

# HORNCHURCH RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

*Established 1933*

**ELM PARK, HACTON, HYLANDS  
AND ST ANDREWS WARDS**

# FOCUS



see page 21

**June 2020**



Email: [info@hxra.org](mailto:info@hxra.org)

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**MEMBERSHIP: £4 PER YEAR (1 Jan to 31 Dec)**

## Corona Virus

Well the lock down is at long last beginning to ease and things are starting to get back to what use to resemble normality, although things may never get back to how they use to be. Maybe that is a good thing. Whatever happens, the world will take time to recover. Whether you are eight or eighty, you would not have experienced such a period and hopefully you will never have to do so again, but who knows if there will be a second wave of the virus.

Naturally, for those of you who may have lost someone during the pandemic, we offer our sincere condolences on your loss and would remind you that there are people out there to help and support you during this difficult time.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank all those key workers in the health and social care sector for their devotion and dedication putting their own lives at risk to help others. We salute you.

But we must not forget that there were many other men and women working during the pandemic such as the police and fire service, the armed forces, supermarket workers, postal workers, council workers, transport workers, drivers, volunteers, waste collectors, teachers, bank staff to name, but a few who also did their bit to help us all. We thank you too.

During the crisis we saw some great examples of our local community pulling together to help each other. This is the very ethos that the Hornchurch Residents Association believes in. Sadly, we also became aware of those people who tried to take advantage of the situation and harm others. For them we only have the deepest contempt.

Given the unique nature of this virus, it was always going to be difficult for the new Government to handle and many Ministers have admitted that in hindsight there were many things that it could and should have done better.

During the lock down Leaders from the three main Residents Association Groups were regularly in contact online. We collated questions and put forward suggestions to the Council Leader and Chief Executive. A number of issues that were included on the council's daily e-mail bulletin were as a result of suggestions from our Groups and our pressure enabled the resumption of the green waste collection and the re-opening of Gerpins Lane earlier than would have been the case if left to the Administration.

It was our view that during the crisis, we would play our part in helping the local council and our communities in whatever way that we could. Sadly, not everyone was of a like mind.

Our April FOCUS magazine arrived just as the lock down began and we debated whether it should be distributed or not. On balance we decided to go ahead as we felt that it was very important at a time of crisis to be in touch with our members and our local communities.

With our magazine, you may recall that we enclosed a "Here to Help" leaflet as we were very concerned that many members, particularly the elderly and the vulnerable who may not have access to the internet, would be left out or left behind by the council through a lack of information. We invited our members to pass on our leaflet to any local friends or neighbours who may not normally receive FOCUS. This was well received by members and many contacted us for help for themselves or others.

However, strangely two people (although it may have been the same person) did not agree with us and complained to both the online newspaper The Havering Daily and the Public Health Director at Havering Council.

We are pretty convinced that this was a set up by the Tories as once again we had demonstrated that we were ahead of the curve and they were not.

Strangely an e-mail from the Public Health Director only to Councillors appeared later in the day on the Havering Daily website. How could a member of the public have access to such e-mails?

For those playing politics during the crisis we can only look upon you with utter contempt.

Eventually, the council woke up to the fact (as we had identified) that there were many residents out there who would have been excluded from helpful online information and therefore they produced a "Good to Know" booklet. We were fully supportive of this as for us it was important that nobody was left out or left behind. We put people first, not party politics.

The after effects of the crisis in terms of the social, financial and economic impact will no doubt last long after the health crisis has run its course, so once again, if you need any help, support or advice, please do not hesitate to contact us.

No doubt the Chief Executive of the Council will be reviewing what went right or what could have been done better or quicker, so if you have any comments, please feel free to let us have them, so that we can ensure that these are feed into the review which will no doubt take place over the next few months, along with a detailed review of council finances.

## Hylands Ward Update

Jody Ganly

**Harrow Lodge Park** - On one of my family walks in the lockdown period, we decided to go for a stroll through Harrow Lodge Park. Unfortunately, there were lots of people feeding bread to the ducks and swans. There are signs up to say not to feed them bread, but if you want to, seeds and pulses are a better alternative. I was also a little dismayed to see that the water fountains that aerate the lakes were not working and have written to the Parks Manager to find out why this is. As the weather is warming up I am fearful that the problem of botulism in the water will return, especially with the amount of bread being thrown in!



