

Past Meetings 16th July 2018 to 7th May 2019

Meeting #16 Tuesday evening 7th May 2019

Walkabout of the Great North Wood within our Neighbourhood Area

Edwin Malins, Great North Wood Project Officer for London Wildlife Trust

guided us around the wooded areas of the proposed Sydenham Hill Ridge Neighbourhood Area, where London Wildlife Trust is working in partnership with landowners

These include:

on the Lewisham side, the woods behind Bluebell Close, and to the east of Hillcrest Estate, directly below the new Wells Park Place development; and on the Southwark side, Sydenham Hill Wood and Dulwich Wood.

We also stopped by the small area of woods in Wells Park; and in the grounds of Countisbury House to look at a locally scarce plant, the corky-fruited water-dropwort (see image 1).

Our focus was on the work being done by the Trust to protect and improve the woods we have in our Area, especially the clearing of evergreen laurel and replacement by deciduous trees and bushes (see image 2); we discussed the rationale for this thinking; there was also a fascinating discussion about ivy, and why the current thinking by the London Wildlife Trust is more or less to leave ivy in place within the woods.

As an emerging Forum we worry about the choice and setting of the built environment; there is a parallel debate about the choice and selection of the wooded environment in our neighbourhood area, guided by the Trust.

We also talked about future possibilities to expand the educational and signage work of the London Wildlife Trust; we asked Edwin to let us see draft text of proposed signage, so we can try to ensure coherence between the way we see the Neighbourhood Area and the way the area will be described in the Trust's new signage.

We talked about future funding for the Great North Wood Project managed by the Trust...the National Lottery Heritage Fund grant for this Project runs out in March 2021.

There is considerable potential for Supporters of SHRNF and London Wildlife Trust to work together..in the first instance, by Supporters joining the London Wildlife Trust:

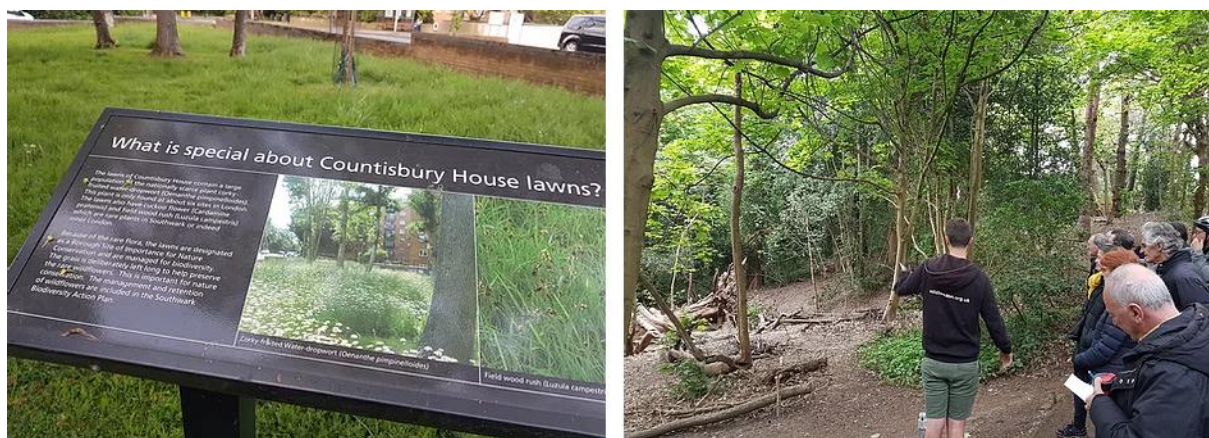
See the link <https://www.wildlondon.org.uk/support-us>

We do ask SHRNF Supporters and those on our mailing list to make donations to, and to become members of, the Trust; please do mention SHRNF in the section in the Trust's application which invites free flow comment on reasons for joining.

Our experience is that the project staff on Sydenham Hill Ridge are excellent guides and wardens.

Monica (Fletcher)

Stephen (Weil)



Meeting #15 Meeting 4th April 2019

Location: Lammas Green Community Hall

Comments on the Lewisham Area Character Study

Background: A copy of the recently published character study is available at:

<https://consultation.lewisham.gov.uk/planning/lewisham-characterisation-study>

This is an important document and you might want to comment, particularly on the section which describes Sydenham Hill on page 178; Consultation is open until the 23/04/2019.

1. There was welcome for the recognition of Sydenham Hill as a distinct area.
2. It was not easy to understand the typology of built forms set out in the plan.
3. The area characterised as “Sydenham Hill” is different from the Sydenham Hill Ridge Neighbourhood Area, which stretches across the border to Southwark; and there is an identity around the ridge area which is also distinctive and recognised. There are particular issues associated with the ridge due to its topography, relative remoteness from other centres and shared character across local authority boundaries.
4. Valuable features of the area noted included:
 1. The way its development was influenced by the presence of Sydenham Common and enclosures
 2. The architecture of the area, and the mix of housing including old cottages, Victorian terraces, Victorian villas, and the postwar mixed development. The range of housing can be read as a potted history of England and is valuable.
 3. The conservation areas and listed and locally listed properties.
 4. The wooded character of the area and its wildlife. This includes not just the valuable wooded areas such as the Hillcrest Estate Site of Importance for Nature Conservation but also the wooded character of the gardens and including important garden trees which are also in part a relic residue of

the Great North Wood whose massing support the biodiversity of the area and its function as a wildlife corridor.

