic 'garden grab') has been rejected by the Planning Inspectorate, upon appeal. This is a major victory for the village and we hope this will set a precedent for future applications of this type.

In this respect, in co-operation with the Hillydeal Residents Association, we have opposed the construction of 3 new houses at the site of 'Darenthmead', 4 Hillydeal Road. This site would link up with the (already approved) development at 'Bramber House' on the Shoreham Road to create an entirely inappropriate new housing estate in a quiet, pretty part of the village. Many thanks to all our members who also wrote in objection. We await the Council's decision with great interest.

### HOUSE EXTENSIONS

By far the majority of planning applications received by SDC for Otford relate to extension of existing properties. This is a difficult subject and the RADIO Committee has debated at length what should be its attitude to these applications. Basically, we have agreed that our view should be tempered by the location of the property and the size/type of the extension and where we have major concerns that the extension will be inappropriate for the area, we reserve the right to make an objection. Please bear in mind, however, if any resident has any worry or complaint about any proposed development in the village, including extensions, they are free to come to us and request advice and assistance.

The subject of house extensions has also occupied much of the time of the Village Design Statement team, who are concerned that all new extensions are 'in character' with both the property being extended and with the character of the village itself. We would ask all residents to bear this in mind when drawing up plans.

### COMMUNITY EVENTS

Thanks to everyone, members and non-members alike, who took the time to stop off at our marquee at the Village Fete. Very brave of you to turn up at all on what was a very wet, cold and windswept day. We thought the Fete Committee did a grand job, in the circumstances!

Fortunately, the weather was much improved for the RADIO Distributors Annual BBQ a couple of weeks later. A good time was had by one and all, even if certain parties had to be inveigled into participating in the cricket match.

### RADIO XMAS PARTY

We will be hosting a Christmas Party for members and their guests at the Village Memorial Hall on Saturday 15 December. Snacks will be provided courtesy of RADIO and a licensed bar will be available, with dancing to the 'Del Monte Brothers' disco. Tickets are priced at £5.00 per head and will be available shortly.

### NOTE FOR MEMBERS

At last! The 'RADIO MEMBER' window stickers have arrived and will be distributed to members shortly. Some of you may even have yours by now!

**PLEASE DISPLAY THEM PROUDLY AND SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR RADIO AND FOR OTFORD.**