A concerned resident asked me to look at the Mulberry Tree in the Sensory Garden. They told me that they feared the tree may have been damaged when it was dressed up in lights for the Christmas fundraising event last December. The tree is over 150 years old and I do believe, in the process of having a preservation order put on it. I am pleased to report that when I had a look at it, there were lots of new buds coming out.

**St. Leonards Way/Wallis Close update** - The road at this junction was reported to the Council, as a resident had complained that it was really uneven and that the road as you drive over it, made your car swerve. We received this reply from the Council:

*"I have been advised by the area liaison officer that they have inspected this location and have confirmed that there are no Cat 1 defects present. The Officer has advised that they are only addressing Cat 1 defects at present, so if this particular location worsens, then please let us know and we will re-inspect. In the meantime, this location will be monitored on future inspections."*

**Roneo Corner** - We asked for an urgent order to be raised to fix the poor state of the road, this being the section of road where you swing round Roneo Corner behind the back of the carpet shop heading towards Elm Park. A resident had reported to us that cars were swerving into the next lane to avoid the potholes that had opened up. I am pleased to report that this was quickly inspected and repaired.

**Faded Road Markings Shelley Avenue/Upper Rainham Road** - We asked back in February if the faded road markings could be repainted and were told by the Council that their budget had been allocated for the year. We passed the lorry repainting the road markings on the Upper Rainham Road in April as they were being re-done. Hurray!

**Hylands Park** - During the lockdown period you may have noticed that the parks were not looking as groomed as they usually are. One resident got in touch to say it 'lifts the soul' when you walk round a well looked after park, and I must say that I agree. Unfortunately, the grounds maintenance teams that cut the grass over all the Council Parks are running on staff shortages as some staff were self-isolating. The Parks Manager told me that all grass cutting had been suspended and that staff were just maintaining bin emptying and keeping grass sight lines maintained. I am sure when we all get back to work the Parks will once again be looking glorious.

## Elm Park News

## Councillor Stephanie Nunn

As we all try to slowly get back to our daily routines, I thank all those who have helped others, many putting their own lives at risk. I thank all those who show kindness and tolerance to others, many people have been and still are isolated. Just a thought, have you lit a bonfire during the day and made neighbours' washing smell of smoke? I know Gerpins Lane tip was closed, but this was a decision by East London Waste Authority in view of the Government's directive only to make essential journeys. Has your dog been barking for hours on end? These and other issues are all a bit harder to deal with when so many people are working at home.



I would like to thank the staff of Havering Council, many of whom have been working long hours, seven days a week being redeployed in essential areas that they have never worked in before. I ask you the residents to be patient as we try to get answers for your queries as you may have to wait longer than usual for an answer. We are advised that

*“All normal grounds maintenance services have currently been suspended leaving enough resources to enable officers to respond to any emergencies, management of sight lines caused by roadside grass verges and shrubs and continue to clear litter in parks.”*

I can't wait to get the flower beds etc tidied up in Elm Park, we have managed to water the little train area while out on our healthy walks, but there are lots of weeds to clear.

I'm pleased to report the give way lines I asked for at the junctions of **Finucane Gardens** with **Bader Way** and **Penrith Crescent** have been installed. However, items requested on residents' behalf and still outstanding as I write this article are:

**Eyhurst Avenue** – proposed extension to the existing 'At Any Time' waiting restrictions. To bridge gap between existing waiting restrictions and the footway parking bays and to ensure that vehicles do not park opposite each other hindering access.

**Freeborne Gardens** – proposed ‘At Any Time’ waiting restrictions on the junction of Freeborne Gardens and Mungo Park Road and also in the turning area outside numbers 13 and 14. This is to ensure access is maintained at all times.

**Harrier Close** – proposed ‘At Any Time’ waiting restrictions around the junction in Harrier Close to improve road safety and sight lines.

**Locke Close/Simpson Road** – proposed ‘At Any Time’ waiting restrictions on the junction to improve road safety and sight lines.

**St Andrews Avenue** – proposed join up of existing ‘At Any Time’ waiting restrictions on the junctions of Carnforth Gardens and Windermere Avenue. This is to ensure access is maintained following many reports of vehicles parking on the odd number side of the road causing access issues.