5. Many vistas particularly at the top of the ridge which are visible from wider areas including Southwark and Westwood Hill. The wooded character of the views of the ridge is distinctive.
6. The estate greens and semi-woodland setting of many of the residential housing estates is characteristic of the area and valued.
5. Supporters were encouraged to comment on the plan by the deadline.
6. We were not aware of a similar initiative for the Southwark part of the Ridge area.
7. Monica said she would aim to prepare a draft comment that would reflect these issues. If people sent her photographs of features they felt were characteristic and important in good time (by 15th April) for the

Mais House Redevelopment

1. We heard an update from residents on Lammas Green and Otto Close about the reaction to the City of London's latest round of consultation proposals for the Mais House site and a wide-ranging discussion of the proposals. The meeting was attended by Jack Baker-Merry from the communications company acting on behalf of the City of London who was invited questions. He stressed that the intention was to provide social housing and any open market dwellings were included purely to help finance the social housing provision. He also explained that it was intended that the development would be tenure-blind, so it would not be possible to tell externally which were private and which public dwellings. He also said that the intention was not to remove but to divert the footpath, which would be reprovided as part of the new access road for the terrace proposed for the garage site. He also said that the model provided should be considered only in relation to scale, massing and footprint as other issues such as design, and, for example, the number and position of balconies had yet to be decided. He also said the light study was still ongoing.
2. The meeting heard about a range of concerns, around which there appeared to be a fair consensus including:
 1. the scale of the development (including the height), particularly given the character of the area, the high location of the site and the impact on the streetscape and the wider skyline which was widely visible.
 2. the effect on the conservation area and Sydenham Hill Wood.
 3. the impact on existing communities given the nature of the existing housing stock
 4. the impact on the green spaces and tree loss, including a concern that any new location for the ball park would inevitably be at the cost of green space.
 5. The unsatisfactory proposal for replacement of the footpath.
 6. Traffic, parking and pollution
 7. The distinctive topology, hydrology and geology of the area, which might not be understood from desktop studies, with the history of a need for substantial underpinning for building on the ridge and of land instability.
 8. The impact on Rose Court and on adjoining properties on Kirkdale, as well as on Castlebar.

9. Local infrastructure shortages including schools and GP places. The meeting was reminded that we had heard that local authorities may be reluctant to locate additional schools near the borders of their areas because of the need to share places with people outside the borough.
10. A view that it was inappropriate to try to import an inner city style of build to the area; and that to do so would build in conflict and friction.
11. Concerns about the consultation process, its reach, the clarity of its messages (as people had had what appeared to be conflicting information) and disappointment that the technical studies produced to date had not been shared on the Commonplace site to allow the community time to view and consider these. The meeting asked if along with existing reports a schedule of reports commissioned and the estimated times for completion could be included on the commonplace site. We also heard that some people had difficulty accessing the Commonplace site, and that comments from earlier stages were not visible. Jack assured us that even if earlier comments could not be read they were still considered; and consideration would be given to making a summary of earlier comments visible on the site.
3. There was a feeling that comments on the Commonplace site so far were a fair reflection of community concerns.
4. It was felt that it was important that the existing residents of the Corporation of London's Sydenham Hill estate and residents at the top of Kirkdale directly affected by the development be actively involved in the design process.
5. One supporter mentioned that the neighbourhood area had a higher proportion of elderly residents than Lewisham as a whole; and it was suggested that re-provision of sheltered housing might therefore be appropriate and less in conflict with the existing use of the remainder of the site.
6. You can still comment at <https://sydenhamhill.commonplace.is/schemes/proposals/more-detailed-proposals/details>; it is important that you do give your comments, as the City of London appears to use the number of comments as an indication of the strength of feeling in the Community.

Sydenham Hill Bus Lane Proposals

Background: Southwark's has proposed a Traffic Management Order TMO1819-039 Sydenham Hill regarding bus lane improvements. If you wish to make any comments regarding the scheme, please send them to traffic.orders@southwark.gov.uk, quoting reference Sydenham Hill before 18 April 2019.

A Resident of Bluebell Close talked us through the history of the parking restrictions which we heard had been introduced without proper consultation. He talked about the problems they caused for Bluebell Close residents.

It was noted that the proposals for traffic calming and parking control, and cycle lanes affected a number of different groups in significant ways. There was a proposal that these issues be explored further at a later date.

#Participants: 15

20190412_Monica Fletcher

Meeting #14 Sunday afternoon 24 March 2019

Key Points arising from Walkabout of the new Wells Park Place (“WPP”) development

Neighbourhood Walk

On Sunday afternoon 24 March 2019, a group of about 10 local residents made a walkabout of the new Wells Park Place (WPP) development. The group was joined by Kay Pallaris from Mapping Futures Ltd, an urban planner who has worked on a number of Lewisham Neighbourhood Plans, to share her experiences of neighbourhood planning in the area. While Kay was not there in a formal capacity, her insights into this and other similar developments were helpful in framing a wider discussion about the pros and cons and the multiple ways in which such a development can be interpreted.

Aim of Walk: To learn from Wells Park Development and apply the learning to the evolving design for the controversial Mais House re-development

Key Concerns:

A number of concerns about the WPP development were discussed on the walk, specifically

- + WPP overlooking
- + disrupting the skyline above Longton Avenue/Vigilant Close
- + creating a potential increased risk of flooding further down Sydenham Hill and
- + disruptive impact on animal life (especially bats).

Learning from WPP

- + Kay pointed out that WPP would be seen as fulfilling criteria of ‘good design’, in terms of landscaping; using, on the whole, good quality materials; with the top storey of the 5 storey high Almshouse Tower well set back to mitigate impact of height; underground parking providing opportunity for ensuring cars did not dominate the public realm at ground level; permeable paving; providing balcony outdoor space as well as communal open space.
- + A number of cons were also discussed, in terms of potentially compromised small rooms inside the development (as they appeared from external windows), over dominance of refuse bins in front gardens; the use of cladding material around fenestration which tends to have a shorter lifespan, etc.
- + Additionally, it was clear that there were also differing views in terms of acceptance of style and the level of perceived intrusion caused by the height of the development, as seen from its rear, with the tree line of Sydenham Woodland being a key heritage feature and vista which warrants protection.

Way Forward

- + Kay recommended that Mais House was an ideal project for ensuring a more collaborative, co-design approach to be established with the City of London, to ensure more of the value created by the new development benefits the community.
- + Kay mentioned that the prerequisite to consider the needs of the local people and the need for greater consideration given to what local people felt about a proposed scheme in their neighbourhood was the key message communicated by the Housing Secretary – James Brokenshire at the recent ‘creating communities’ event.
- + Residents felt that the development would create a number of impacts not being currently considered; Kay suggested to keep an eye out for the EIA – Environmental Impact Assessment to be published as part of the application expected later this year, as well as the Transport Assessment which should highlight the impacts and how they are to be addressed by the development proposals.

