

Theydon Bois Action Group

PROTECTING THE VILLAGE OF THEYDON BOIS

CHAIRMANS REPORT 2011

Theydon Bois Action Group

Theydon Bois Action Group (TBAG) was set up in 2005, to protect the village and its surrounding area. Throughout 2011, that task has proved to be any on-going and important function. Unscrupulous developers continue to wage a war of stealth in trying to develop areas within the village and surrounding area. TBAG has continued to lead the fight to stop them.

TBAG consists of dedicated and committed villagers who believe passionately in protecting our beautiful village. It has been interesting to watch TBAG and its members grow and become the very professional organisation that it now is. We are all very proud to have been involved in that development and process. Without doubt the group is now recognised as an integral part of the village and a 'champion' to prevent further environmental damage. I often wonder if the Blunts Farm debacle would ever have taken place if TBAG had been in existence at that time.

I think that it is important at this point to highlight the outstanding work of our former Secretary Jacqueline Dodman, who recently moved from the village. Jacqueline was a founding member of TBAG and has worked tirelessly over the years to protect the village. Her professionalism,

commitment and dedication have often gone unnoticed by the vast majority of the village. She was a driving force in TBAG and we would all like to recognise her efforts on behalf of TBAG and the village as a whole. Jacqueline will be sorely missed. I would also thank all those no longer with us who have contributed so much.

For TBAG, 2011 was a busy year with repeated attempts by developers to develop the green belt land at Blunts Farm and with concerns over the call for gypsy and travellers sites.

An immense amount of work has been undertaken by the team and it has again led to considerable success. Often success can be measured in not what can be seen, but in what cannot. The Green Belt surrounding Theydon Bois remains as it did in 2010. That is in no small part the result of TBAG's efforts.

Some of the major events of 2011 include; the application for a commuter car park by Parkeng Ltd at the site of the Old Foresters club house and land, the dual applications for a foster care home and ancillary buildings and more recently the proposed camp site for the 2012 Olympics, the enforcement notices at Blunts Farm and the related land-bank scams, applications for the building of dwelling houses on the site of the Blunts Farm House, subsequent to the cannabis factory being uncovered, applications for telephone masts at the village hall and more recently on land adjoining the village at Thrifts Hall Farm. There have also been a myriad of other relevant planning matters and issues that TBAG have reviewed and taken necessary action.

The issue of the traveller's sites has for the present been resolved by central Government. TBAG have compiled a substantial defence case should the matter resurrect itself at any stage. We remain vigilant.

The continued war of attrition waged by the owners and 'unscrupulous' developers of Blunts Farm has seen further applications and appeals throughout 2011. TBAG has submitted an immense amount of evidence for each and will continue to fight to protect the village and green belt. It is of real concern to TBAG that EFDC do not appear to be willing to execute the relevant enforcement notices that we have all worked so hard to achieve. Our MP has joined the 'chorus' of calls for action in relation to these matters and we now await the response of the council.

Significantly, despite our written concerns and evidence submitted; the Epping Forest District Development Control Committee signed off the enforcement notices on Blunts Farm on 19 October 2011. It was interesting to note the alleged change in ownership of the land reported in the local press.

TBAG has continued to build sustainable partnerships with other local residents groups and is a member of The National Organisation of Residents Associations. We have also been active in supporting The Campaign for Rural England in their opposition to the National Planning Policy Framework. We would also thank The Theydon Bois Rural Preservation Society who have often been allies in protecting the village. We would also at this time thank our Member for Parliament has also been a strong ally and has often helped get answers where none were forthcoming.

I have thanked Jacqueline Dodman for her outstanding work but I also think it important to mention the entire Executive Committee and those who attend our meetings and give support. Our members give up their time and efforts to keep our village safe. The team is pro-active, focussed and as active as ever. We are an open book and 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 or attend our monthly meetings.