**Woodcote Avenue** – proposed extension to the existing yellow lines at the junction with St Nicholas Avenue.

All residents affected by the above proposals should receive a consultation letter.

**Hornchurch Country Park** – As one of the local ward councillors and a member of the Friends of the Park I was pleased to write a letter in support of Havering’s application for funding to add educational improvements to the park. The plans are:

1. To create a new nature trail to engage families in the natural and built heritage of the park. This could be in the form of pictures, small sculptures or plaques of a character to lead you around the park, with a military or nature based theme.
2. To make improvements to the popular existing trim trail (outdoor fitness equipment) throughout the park, for all to enjoy.
3. To improve the educational facilities in the park, the dispersal pen air raid shelter could be opened up, restored and made accessible for all to enjoy and learn about our local wartime history and RAF heritage. The aim is to be able to take groups of children and other visitors inside, to experience what it was like in the war. To enable this would need the removal of the concrete filling in the mound, restoration and rebuilding to stabilize, adding interpretation boards and display cabinets for artefacts.

Another item to do with the park which has been drawn to my attention are holes appearing in the fields to the right of Albyns Farm. Some of the holes have been filled in, not very well and others not at all to the dismay of a resident who twisted her ankle there. It has been suggested metal detectors may be in use there?

### **Travellers:**



Sadly just before the lock down we had 3 travellers’ vans arrive at a piece of land near the chase. Once again the travellers broke locks to gain entrance, and before we could get them evicted they had left loads of mess. Of course due to the limited numbers on the council team it has taken some time to get the rubbish cleared, fortunately the area is fenced and gated now so no one will be going into this area. We will be on the council’s case to get this cleared, but as you can see from the photo this rubbish did not come from three caravans. It appears to be general rubbish

clearance, people paying for it to be taken away. They may have been offered a cheap price for this service, but it isn't cheap as we the residents of Havering all pay in the long run.

**Kestrel Close and Peregrine Close** – We have had complaints about vehicles, vans in particular blocking Kestrel Close and in some cases stopping the refuse vehicle gaining access. We have had complaints from Peregrine about residents parking over other residents' drives. Back entrances with dropped kerbs are there for the residents of the house and their guests to park and no one else. We recently asked for letters to be sent to residents in Dove Walk reminding them of this, if you feel letters would help, please let us know.

**Tangmere Crescent:** After complaints about dog fouling I contacted Environment Services who advised that street cleansing is carried out every 10 days here. However, in view of my request, the area will now be inspected on a weekly basis and 20 new dog stickers have been installed.

**Tuck Road** – This road is in urgent need of the white lines being repainted on the footpath for parking. I do not like to hear of residents receiving fines because it is not clear where the lines should be. If you have clear evidence of white lines, you are able to appeal and should be successful.

**Havering Council Tenants** – A couple of issues raised by residents recently. A resident in Bader Way advised me that he had received a letter from a contractor, Armstrong York to advise him he must have an asbestos check in his flat. He rang me because he had already had one in October, so he thought it was suspicious. When I contacted the Housing Department I was advised:

*“A new programme has been put in place with Housing Services and surveys are being carried out to ensure that we (Havering) are in line with all compliancy needs.”*

A second (senior) resident contacted me about their gas safety check. These have fallen behind because it is difficult to carry them out when people are self-isolating. In fact government advice on the [gassaferegister.co.uk/help](http://gassaferegister.co.uk/help) advises that for the extremely vulnerable and self-shielding, gas safety checks should be carried out after the isolation period has ended. The resident had contacted the contractor direct and advised that he and his wife were self-isolating and had not been out of their house since the start of the lockdown. He was advised it was ok to delay the test. He then received a very strongly worded letter from Havering Council which suggested his front door would be broken down within 2 days to gain entry. If only they had liaised with the contractor first, they would have prevented the terrible shock and anxiety the letter caused the resident.

I was also contacted by a resident who received a letter from Havering Council Electoral Registration Services asking for the resident's National Insurance number. As she wasn't sure if it was a scam or not she passed the letter to me and I looked into it for her. Sadly her husband had passed away causing a change to the council tax account which triggers an automatic letter from electoral registration. I phoned on her behalf and as she was already on the electoral roll and not a new resident, no further action needed to be taken and the letter could be destroyed.