Links:

+ <https://www.building.co.uk/news/think-of-local-communities-brookshire-tells-housing-developers/5098016.article>

+ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/james-brookshire-unveils-next-steps-to-building-integrated-communities>

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Meeting #13 Tuesday 12th March 2019

from 7.30 pm to 9.00 pm.

Location: The Wood House

Subject: **Understanding what SHRNF Supporters would like from Southwark Council**

Note: 12 Neighbours attended from across the Neighbourhood Area.

Topics to track actively

What do we want from Southwark:

- + Electric vehicle charging points (contact Caroline Pidgeon/ connection of AR)
- + Concern that Southwark may be prepared to agree to excessive height in new buildings applications
- + SHRNF to emphasise to Southwark the importance of defending garden trees as part of a “continuous bank of woodland” in the Neighbourhood Area
- + Why does the Dulwich Wood Conservation Area not include the top of Fountain Drive? Can this absence be amended
- + Concerns regarding leaseholders and tenants on Southwark Estates:
 - + “longstanding priority is for the Council to institute transparency and accountability on service charges...including
 - how charges are set; and how relevant council processes work;
 - proactively rectifying situations the council gets wrong; and

- putting in place demonstrable change in response to things the council gets wrong.
- + Support for the TRA would be useful as well
- + Early information regarding proposed traffic calming
- + Effective and prompt enforcement of planning decisions
- + Effective action against Owners whose actions, or lack of actions, in respect of proposed developments
are depriving their Neighbours of amenity
- + Keep an eye on Crystal Palace Park and Caravan Park development (height and density).

Those who attended the earlier (01/03/19) meeting with Southwark Cllrs Andy Simmons and Caroline Rose expressed great appreciation for the time the Councillors spent talking with us, and the effort they had made to prepare.

Meeting #12 Friday 1st March 2019

from 7 pm to 8.15 pm

Location: T&RA Hall, Lapsewood Walk, Sydenham Hill Estate, SE23 3PL

Understanding the New Southwark Plan: An introduction

Introduction to Impact of the New Southwark Plan and its Amendments (“NSP”) on Sydenham Hill Ridge Neighbourhood Area (“the Area”) : a workshop led by Dulwich Wood Ward Cllr Andy Simmons and Cllr Catherine Rose.

There were two key points regarding the direct impact on the Area of the matters discussed at the Meeting:

On the one hand, the NSP is unlikely to have a major impact on the Area: while the Forum needs to have at least one representative monitor the NSP, the NSP barely affects the Area, primarily because Southwark has large development sites elsewhere, in the north and centre of the Borough. For monitoring Southwark's plans for the Area in general, it is important for the Forum to have a representative participate in the meetings of the Dulwich Community Council (see "For more information" below).

On the other hand, the extension of the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) from October 2021 to the South Circular Road is likely to have a major impact on the Area: for residents, workers and volunteers in the Area, owning a car other than petrol EURO 4, or diesel EURO 6, or electric/hybrid will no longer be viable from October 2021. The extension of the ULEZ raises the urgent issue of public charging points and dedicated parking spaces for charging: the Area has none!

As a Forum, we need to think quickly what to propose to our respective Councils to fill this gap, especially given that local pressure from residents and businesses seems to be important in getting funding for public charging points and spaces.

Moreover, the increased scrutiny of the monitoring of pollution levels before and after the extension of ULEZ is also important for the Forum as a whole to follow closely, to ensure sharing of accurate and comparable information, especially given the level of interest expressed by many participants in the Forum's meetings in environmental and traffic matters. For more information, see:

ULEZ:

<https://tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/ultra-low-emission-zone/cars>

Dulwich Community Council:

"Dulwich Community Council is made up of members of the following electoral wards: Dulwich Hill, Dulwich Village, Dulwich Wood and Goose Green wards. Lewisham residents can attend if there are border issues on the agenda, like the Sydenham Hill speed reduction scheme

Role and functions

1. To promote the involvement of local people in the democratic process and to bring decision making closer to local people.
2. To take decisions about local matters. At present community councils have delegated authority in the following key areas: the neighbourhoods fund, cleaner, greener, safer capital programmes, and highways capital investment.”

Source: <http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=176>

To sign up for the Dulwich Community Council’s mailing list, email Fitzroy at fitzroy.lewis@southwark.gov.uk. You should then receive updates on current consultations and issues affecting the wider local area. **The next meeting of the Dulwich Community Council will take place on Saturday 27th April, starting at 2:30.** You can sign up online on Southwark Council’s planning portal to receive automated notifications about planning applications in your area.

Traffic Management on Sydenham Hill:

Broadly, Lewisham is responsible for the section of Sydenham Hill from the junction with Lordship Lane / London Road to the first junction with Crescent Wood Road. Southwark is responsible for the section from the first junction with Crescent Wood Road to the junction with Fountain Drive. While the two boroughs are broadly responsible for the two main sections of the road as highlighted, both councils are responsible for street cleaning and parking enforcement on their own sides of the road along the complete length of Sydenham Hill. There are also some other minor quirks.

Dulwich Wood Conservation Area:

Proposals to update the Dulwich Wood Conservation Area which would cover much of the Southwark side of the proposed Neighbourhood Forum area are being progressed.

For more information, see

<https://www.southwark.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/design-and-conservation/conservation-areas?chapter=12>

Crystal Palace Park is important to local residents, and councillors work to liaise with Bromley Council to make sure their interests are taken into account in decision about the parkland.

SW

Meeting #11 15th January 2019

SHRNF Meeting

The proposed new forum for Sydenham Hill Ridge Neighbourhood Area held a Supporters Meeting on Tuesday 15th January 2019 at The Wood House pub, and was attended by over 20 of our neighbours from across the Sydenham Hill Ridge Neighbourhood Area, to hear how we have in mind to go about organising ourselves for the first half of 2019; and to have an update on the status of the Forum and Area Designation Application process, and major planning issues which are coming up.

