

◆ Public Health

The downgrading of Queen Mary's Hospital is now well under way. Ellingsworth ward has now been closed for an "indefinite" period reducing accommodation for elderly patients from 116 to 87. Elective surgery, due to be transferred to Queen Mary's hospital will instead be transferred to Princess Royal Hospital in Farborough. The South London Health Trust described this as an "interim" measure. At the same time, health chiefs have confirmed that the A & E department which has been closed to overnight emergencies is unlikely to be re-opened. A report by the Audit Commission revealed that Bromley, Queen Elizabeth and Queen Mary hospitals were awarded its lowest possible score for financial management with the hospitals being £4.9 million, £5.4 million and £11 million in the red respectively. This appears to contradict the information given by other parties claiming that most of our hospital's debts were repaid. The government is at last considering abolishing **exorbitant hospital parking fees** referred to by many as a "Tax on the Sick". It is to be hoped that this disgraceful practice is abolished before any of Sidcup's health centres relocate to Queen Mary's.

◆ Traffic and Transport

The poorly publicised public consultation on **traffic modifications in Station Road** has been completed. Despite representations from the public, commuters young, old and infirm will have an uphill walk to relocated bus stops outside the solicitors at Alma Road junction so that car drivers can access Tesco! Bexley's Chief Engineer has explained to us that the retention of the bus stop in its current position would prevent the introduction of the much needed pedestrian phase in the Station Road/Longlands Road junction. Referring to a £3.4 million grant to Bexley Council by Transport for London, London's Transport Commissioner said "Bexley has identified a range of small and large-scale projects which will..... improve the environment and promote greener forms of travel"! We feel that encouraging the use of a car for local shopping is neither green nor environmentally friendly. Bexley Council has at last reconstructed the £20,000+ **speed table in Elm Road** so it complies with the law and neither jolts motorists nor causes unnecessary disturbance to neighbouring properties. The local residents had to measure the distance of their properties from the road in order to prove that the existing table did not comply with legislation.

Please access and Bookmark our Web site for latest News, Upcoming Events, Current and Archived Newsletters* and Useful Contacts* (* Members only)
www.sidcupcommunitygroup.co.uk

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Web Site Launched!

No. 13 Feb-Mar 2010

Sidcup Matters

The Newsletter of the Sidcup Community Group

No. 13 Feb - Mar 2010

Our Newsletters are distributed to members and summarise local issues, activities of the Group and items of news from a number of sources including the local press. If you have received a sample copy and wish to be kept informed, let us know. Please pass this onto a friend or neighbour when you have read it. We apologise for any duplication of content if you are an email subscriber. Please bookmark our web site for latest news of the Group. We do not regard this as junk mail or spam but let us know if you disagree.

The **Sidcup Community Group** was established in 2002. We are an independent and apolitical group receiving no Council support. If you wish to be kept informed on Sidcup issues, email or call us:

Email: sidcupcommunitygroup@hotmail.co.uk

Tel: 07092 208302 (message service)

Web: www.sidcupcommunitygroup.co.uk

◆ Headlines & Other News

➤ Bexley Council is consulting on the ways in which the borough can contribute to and benefit from the **London Olympics**. Details can be found on www.bexley.gov.uk or call 020 8294 6963.

► Compare and Contrast the story of **two local men**. The first, **Aidan Howell**, 19 born in Sidcup. He was a rifleman in the 3rd Battalion and was killed by a roadside bomb whilst on patrol in Helmand Province on 28th December. His family are understandably devastated and told Newsshopper that he may be remembered as a hero now but to his family and everyone who knew him, he was already a hero.

The second, **Anjem Choudary**, a British born cleric and trained solicitor from down the road at Welling. He had been organising a now cancelled march through Wootton Bassett to protest at Britain's "murdering" soldiers in Afghanistan. Whatever one feels about the rights and wrongs of our presence in Afghanistan, our brave soldiers there are doing their best to root out terrorists who, with our porous borders could directly or indirectly threaten every citizen in the UK.