Finally, a thought for all the charities that have been prevented from carrying out all their various fund raising activities, many are in deep trouble so please help them out if you are able to. Thank you so much.

**Hornchurch Station** - During the lock down, I had a conference call with two members of staff from Havering Council to try and move improvements to the station up the agenda, as frankly it looks rather tired to say the least. It is hardly a great gateway to Hornchurch.

Whilst I understand in the current financial climate that major improvements such as a lift is probably a pipe dream (we have tried previously), but surely a lick of paint to make the place look and feel more inviting is not out of the question. We shall see what council colleagues can do. Hopefully, they can persuade Transport for London (TFL) to make some small, but noticeable improvements.

Talking of TFL, I recently read a report that complaints about their service were up 62% over a three year period. I must say that I am not surprised by this news in light of my experience of dealing with their Customer Services. This is certainly an area that the Labour Mayor of London needs to improve.

As many of you are aware, the former club down the side of the station has been sold and there are plans for a number of flats. We have spoken to the developers on a few occasions to try and get the development the best that it can be, although unfortunately both Labour and the Conservatives have stacked all the cards in favour of developers to build as much as they can even in small areas.

If there is one thing that politicians should learn from the Coronavirus is the dangers of creating high rise, high density developments with little or no green space.

Hopefully, now that the lock down is out of the way, we can have further discussions with the developers to ensure that there is minimum impact on those houses in Kenilworth Gardens that have the area in question at the end of their gardens and hopefully, monies from the development can improve the configuration and layout of the area in front of the station.

Prior to the lock down, the graffiti boys/girls were out doing their worst leaving their mark so to speak on the bridge. Fairly quickly we got this blight removed, only for it to be replaced, but in a different colour. At the time of writing, the walls on the bridge are thankfully graffiti free. Please always let us know if you ever see graffiti in your area, so we can get it removed.

**Road Markings** - Somewhat surprisingly contractors were out and about during the first part of the lock down re-painting various lines on the road that were badly faded.

There are certainly more to do, so if the lines in your road are particularly faded, please let us know about them, so we can get them added to the next batch of roads to be re-painted.

**Bushes/Hedges** - During the lock down, the schedule for cutting of bushes, hedges and indeed grass verges was generally abandoned and only those areas where overgrown bushes/hedges were causing sight line dangers were attended to by the council. It will certainly take a while to get things back on track, but if there are any areas you feel need to be attended to as a priority, please let us know.

**Subs** - Just a gentle reminder for those members who have not yet paid their subs for this year. Don't forget you can now pay your subs quickly and easily online. Several hundred members have used this method for the first time this year. For full details, go to our website [Hxra.org.uk](http://Hxra.org.uk).

One member with a surname of McGraw has sent me a cheque, but unfortunately there were no details of the home address. If this was your cheque, would you kindly contact me.

**Suttons Lane Shops** - Many members will be aware rainwater often hangs around on the footway by the shops near Winifred Avenue. I raised this with the council as it is dangerous.

The council established that the reason why the water did not drain away properly was because there was a collapsed pipe which needed fixing. Work has now been completed by the council and therefore I would hope the water will now properly drain away, although since the work has been completed there has been no appreciable rain, so I cannot confirm yet if the problem has been solved. Fingers crossed it has.

**Springbank Avenue** - Following the building of a new dwelling at the end of this road, the circle which contained plants and bushes was demolished as per the original planning permission granted over twelve years ago.

Rumours seemed to have circulated that the circle had been demolished in order to create a through road into Wendover Way. This was not part of the original plans that were approved by the council and nothing has been submitted to the council since to try to amend this. If plans were submitted for such a change we are sure many locals would object, as would I.

I must say personally, I am pleased that the circle has gone as it has been a location over very many years where young people use to gather and often leave a considerable amount of litter and other debris creating additional work for the council. For the council the removal of the circle has also meant there is now a little less maintenance work needed for bushes and hedges on the Estate.

**Tory Resignation** - I and my colleagues have received comments from some members that we appear to be very anti-Tory. Given the fact that when I first got involved with local politics I was working with the Conservative MP for Romford and later on became a Conservative Councillor, the comments do not really stack up as far as I am concerned.

Three years within the Conservative Group and the things that I saw at a local level made me realise this group was not for me and back in 2005, I resigned from the Conservative Group and then left the employment of the Member of Parliament, as he was moving his local operation to London. I did not fancy the daily commute to Westminster.