There was a good turn out for the meeting from across the Area.

1. Stephen Weil summarised some of the **reasons the area boundary** was drawn where it was, and why a forum might be useful:

- * the area, unusually for a Neighbourhood Area, has no high street, with the result that normal “high street” facilities and community links are lacking

- * from a housing type point of view, the Area consists largely of a set of post-war housing estates, publicly and privately funded, built to be affordable, in a wooded setting;

- * the Area is split by administrative boundaries, and so has not been planned as a cohesive area. There has been no one to speak for the Area as a whole, leaving a democratic deficit.

- * the Forum could help nurture a sense of community and support people to “take back control”.

There has been **broad interest in the proposed forum from across the area.**

2. He also summarised the **proposals for the next stage** of the process which should aim to prepare for the neighbourhood plan by gathering data (including demographic, social and environmental features) and building an understanding of what supporters want to see in a plan.

He proposed a series of meetings, discussions and walkabouts, during the day time and also at weekends.

A first meeting might **focus on Estates on the Lewisham side of the Neighbourhood Area** where there had been developments or development proposals, including Wells Park Place, Mais House and Hillcrest. The aim would be to understand what **had worked and what hadn't, what were the challenges and what were the issues for a neighbourhood plan.**

There will also be a **walk in the woods in May 2019 led by Edwin Malins**, Great North Wood Project Officer, London Wildlife Trust, to help focus on the environmental features of the area.

He called for volunteers to organise a Sydenham Ridge run; and a curated Instagram site with images of Sydenham Hill Ridge.

3. The meeting thanked Angela Koch, our appointed expert in neighbourhood engagement, for her guidance to date.

4. Angela Koch advised **some general principles on the way forward:**

* It is important to keep up speed/ momentum. The process is always long, try to keep it as short as possible.

* We should aim to submit the application as soon as possible to get started.

* It is good to have a program that mixes work with other activities as this can help draw in a wider range of participants, gets more people involved, and also keep things balanced.

Simply mixing in a social event (eg a meal/ a meeting in the pub/ pub quizzes/ a walk in the woods) can help. Take advantage of Spring / summer.

* We do need to produce a document. Having a rough contents page for people to work to at the outset helps people know where they are going and see progress.

* Design charettes (bringing together the community and professionals) can be productive.

5. The meeting reviewed possible Forum meeting spaces:

* the TNG

* Community gardens in Wells Park Place

* Lammas Green Community Hall

* St Stephens Church Hall.

Other possible activities canvassed included a food festival.

6. People raised **issues they would like** to see the Forum address:

* lack of a GP surgery in the area

* lack of shops

* need for better transport links to local centres and hospitals

- * the area is a green lung. The tree line is important. Development should have regard to the heights of trees

- * air pollution locally is bad. Monitoring of air quality is inadequate; we do not know whether and where there are local air quality monitors, and what is/could be the information delivered by air quality monitors

- * traffic has a major impact on quality of life. Changes elsewhere in the traffic network have an impact (eg if the Area is not included in a low emission scheme protecting other areas, or traffic restrictions in Dulwich divert traffic to the ridge). Helen Hayes, who is MP for part of the Area, could be a useful ally here.

- * plug ins for electric cars

- * parakeets

- * London as “national park city” from 2019 (green roofs, living walls)

- * specific development proposals including urgently Mais House.

Francis recommended we use the forum to map local problems and get them addressed.

7. Comments were invited on the application for designation and the constitution, and Supporters were invited to send any further comments by email. There were **no objections raised at the meeting**, and it was agreed that if any objections were forthcoming in next three days, the application documents could still be amended before submission to Lewisham, our lead Borough, early in the week beginning 21 January.

8. It was suggested we clarify arrangements for liaison with supporters. Monica explained that currently we communicate through the log of activity on the website and by circulating emails. There may be a need for other tools going forward. During the Meeting, the Forum signed up additional Supporters to raise the number of signed Supporters well in excess of the minimum required number of 21.

Meeting # 10 28th Nov 2018

Inaugural Meeting

The proposed new forum for Sydenham Hill Ridge Neighbourhood Area held its Inaugural Meeting on Wednesday 28th November at The Wood House pub, and was attended by over 20 of our neighbours from across the Sydenham Hill Ridge Neighbourhood Area, including Residents from:

Southwark's Sydenham Hill Estate; and Corporation of City of London's Lammas Green in Lewisham in the north east of the Area;

Lewisham Homes's Hillcrest Estate, Bluebell Close and High Level Drive, and neighbouring Vigilant Close; and Fountain Drive and Hogarth Court in Southwark, in the south west of the Area; and

Crescent Wood Road, Great Brownings, Woodsyre in the central section (Southwark side); and Longton Grove in the central section (Lewisham side) of the Areal.

The attendees engaged with presentations by Stephen, Monica and Patsy on the themes of:

- recap what is a Neighbourhood Forum, and the limit of its powers; what is a Neighbourhood Area, and the limit of its boundaries; and other areas of activity in which the Forum might engage around planning consultation, public transport, and absent facilities (Stephen);
- review of what we have learnt as regards key planning (and other issues) in the course of our Neighbourhood Walkabouts and meetings, since we have started talking together in July 2018 (Monica);
- key points in the draft Constitution (Patsy);
- how we see the next 5 months or so, while the applications are prepared and during the subsequent 20 week review process by Lewisham and Southwark; the creation of a repository of information about each Estate within the Area; responding to other relevant issues coming up, in particular the Mais House redevelopment consultation; and outreach to more Residents and Businesses in the Area.

There was opportunity for Q&A, particularly around sources of funding / comments from Participants as to how the emerging Forum is going about its work in engaging the Neighbourhood, and consulting with other interested groups.

Two identified gaps were discussed, related to absence of Residents from Lewisham's Sydenham Hill Estate; and the need for more Committee members.

The draft Constitution was approved by the Meeting in principle subject to clarification, particularly to add a limit to the power of the Committee to take a decision on major projects without prior consultation of Supporters/Members; and to reduce the minimum age for serving on the Committee from 18 to 16 to encourage participation by younger people.

