

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2013

It is with sadness that I am standing down as Chairman of Theydon Bois Action Group this year. John Warren is taking up the role and I wish him all the best. 2013 saw a great deal of work and activity by Theydon Bois Action Group (TBAG) to protect the Metropolitan Green Belt surrounding our village. We had considerable success; the direct result of the dedication, commitment and hard work of the Committee and those members who attend our meetings and those who support our activity. On occasions we called on the active support of the village. In September, after a mass leafleting of the village by TBAG supporters, over 300 villagers attended the Parish Council meeting to show solidarity in the fight to prevent the mass building of new homes in the heart of our community as put forward by Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) as part of the Issues and Options Consultation. TBAG has been very active in challenging these proposals and working hard to protect our village from this potentially damaging development.

This remains the major threat with potential plans for anything up to 1274 new houses. The damage to our village would be catastrophic and change it forever. Following TBAG's robust response to the Consultation in 2012, we have continued to monitor the progress of the emerging new Local Plan by keeping track of the various Committee meetings at Epping Forest District Council. We note that new population forecast figures arising from the 2011 Census are now being considered but, to date, we are not aware of any real progress having been made and it is unfortunate that most Local Plan Cabinet Meetings were cancelled last year.

TBAG continues to review and make representations concerning local planning applications. Our work led to the refusal in November 2013, for permission to build four new houses on the Metropolitan Green belt at the Blunts Farm site (EPF/2468/12), despite EFDC's Planning Officer's approval. TBAG members attended the appeal hearing with The Planning Inspectorate and gave direct evidence to oppose the application. We were also intrinsically involved in the refusal in the appeal to develop the Coppice Farm site (EPF/0457/12) refused in January 2014. We also made a strong submission in relation to the erection of a new

agricultural building on the pre 18th century field next to Blunts Farm, Coopersale Lane (EPF/0553/13). EFDC Planning Officers and Councillors unfortunately supported the application and it was passed.

In October we identified that the water supply to The Old Foresters site was not only still connected and being used but that no water charges had been paid in over 10 years. There was a substantial leak from this supply causing flooding to the footpath. As a result the connection was terminated. We have also pressed EFDC to take action.

TBAG continue to actively work with the National Organisation of Residents' Associations (NORA), the London Green Belt Council (LGBC) and have supported the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE).

Our work will continue throughout 2014 and with your support we hope to prevent over development of our beautiful village and its special character.

We are also working towards producing a new, improved website during the coming year.

I would again thank the entire Executive Committee and those who regularly attend our meetings and give support. Our members give up their time and efforts to keep our village safe. The team is pro-active, focused and as active as ever. We are an open book and always welcome new members.

Thank you all.

David McKELVEY

Chairman

For further information about current issues please visit the TBAG website www.theydonbois-actiongroup.co.uk and Follow @TBAActionGroup on Twitter or attend our monthly meetings.