During the time when I was a Cabinet Member within the Conservative Group, I had always got on well with Residents' Group Leader, Barbara Reith (now Matthews) and liked the philosophy behind the Residents' Association which is why I accepted an offer to join the Hornchurch Residents' Association in 2006 and have never regretted the decision to be part of it.

Since being a Hornchurch Residents' Association Councillor we have had three Conservative Leaders of the Council and personally I have had a good relationship with all of them, but that cannot be said for the current one.

One of Damian White's first actions as Leader was to halve the Opposition Leader's allowances for no other reason than he can.

Later he offered to put mine back as he wanted to work more consensually with me which is fine, but when I told him that as Leader of the Opposition I would still continue to challenge, scrutinise and hold his Administration to account, suddenly the offer to return my allowance to the original amount was voted against by his Administration. Clearly, his idea of consensual

working was to support him whatever he was doing. I would be failing in my duty as Leader of the Opposition if I did that.

Allowances should be based upon the role and responsibilities that a particular councillor undertakes, not used as a bargaining tool.

Recently, changes to the Councillor Allowance Scheme were put forward by his Administration so Opposition Leader allowances were reinstated to their original 2018 level, but Leaders had to positively opt-in to receive it. No other councillors had to do this. Although it cost me £7,000 plus, I told the Council that I would not be opting in.

I am surprised that council officers did not find this proposal discriminatory, but then increasingly opposition groups appear to not only have to fight the Conservative Leader, but also what appears to be clear bias against us from Council Officers. They should be neutral like civil servants should be.

Personally, I think they are fearful of Damian, as he would have no hesitation in getting rid of officers whatever it costs. He has done it before.

Recently, a Conservative Councillor and former Chairman of the Hornchurch & Upminster Conservative Association no less resigned from the Conservative Group in the Town Hall because of Damian's culture of fear, bullying and dictatorial ways. These are not my words, but the words of former Conservative Councillor, Bob Perry, although given my personal experience of Damian over the past two years, I can see why such words have been used.

As colleagues of mine will tell you, I predicted that when our former Councillor, Sally Miller, left us to join the Tories a year ago that she would become Chairman of the Crime & Disorder Committee.

Following the resignation of Bob Perry, Cllr Miller has indeed now taken over the Chairmanship of the above Committee and has been well rewarded for her troubles and some say disloyalty to many voters in Elm Park.

**Suttons Lane Road Improvements** - Just as the lock down was coming into force, works on the crossing area opposite the shops near Randall Drive were nearing completion. The aim of the changes was to try and ensure larger vehicles such as buses were not being obstructed from passing the pedestrian refuge because of parked cars that were sticking out.

In addition, a new pedestrian refuge was installed opposite Sainsbury as residents were finding it increasingly difficult to safely cross the road at this point.

I have received a couple of concerns about the works that have been completed. If you have any too, please let me know as soon as possible.

### **And finally, we need your help**

Do you have 30 or so minutes spare each month to deliver FOCUS to our members in South End Road between the bridge and the junction with Coronation Drive/Maybank Avenue. If you do, please let me know.

**St Andrews**

**Councillor Paul Middleton**

Welcome back everyone. It was strange not writing a piece for the best part of two months. We rely on our small army of deliverers to get the magazine out to the readers each month. While we have been in 'lockdown' we (the executive) agreed it was not right to ask our people to use their allowed exercise time to deliver for us.

While many have been working from home, and key workers doing an amazing job carrying on, it has shown me how many people we rely on, each and every day for a near to normal life. I hope that once this is all over, that lessons will have been learnt, that not so much is taken for granted and perhaps, just perhaps people will view everyday life in a slightly different/more positive? light.

I for one will cherish the moments with friends and family a little more. I will appreciate that I can pop out to a local shop at the drop of a hat, that I can pop into a café or pub with a friend. There is much I have missed, and which was accepted as normal everyday life. I imagine this is the same for many.

Work has continued while the lockdown has been in place, while my own business has gone very quiet, I have been kept reasonably busy with calls and emails from residents requesting help and reporting issues. The council business continued to churn through, but it often takes a little longer to get a response let alone an answer.