During the Meeting, the Forum signed up additional Supporters to raise the number of signed Supporters well in excess of the minimum required number of 21.

Comments, both in the Meeting and subsequently (via email and in conversation), were very positive. No one is questioning the need for the Forum, nor the logic of the proposed Neighbourhood Area.

The Meeting gave the go-ahead to the preparation of the formal application for both Area and Forum designation, subject to a minimum 3 day review by Supporters/Members of final sets of documents (including amended Constitution) before submission to Lewisham/Southwark.

Thank you to all participants; those who wrote beforehand saying that they could not attend and wished us a successful meeting; those who attended and wrote in afterwards with comments; to The Wood House for their hospitality; and, above all, to Patsy for preparing and leading the drafting of the Constitution.

To see the draft constitution, register interest in membership and/or consider serving on the Committee, please go to <https://www.sydenhamhillridge.london/>

SW

Meeting #9 22nd November 2018

Representatives of SHRF met Southwark Planning Division/ Urban Planner.

We gave a tour of the proposed Neighbourhood Area, starting with Sydenham Hill Estate (Southwark).

We walked on foot along the island site bounded by Sydenham Hill and Crescent Wood Road, including Countisbury House; and looked together at the new Wells Park Place development.

The last part of the tour was by car, given limited time; and took in the southwestern half of Sydenham Hill; Fountain Drive; Sydenham Hill Station; St Stephens; and Westwood Hill.

We focused on the steep slopes; the massed wooded setting; and the affordable housing (or what was, at least in origin, affordable housing) which characterises much of the proposed Area; and we talked about the importance of finding the appropriate balance between these elements.

We were provided with a copy of Southwark's Application Form for a Neighbourhood Area, which is a most useful aide-memoire, whichever of the two Boroughs, in which the proposed Area falls, decides to take the lead.

Southwark's Urban Planner was particularly interested to satisfy himself that the emerging Forum had engagement with Residents of the large Council Estates in the proposed Area.

He offered to help with introductions to appropriate individuals in Southwark Planning for issues related to Southwark's Council Estates; and to help us with data sources.

SW, MF

Meeting #8 1st November 2018

Representatives of SHRF met Lewisham Planners on Thursday 1st November.

Much of the discussion was spent on the Lewisham Planners:

- + Ascertaining that the emerging Forum understands how Neighbourhood Planning works, the duties and limited powers of a Neighbourhood Forum; and the importance of following the specified requirements for application for designation as Forum and as a Neighbourhood Area, including providing names, addresses and emails of the initial Supporters (21 minimum in number, and representative of the neighbourhood Area); and

- + understanding how the emerging Forum is approaching the task of preparing for application for designated status.

There was a specific query from the Planners around the target, published in the SHRF Website, of completing the Neighbourhood Planning process within 30 months, which was viewed as ambitious compared with the experience of other Neighbourhood Forums.

In regard to these discussions, we felt we had been well prepared by our Consultant, Angela Koch.

Two new matters specifically came out of the discussion:

+ Timing: The Borough of Lewisham is in the process of updating the Borough Plan, while the Mayor's Office is in the process of updating the London Plan.

+ Drafts of both the London and Borough Plans are currently expected to be published around the middle of 2019, which would fit well with the proposed timetable of the emerging Forum to start work on its own Neighbourhood Plan in the 2nd half of 2019. This assuming designation status is granted to the Neighbourhood Forum during March-April 2019;

Lead Borough: Lewisham Planners will talk to Southwark Planners about co-ordination, and will guide as to next steps.

Meeting #7 18th October 2018

The seventh Sydenham Hill Ridge Forum (emerging) meeting took place on Thursday 18th October 2018, from 8:00 pm to 9:30 pm, at 75 Sydenham Hill, London SE26 6TQ.

Attendees:

- Monica F from Hill Crest Estate (Lewisham);
- Dora P from Lammas Green Estate (Lewisham);
- Kes H from Sydenham Hill Estate (Southwark);
- Pat T from Longton Grove
- Annette E-D from Longton Avenue
- Sophia K from Crescent Wood Road
- Jay from Crescent Wood Road
- Matthew W from Crescent Wood Road
- Patsy B from Fountain Drive (Southwark);
- Stephen W from 75 Sydenham Hill (Southwark).
- Francis B (CP Neighbours) was a special guest.

Monica chaired the meeting.

Invites were sent to

- all who attended/expressed interest in attending any of the previous 6 meetings, of which the first took place on 16 July 2018;
- everyone who had registered on the mailing list of the website; and
- limited word of mouth.

The Meeting was advertised on the Forum's website (www.sydenhamhillridge.london)

Developments since last meeting

- Meeting with Dulwich Estate on 5th October: Monica and Stephen reported that The Estate management team is supportive of such initiatives, and will assist the Forum where it can with providing the Estate's own guidelines and maps. Under the Estate's Constitution, the Estate cannot be a formal Supporter.
- Scheduling of meeting with Lewisham Planners – November 1st at 11:00. A second person from Lewisham to join Monica and Stephen.
- Funding Offer (conditional) of £2,600 has been received from Neighbourhood Planning to pay for expert advice.

Update on status of major planning applications in the Area: Annette explained background to the withdrawal of planning application for Hill Crest Estate by Lewisham Homes.

Francis B explained, especially to those who had not come to the previous meetings, the function and organisation of Neighbourhood Forums.

Review of draft Constitution – led by Patsy

- A draft of the constitution prepared by Patsy had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Patsy discussed the major elements in the draft constitution which Meeting Participants needed to reflect upon, and invited comments.
- There was discussion, among other matters, around term limits for the Steering Group; and how to ensure that membership of the Forum and the Steering Group is and remains representative of the Neighbourhood Area.

- The following outline timeline was agreed:
 - Comments to Patsy by the end of October
 - If the comments were not too heavy, Patsy would try to have an amended constitution available by 7th November
 - Inaugural General Meeting to approve the Constitution and to elect the Steering Group on/around 30 November 2018.