Apart from the added grief which such disgusting protests would have caused to the bereaved families, the most disgraceful aspect of this was revealed by journalists at Bexley Times who found that Choudary makes more money from British taxpayers than brave soldiers like Aidan receive as a salary. According to the Times, Choudary's £25,000 in benefit claims is £8,000 more than the take-home pay of our soldiers. Choudary has now placed an additional burden on taxpayers by receiving round-the-clock police protection following his provocative threats. No further comment is necessary.

We would like to acknowledge the initiative of Andi's Hair and Beauty saloon in Main Road who has raised £800 for Help for Heroes (0845 673 1760). Please also be aware of SSAFA who do so much for the families of the fallen from South East of London – 020 8639 0495 www.ssafa.org.uk

◆ **Crime and Policing**

Concerned that police are needed to protect the public from school children outside McDonalds in Sidcup and the pedestrianised area of Bexleyheath Broadway, the Group's secretary took a photograph of the depressing scenes. He was immediately approached by the police, questioned about his motives and warned that prior permission was required under new anti-terrorist legislation. Meanwhile, individuals are learning how to blow up planes. If you are a photographer and have been subject to harassment, report it to **AP Rights Watch**. www.amateurphotographer.co.uk

Bexley's 21 Safer Neighbourhoods Teams will be organising visits to every residential household in the borough in the "**Street-a-Week**" initiative..

A member of their team will introduce themselves to residents and listen to any concerns you may have about crime and anti-social behaviour. They will take this opportunity to provide crime prevention advice and information.

There are 1,850 streets in Bexley, an average of 88 streets per ward and the initiative may take over 12 months to complete. The team will always be in full uniform and in possession of appropriate identification.

Our enquiries with the police indicate that the Crown Prosecution Service has decided to take no action against the individual arrested after a **cannabis factory** was found in the premises of the Snooker Club.

◆ **Planning, Licensing and the High Street**

A plan for the management and conservation of **The Manor House** has been adopted by Bexley Council. Specialist consultants have identified 15 management and maintenance guidelines. English Heritage would have to be consulted before any major alterations or repairs could take place. The council has confirmed that it has dropped controversial plans for its sale. Our gratitude goes to John Mercer of Bexley Civic Society.

An application has been submitted for the building of 23 flats and 14 houses on **the Toyota site Rectory Lane / Craybrooke Road**.

The fact that **Athena House** was approved on appeal will not stop us asking why such an intensive development was approved with what appears to be totally inadequate lift provision. We are still asking why?

With a town-centre Supermarket allowed to flaunt planning regulations and the last of the town's free parking closed down by the Council, the last thing the High Street needs is the closure of a family business like **Simply Frames** by the action of criminals who will almost certainly walk away scot free.

The London Assembly is to review the measures designed to **restrict the expansion of supermarkets**. According to their figures, £7 out of every £10 spent in the High Street is taken by supermarkets which "choke the life out of small shops and local high streets". They return 5% of turnover back to the local community compared with 50% from independent retailers.

◆ **The Environment**

If you live in Sidcup, you would have heard the **fireworks on Christmas night**. We respect the rights of those who enjoy this form of celebration but wonder how many other days will be earmarked.

Very few residents clear **snow** from the pavements outside their houses these days. Well, the nattily named Institute of Occupational Safety and Health have come up with a good alibi. They claim that if a member of the public was lead to believe that a pavement was safe and then slipped, legal action could result. This is absolute bunkum.

Members who expressed concern about the tagging of trees in **Bexley Woods** will be interested to learn that it was the intention to coppice these trees but Friends of **Bexley Park Ancient Woods** are campaigning against this. For more information see www.fobpaw.co.uk.

Fight the Flights has been given approval to mount a legal challenge against the expansion of **London City Airport** which would impact directly on Sidcup residents. <http://londoncityairportfighttheflights.blog-spot.com>

◆ **Membership, Publicity and Administration**

The Group has **7 Committee, 67 Full and 11 Associate** members.

The Group has applied to Bexley Council to become a Formally Constituted Representative Organisation. If you are reading this Newsletter and are not yet a member, **please join us**. The Council will pay more attention to organisations which have a substantial local membership.

Our **web site** was launched on January 1st making communication with our members more efficient as well as encouraging new members.