The gentleman in the mobility scooter on the front cover this month is Mr R Miller. The FOCUS team had the pleasure of meeting Mr Miller a couple of months ago while we were working outside Sainsburys in Hornchurch (late Feb/early March). Mr Miller told us that he was approaching his **100<sup>th</sup> BIRTHDAY** (in May) – we are pleased to be able to report that Mr Miller reached that milestone. What a lovely gentleman. We wish him all the best and congratulations from all of us.

In case anyone is not aware, the Green Bin (garden waste collection) restarted on the 27<sup>th</sup> April for those who get their bins collected in 'Week 1' and from 4<sup>th</sup> May for those who have a collection in 'Week 2'. If you have not already renewed your contract, you can do so now online. By the time you read this I hope the phone lines will also be open to allow you to renew that way as well.

I received a few reports of people receiving a PCN (penalty) for entering Queens Hospital from Oldchurch Road (opposite where the previous hospital stood). Please be aware that you can enter the hospital grounds from Oldchurch Road direction **ONLY** up to the first car park. After that point the roads are for buses and ambulances **ONLY**. There are notices and signposts; there is also an ANPR camera and you will receive a fine if you use this road without authority. Please be aware.

The entrance to Queens Hospital main entrance is accessible through Rom Valley Way. I would also like to add, if you are paying for a PCN via a cheque in the post, please get proof of postage if not proof of delivery as well. I am trying to resolve an issue where the driver stated he had paid the fine in time, the cheque had not been cashed, but there is no proof of postage. The resident had received the next level of penalty for not paying in the allocated time. (update before we went to print – the council have now found the cheque and the lower amount has been accepted, this case is now closed - phew)

We had an incident of fly tipping near Lidl in Fairkytes Avenue. This was cleaned up very quickly once reported to the council, the foxes had gotten into the bags though and rubbish was strewn across the street. The resident who reported this had noticed some evidence in the rubbish

which may identify the owner. This information was passed on to the council for follow up. The resident received notification that the issue was closed, I am following up to find out if a warning or prosecution was issued.

Many members have paid this year's subscription, we have had a very good uptake on the online payment system. We thank you for that. Usually we would be knocking on doors for the outstanding subscriptions. Due to the lockdown this has not happened so far this year.

If you have not yet paid, can I ask that you do so as soon as possible please? You can use the Online sign up available through the website [www.hxra.org](http://www.hxra.org) under the manage my membership tab. Otherwise, please post or drop your payment off to any of the team members on page 3 of this Focus (cheques payable to Hornchurch Residents' Association). Please make sure you identify yourself and address. If you no longer wish to receive the magazine please let us know.

## Hylands Updates

Del Ganly

Our resident poet, Terry Bickell, also sings the praises of our own deliverers in his poem

*"A Few Thank You's"*

*I would like to say a thank you  
To all those folk out there  
Who help deliver the monthly Focus  
And show how much they care*

*Care about what's going on  
All around our neighbourhood  
Being prepared to give up their time  
Helping us all which is so good*

*A big thank you to the readers  
Spread out so far and wide  
For without their comments and their points  
of view*

*The Focus could have died*

*And last of all a thank you  
To those that run for us  
A wonderful monthly magazine  
With little or no fuss*

*Terry Bickell*

I would like to thank the **Havering Volunteer Centre** for getting in touch with some of our residents, and providing food parcels, pharmacy pick-ups and the much needed chats via the phone calls from all of their volunteers.

At the start of the lockdown and with the fantastic help of our regular deliverers, we managed to get our Focus magazine out with a last minute leaflet, offering support and help for our members and anyone they know who may need it. Several of you contacted us and we were able to pass details on to the HVC, with them ringing most residents within the day, and the residents then ringing us full of praise for the volunteers. A good job all round!

## Elm Park Updates

Councillor Barry Mugglestone

Well folks where do I begin? What a year it's been so far and we are only nearly half way through it. I hope you all are well and by self-isolating you managed to avoid the thing that plagued the world. I hope by now we can start looking by getting back to normal as best as possible, What I did see was a great Elm Park and Hornchurch community spirit, I heard of

people of doing all sorts of good turns for neighbours and friends, so once this virus is over let's continue to speak and help each other out.