Next steps

- Second Lewisham resident to join 1st November meeting with Lewisham Planning Officers
- Comments invited from all participants on draft Constitution to Patsy (by end October)
- Individuals interested to serve on the Steering Group to put their names forward
- Review and Expansion of Supporters List
- Inaugural General Meeting to review and approve application to the Lead Borough (subject to satisfactory meeting with Lewisham Officers) to be organised
- Francis B to assist with mapping streets in the Neighbourhood Area with census records

Meeting #6 25th September 2018

For background, please see URL www.sydenhamhillridge.london

The sixth Sydenham Hill Ridge Forum (emerging) meeting took place on Tuesday 25th September 2018, from 8:00 pm to 9:30 pm, at 75 Sydenham Hill, London SE26 6TQ.

Attendees:

- + Monica F from Hill Crest Estate (Lewisham);
- + Will E from Hill Crest Estate (Lewisham);

- + Kes H from Sydenham Hill Estate (Southwark);
- + Lesley and John H from Great Brownings Estate (Southwark)
- + Barry K from Great Brownings Estate (Southwark);
- + Patsy B from Fountain Drive (Southwark);
- + Stephen W from 75 Sydenham Hill (Southwark).
- + Michael A (Forest Hill Society) was a special guest.

Kes chaired the meeting.

Invites were sent to

- + all who attended/expressed interest in attending any of the previous 5 meetings, of which the first took place on 16 July 2018;
- + everyone who had registered on the mailing list of the website; and
- + limited word of mouth.

The Meeting was advertised on the Forum's website (www.sydenhamhillridge.london)

First Half of the Meeting – top priorities for our Neighbourhood: Discussion led by Monica F.

Monica introduced the discussion, by referring to what had been learned from the two Walkabouts (Meetings 4 and 5 reported on the Website).

The following is a summary of points raised by different individuals during the Meeting:

Summary of strengths of the Neighbourhood (in no particular order):

- + The woods – management superior to 30 years ago
- + Massing of woodland
- + Variety of built environment...age, size, type, history
- + Wild life corridor (bats, birds)
- + Park (Wells Park)
- + Near the centre of London, in a green setting
- + New paths through the woods
- + Local people involved in protecting the woods

Summary of top priorities for our Neighbourhood / changes we would like to see (in no particular order):

- + Built environment – new developments should reflect strengths of the Neighbourhood;
- + Transport Links – additional, smaller buses to address “black spots”;
- + Signage – better signposting how to cross the Neighbourhood Area;
- + Signage – description of architectural and railway heritage, Victorian and Modernist..tell the narrative;
- + More facilities for children and young people to play;
- + More Zebra crossings (at eastern side of Sydenham Hill);
- + A second food shop in the Area selling a broader range of healthier food than the single shop in the Area, on Hillcrest Estate;
- + Dedicated cycle lanes along Sydenham Hill;
- + More planting along Sydenham Hill;
- + Space to be more welcoming;
- + Better (=more accessible) medical services;
- + As second camera on Sydenham Hill to reduce speeding.

Funding of improvements:

Michael (Forest Hill Society) explained that

- + improvements can be funded out of allocations of Community Infrastructure Levy paid by developers;
- + a Neighbourhood Area gives the community the opportunity to influence priorities;
- + whatever is proposed needs to be strongly evidence-based.

Second Half of the Meeting: Discussion led by Stephen W: process to apply for Area and Forum designation

For the purpose of preparing Area and Forum applications; draft constitution; application for funding, Stephen pointed to Lee Forum precedent (which had been circulated with the Agenda).

For repository of information about each Estate within Sydenham Hill Ridge Area, Stephen distributed a first working draft (attached).

According to this schedule, there are 30+ identified Estates across the Area.

Stephen recommended that a good test of whether there is sufficient representation across the Area would be whether there was at least one individual involved, in the work of the Forum (emerging), in at least 50 per cent of the 30+ Estates.

On this basis, Stephen expressed concern that we may not yet be completely ready to apply.

There was an alternative view that the Estates which matter most are the larger estates, and if there are gaps, we should ask local councillors for help in identifying individuals.

There was discussion around leafleting the Area and particular Estates. Kes H offered to distribute a flyer together with the Residents Association documentation across Sydenham Hill Estate (Southwark) in November.

Michael A (Forest Hill) suggested quick ways of measuring approximate numbers on the different Estates.

Next Actions:

1. Patsy B (a retired solicitor) offered to draft SHRF Constitution based on Lee precedent;
2. Stephen W to prepare application to Locality for funding to pay our Expert (Angela Koch) and for printing, with application to be reviewed by 2 of those attending this Meeting;
3. Will E and Stephen W to arrange jointly daytime meetings with planning officers of Lewisham and Southwark, and other relevant bodies (such as Dulwich Estate), to discuss:
 1. which Borough will lead,
 2. what are the key points for each of the Boroughs,
 3. whether it is possible to receive automatically information regarding every planning application in the area;
4. All parties to add information to the repository of information about each Estate within the Area, especially contact points;
5. Prepare list of 21 names of individuals prepared to support publicly the application for Neighbourhood Forum and Area designation;
6. Arrange small Walkabout of Fountain Drive area with Patsy;
7. Establish, via Kes, date of circulation of notices across Sydenham Hill Estate (Southwark);
8. Publicise on local online forums (Sydenham forum, Forest Hill forum..)

Purpose and Date of Next meeting:

+ To approve the Constitution after review of drafts.

+ Timing to be fixed once drafts are ready.

Meeting #5 Sunday 16th September

Sydenham Hill Ridge Forum Walkabout 2

Our second walkabout began again at The Woodhouse, passed Wells Park Place, and then saw us once more passing the listed houses at the western end of Crescent Wood Road, but soon led off in a different direction.

This time we continued North. We enjoyed the views from Peckarmans Wood, talked over the noise of the traffic back on Sydenham Hill, and benefitted from the improved paths linking Cox's Walk to Southwark's Sydenham Hill Estate. From there we climbed back up the hill to the roundabout, where we struck slightly left down Kirkdale. Our route took us past one end of one of the Corporation of London's estates, before we struck off into the hidden quasi-rural charms of Mount Gardens estate, where we had a generous invitation to tea and scones in the ambit of a giant sequoia tree. Refreshed, we climbed back to Sydenham Hill, walking through Lamma Green, back past some of the vast Victorian villas, like the Salvation Army building and faintly Gothic Sydenham Hill House, before separating as we came back to the pub.

Some themes that came up as we went:

* the impact of the policies of the Dulwich Estate - were they beneficial? Were they too restrictive? Are they always well enough enforced? How can those affected by them make their views heard?

* how much we value the woodland, and the value of the massing of trees throughout our ridge. We heard that there had been threats to the wooded character of the area at least since the war, and how the trees' survival was in part the fruit of consistent local voices using the planning process effectively to advocate for their public amenity value.

- * the value of the estate greens at the larger estates we passed through and how these humanise and make appealing living areas where architects may otherwise have slightly let us down.

- * the transport network and lack of links across the area borders. Is this an area where a forum can make a difference?

- * Sydenham Hill itself remains a major through road. Traffic management there, including the speed limit, affects those of us who live here in terms of noise, air quality and our ability to get about. We may have different views that need to be reconciled.

- * the area is a collection of estates with different characters. Can we work with existing tenants and residents associations where these still exist?

- * the unsigned history of the area. We were reminded for example of Lordship Lane station and Pissarro's paintings of the removed railway, of the old plague pits that still restrict development near Sydenham Hill Estate. We heard about how the relatively unpopulated area was sacrificed in the 2nd World War when fabricated stories that it was an industrial area were used to decoy bombs from more vulnerable targets.

- * children's outdoor play space on the estates in the area. Children perhaps play less outside together than they did a generation ago. Why? Should we be encouraging more outdoor play? Is outside play space still important and valuable?

- * the scale of development. Small infill can take away valuable woodland and green space, and increase a sense of crowding and density, without making any significant impact to overall housing numbers. Might larger sites, like Wells Park Place, strike a better cost/benefit balance?

- * the diversity of those of us who live across the area. How can we reach out to include a wide range of people in the forum?

Much food for thought.

Meeting #4 Sydenham Hill Ridge Forum Walkabout 1 Sunday 9th September

An exploration

A small group gathered for our first walkabout, with the goal of exploring not just the neighbourhood but also perhaps a process, feeling our way towards questions and issues. Does a neighbourhood forum make sense to us? Do the boundaries we have proposed make sense on the ground? Will our sense that this liminal area, straddling administrative boundaries, is a distinct neighbourhood with its own character and needs become clearer as we walk around together? Will people want to get involved? Will we be able to work together? What will we need to do?

We were there perhaps to share knowledge and learn about our neighbourhood, test out the boundaries, observe the area's character and look for issues that affect the site.

Meeting and maps

We met at the Dulwich Wood House, busy as ever on a sunny Sunday afternoon, and began by reviewing various maps. A 19th century map showed the area before London's development had got underway, already on the county boundary, wooded, almost free of buildings, with a road running along the top of the geological ridge. More modern maps revealed the area like a hare, separate from Dulwich, Sydenham and Forest Hill.

A changing area and planning controversies

Back on Sydenham Hill, we noted the change that had come to St Clement's Heights, where the old people's home has given way to housing. We stopped outside Beltwood House, a Grade II listed house within the Dulwich Conservation Area built in /around 1850s, before the Crystal Palace had come to Norwood. We were told of the contested planning history, and particularly of the impact of the closed boarded fencing apparently put up without planning permission, which prevents views of Beltwood House which was previously visible through the picket fencing. Currently there are plans for redevelopment.

How might future changes impact on our neighbourhood? Do we need a forum where local residents can talk about this, express what is valuable in their area and steer policies that might get the best out of such developments for local residents and mitigate any possible adverse impact? Is there a special character here that needs to be identified and protected?

Trees: Our wooded area

Throughout our walk, we would be brought to standstill by trees. By the gateway of Beltwood, it was an impressive rather exotic tree none of us could identify that stopped us. I was constantly reminded of how trees both from the original Great North Wood and the Victorian gardens define and shape the character of this ridge, whether in private gardens or in our more protected woods. Our buildings and gardens coexist with the surrounding wild wood, that has survived perhaps because the challenging topography held back earlier developers. The result is almost exotic: a very special urban wilderness five miles from the centre of London.

Architectural heritage and a hidden history

Round the corner back on Crescent Wood Road, we stopped outside 4 Crescent Wood Road, an elegant example of the French Imperial style, and the adjoining Six Pillars, built in the 30s in a modernistic Bauhaus style by Lubetkin's practice for the headmaster of Dulwich College, Six Pillars. There was a sense of an important architectural heritage that people valued. Also a hidden history; Might signage help to tell the story of these buildings to passers by, to connect residents with the past that had shaped the present environment and so build a sense of rootedness and connectedness?

Descent to the station

We passed John Logie Baird's home with its almost invisible blue plaque before walking back past the fringes of Sydenham Hill Wood down to Sydenham Hill Station, the main transport connection for our area. We noted the lack of any bus service connecting back up from the station to the top of the hill, shared our mutual awareness of the steepness of the climb. We noted the absence of any maps or guides on the station to give arriving passengers direction and shared stories of visitors who had needed direction on arrival. Again, perhaps issues a forum could address. More generally, do people feel hampered by the shortage of public transport connections within an area devoid of immediate services (no shops, no schools, no doctors' surgeries)? Is it causing problems for older or disabled residents? Can anything be done about it?

The church

We stopped outside St Stephen's Church, which was the only place of worship any of us were aware of within the neighbourhood, and was seen as an integral part of the area.

A natural boundary

Continuing back uphill, we noted that the Western edge of College Road lay off the ridge and had a natural connection back to Dulwich. By contrast, the other side of the road, banking steeply up through the woods, connects back organically to the ridge. The proposed boundary seems here to reflect a real geographical divide.

Post-war developments

We turned back up the hill, the group splitting briefly to allow different walking speeds as the familiar gradient challenged at least one of us with health issues.