**Traffic Lights:** On one of our daily exercise/walks we walked past the traffic lights at the junction of South End Road, Airfield Way and Heron Flight Avenue. We noticed how low one of the lights is and have questioned this as I would not like to see someone hit their head on the light. Also while on the subject of lights, I would like to thank the resident who came and informed us of the damaged light on the newly installed zebra crossing on Wood Lane, somehow a bus hit the column (maybe with the wing mirror) that holds the light. It looks like poor driving as many buses had gone past it before and still are. We cleared the area up as best as we could and then informed the council, the light was replaced in very quick time, so well done to all.



**Yogi News:** Council meetings were suspended for 6 weeks, but we have been listening in to a weekly briefing and some meetings have been conducted by skype. We recently attended an audio skype licensing meeting. An application was made for a license by Yogi News of **Mungo Park Road**. Residents who live above these shops contacted us to protest as alcohol often fuels anti-social behaviour and there are already two licensed premises in that parade of shops, the Co-op and Londis. A petition with over a hundred signatures was also sent into the meeting. The new license request is to sell alcohol until 11 pm every evening, midnight on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. The Co-op shuts at 10 pm and Londis at 8 pm. At the meeting the applicant's agent stated that the granting of a license is not based on need and that is correct. Years ago there were stringent controls on how many shops of a certain type could be in a high street and what they could sell and when (no greetings cards on Sundays for example). Now it is completely different, many shops sell alcohol which of course brings in tax in the form of duty for the Government. Also in Mungo Park Road I reported to TfL that the side of bus stop "W" by Freeborne Gardens had the side panel off which was now behind it.

**Harrow Lodge Park:** I have reported the missing fence panels in the fence near to a play area in the park, it looks like a gap has appeared to look like a gate way, I am not sure this is right so we are asking for it to be corrected and put back to its correct condition.

Well folks that's all for now, but on my travels during the virus pandemic, I would like to leave one moment with you. A resident spoke to me and said they were very lonely and I thought how lucky I am. So please, if you have neighbours who you know live on their own, take time to speak to them and make sure they are OK, I hope the back end of 2020 is better than the front end.

## **St Andrews News**

## **Councillor Gerry O'Sullivan**

**LOCKDOWN** - By the time you read this article we will be well into lockdown and as yet we are not sure if it will continue for a further few weeks. I hope you and your families are keeping well. We as a family are doing our best to follow the Government's advice on social distancing **AND STAYING AT HOME**. I must admit it has not been as bad as I expected.

Senior management has found me lots of work to do while I have been at home. It's mainly items that I should have done but have not had the time to do since becoming a Councillor. So far, I have cleaned the soffits and gutters, painted the log cabin, retilled the front doorstep and painted the kitchen. I am sure that senior management has created a list of further items that need doing but, as yet she is keeping it to herself. If like me, you are doing a bit of DIY please consider all the risk the work entails and be incredibly careful.

**Hornchurch Town Centre** - I was in Hornchurch Town Centre recently collecting a prescription for an elderly resident. I was sad and concerned by the number of small shops that were closed due the restrictions. These shops are the backbone of our Town Centre and without them we would not have a shopping area that is great to visit and shop in.

We all know that our high streets shops were having a tough time before the lockdown started due to the popularity of online shopping and the council's decision to remove the 30-minute free parking as well as increasing parking charges across the borough. I do hope that once the emergency is over all our residents will join me and make a special effort to support these shops even though it may be a little more expensive than going to the supermarket chains or larger retail outlets.

**Gone Down a Pothole** - While the country remains in lockdown cycling has become a popular pastime as residents are taking the exercise they need. One of the biggest hazards they and car drivers face is the dreaded pothole. They can damage the wheels on your cycle and car but can also cause serious injuries to cyclist and drivers.

Very few potholes are being reported to the council because residents feel it is too time consuming and not worthwhile. Unless a pothole is reported prior to an incident those cyclists or drivers who want to make a claim for damage or injury will unfortunately fail. Reporting potholes is a relatively simple process. If you have a computer, it can be done online just visit the Council website and type in potholes, you will then be redirected to the appropriate area. If you do not have a computer, please let your Ward Councillor know, they will report it for you.