We walked back up Rockhill and past Woodsyre, noting how the post-war Dulwich Estate developments with their Wates houses are also characteristic of the area. We noted the sympathetic boundary railings that could be seen here, a model of good

design that enhances the streetscap whilst still affording privacy.

More history and change

Back on Sydenham Hill, we noted Fountain House, a listed property which has been redeveloped. We noted the trend for the large Victorian properties to come up for redevelopment bringing change as the area evolves.

We paused outside the “The Woods”, an elegant building with an interesting history, one of the earliest houses to be built on Sydenham Hill, which we understood was later restored as social housing.

Hillcrest estate

Then we came to the Hillcrest Estate, approaching via Bluebell Close and down through one part of the estates’ woodland, designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation. Again we noted the trees surviving on the steep site.

We walked through the estate to view the garages and community centre that are the subject of current development proposals.

Outside the community centre, we considered whether the building was needed. One mother said that she did not know her immediate neighbours. We asked how can local residents build a community as the buildings where they might come together are removed? Is this an issue a forum could help with?

We noted the erosion of the woodland corridor that had already come with the building of the estate in the 1960s and asked whether there was a value in the overall continuity and bulk of woodland over and above its individual trees that the forum might help to identify and advocate for.

We talked again about the distance of the estate from services and public transport networks, and the importance of considering that homes are nested within a network of services that will make them homes for life.

We also remembered the dismantled railway whose presence and removal have both influenced the shaping of our environment.

Closing

We separated before pressing on as planned to Wells Park, walking back to our different quarters of the Sydenham Hill Ridge. I had an interesting sense of a sympathy of concerns and outlook, a shared vision of locality in our profoundly suburban wooded corner of London. As the old Sydenham Common lay hidden under our feet as we parted, perhaps too there are hidden community needs. If we make an effort to expose and signpost these, can we improve the day-to-day lives of those of us that share this ridge?

MF

Meeting #3 Wednesday 22 August 2018

Four of us (including one couple) met to discuss at short notice Boundary proposals presented by the Developer of Beltwood Estate to Southwark for discharge of Planning Condition 13.

Out of the three of us, one couple was an interested immediate Neighbour, while the other two were from the Lewisham side, who had not previously commented on the Beltwood planning applications.

The primary purpose of this meeting was to see if there was anything in the latest Beltwood Proposals which might indicate priorities for a future SHR Neighbourhood Plan.

The meeting agreed to send comments to Southwark, the planning authority responsible.

The letter sent, set out below, reflected the discussions.

We also discussed whether there is a preference not to have more gated Estates on SHR. In the end, it was decided not to make this particular point.

The letter sent to Southwark read as follows:

From: Sydenham Hill Ridge Neighbourhood Forum (emerging)

www.sydenhamhillridge.london

e: SHRF email address: news@sydenhamhillridge.london

To:

Alex Cameron

Team Leader – Major Applications Team

Southwark Council

Chief Executives Dept

Planning

Development management

PO Box 64529

London SE1P 5LX

28th August 2018

Dear Alex,

Re: 18/AP/2652

Beltwood House: Discharge of Planning Condition 13

Sydenham Hill Ridge Neighbourhood Forum (emerging) (“SHRF”) has the following specific comments on the Boundary proposals presented by the Developer for discharge of Planning Condition 13 (Boundary Details):

Boundary Fence viewed from Low Cross Wood:

The new 6ft high picket fence proposed along Sydenham Hill boundary should be extended to include the length of fence visible from the road in the proximity of The Woodhouse pub. The plan proposed by the Developer seems to imply that the picket fence will only extend along Sydenham Hill boundary, rather than the length of the publicly visible boundary including the right hand side of The Woodhouse.

Context: SHRF wants to avoid presenting a view, to somebody climbing up Low Cross Wood Lane, of a vertical close boarded fence around the right hand back and side of The Woodhouse, similar to that proposed by the Developer for his neighbours’ properties.

Installation of Signage following the guidelines of the Revised NPPF:

Please oblige the Developer to include in the Proposal appropriate signage. We draw attention to the following paragraph of the Revised NPPF published in July 2018, specifically:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/733637/National_Planning_Policy_Framework_web_accessible_version.pdf page 57, para 200 which reads as follows:

“Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas..., and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably”.

Context: SHRF is concerned at the poor signage across the Sydenham Hill Ridge, and one of our priorities is expected to be to improve public signage.

An appropriate sign, also including a map of the area and linking to the Green Chain Walk, the Woods, the bus stops and stations, would be a good start.

We would like to see neighbours consulted on the language and design of the signage.

Public Safety at the proposed new entrance/exit to the New Gatehouse, opposite Droitwich Close

Are Highways satisfied that the new entrance/exit opposite Droitwich Close is safe, given the proximity to the sharp bend in the road, and the many buses which pass regularly?

Are any additional measure proposed by Highways to warn or slow traffic at this new entrance/exit opposite Droitwich Close, in particular during the construction period?

Context: SHRF is concerned about safety on Sydenham Hill Road.

Would you please confirm receipt of this letter, and that these concerns, none of which block the proposed redevelopment, will be taken into account.

Sydenham Hill Ridge Forum (emerging)

E: news@sydenhamhillridge.london

Stephen Weil

Project Manager

Meeting #2 Thursday 9th August 2018:

The overriding purpose of the meeting was to learn as much as possible from our Expert Angela Koch, especially from the experience of other London Neighbourhood Forums; and how to avoid wasting time and resource in setting up, getting designated and selecting advisers.

Invites were sent to all / substitutes who attended meeting #1, which took place on 16 July 2018; plus a resident from Great Brownings.

Meeting #1 Monday 16th July 2018:

Neighbours were invited to attend through personal networks. There was also reference to the forthcoming meeting in St Stephen's Parish magazine.

A broad range of those who live along Sydenham Hill Ridge, on both Southwark and Lewisham sides....from the junction of Sydenham Hill with the South Circular all the way to Woodsyre; and along the upper slopes of Southwark's Peckarman's Wood and Lewisham's Hillcrest Estate attended the meeting and/or expressed interest in finding out more, with 10+ Residents present in person.

Sydenham Hill Ridge Forum (emerging)