If you wish to make a claim there are a few key steps you need to follow:

- Gather evidence: if it is safe to do so, take photos of the pothole and the damaged caused. Drawing a simple sketch can also be helpful.
- Report the pothole: inform the council or highways agency about the pothole.
- Get repair quotes: include these with your claim. If the repair needs to be carried out immediately, include copies of the receipts.
- Make a claim: include full details of the incident, with date and time.
- Negotiate on cost: you may be able to negotiate any offer you receive but be aware you may not get compensation for extra travel expenses and any inconvenience caused.
- Consider the small claims court: If your claim is rejected and you want to use the court, seek legal advice first, there may be some cost involved.

**Dog Fouling** - I am annoyed to report that with many dog owners being off work due to the lockdown there has been an increase in the number of reports coming in regarding bags containing dog poo being left on pavements and even hanging from trees. If you see this terrible practice in your area can you please report it to the Council or your Ward Councillor as soon as possible.

**Fly tipping** - Once again fly tipping is on the increase since Gerpins lane recycling centre was closed. If you see this happening can you, please also report it to the Council or your Ward Councillor as soon as possible. There is no excuse for this behaviour.

**ONCE AGAIN, PLEASE REMEMBER STAY AT HOME & BE ALERT**

**St Andrews Ward Work**

**Bryan Vincent**

I hope by the time you are reading this some of the Covid 19 restrictions will have been lifted. I am particularly thinking of Garden Centres and some smaller specialist High Street shops all of which could have in place distancing restrictions, making the Lockdown a little less of a burden to bear.

I know the government have been criticised by various newspapers for their initial action (or lack of it) when they first became aware of the Covid 19 pandemic. I understand various groups are calling for a government enquiry into what could have been carried out better. I think it is wrong to apportion too much blame at this stage as we are going through an extraordinary period the likes of which we have never experienced before.

However, some lack of action regarding the restrictions are difficult to understand for instance I recently read that during early/mid-April UK Airports were still operating normally. Thousands of people were arriving daily from Coronavirus hit counties and they were not just UK citizens coming home. All were saying they breezed through security at Heathrow with no testing or quarantine advice whatsoever as if it were a normal working day. All this whilst I am under lockdown. Clearly some questions need to be answered

**War Memorial in Station Lane** - I was recently contacted by a resident regarding the memorial in Station Lane that commemorates an Anti-Aircraft Gun emplacement that was positioned on what was at that time Tennis Courts in Station Lane. The gun was positioned there I understand to protect Hornchurch Aerodrome from attack. The old Tennis Courts were on what is now part of the larger Draper Court complex. I call it a memorial, but it is only a semi-circle of special brickwork on the pavement positioned by the bus stop roughly opposite the new block of flats on the corner of The Avenue. On the adjacent wall there has been for as long as I can recall a small brass plaque with details regarding the history of the gun. Whilst the wooden frame for the plaque is still in place on the wall the actual brass plaque has gone. I recall it being securely fixed to the wooden frame hence I can only assume it has been prized off by someone. What is the world coming to?

I have asked Havering Council if there is a record of the wording on the plaque and if a replacement can be arranged. Obviously, in the current circumstances an answer may take some time but along with I am sure many of you, I would want to see the plaque reinstated.

**Commercial Rubbish Bins on the corner of Appleton Way/Dorrington Gardens Car Park** Once again, the matter of over-spill from these bins has been reported by a resident (Mike) as substantial rubbish is being blown around the car park and onto the street from the bins. It was particularly bad in early April during the high winds at that time. The problem with over-spill from these bins has been ongoing for years. I can recall reporting the problem to Havering Council in late 2018, the rubbish gets cleared, the bins get emptied and the matter gets forgotten till the next time.

However, this time Mike has done some investigating (for which I thank him) and it appears the bins are commercial bins arranged by various restaurants/bars in Station Lane, Onyx, Noor, Sortie and Vertigo. Each use a different contractor to supply/empty their own bin. The problem is that if the bins are left there for more than 24 hours, residents use them (no doubt thinking they are council bins) to dispose of their own rubbish. Mixing orange and black bags together with other rubbish contaminates the load and the contractors are reluctant to empty them

**General** - Despite the lockdown life goes on and whilst your HxRA Focus team continues to resolve, report and monitor various matters or problems that are brought to our attention, these will inevitably during the current restrictions take longer to resolve. For instance, a resident (John) reported a faulty streetlight late March in Hunter Drive, hang on John it will get sorted out soon.