



# The Round Hill Reporter

Issue 37  
September 2009



**Street life** *Live music, fresh food and even a spot of sunshine were some of the vital ingredients in this year's street party - read more on page 3*

## Battle for greenfield site is lost

*City Councillors ignore their own guidelines to support developers with designs on the area's dwindling open space*

After years of controversy, protests, plans and appeals, the latest application for land in the Round Hill conservation area has been approved.

Carelet's fifth proposal for their small plot of land in the Round Hill conservation area was approved by the City Council on 22 July. Despite strong objections from the three Green members on the Planning Committee, the panel voted through the plans to build four new houses on a stretch of ground bordering the railway embankment.

Speaking against the proposal, Amy Kennedy argued that since the development failed to fulfil the requirements of the Council's own planning regulations, the Local Plan could be "torn up" if the scheme was approved. Ian Davey, one of the three Councillors for the ward which encompasses Round Hill was also unconvinced by the application, pointing out

that according to the Council's guidelines, the spot was not eligible for development. Despite these arguments however, the three Green representatives were the only members of the Committee to vote against the proposal which was therefore carried by a majority.

This small section of land has been at the centre of controversy and fierce debate since 2004 when Carelet submitted the first application for their newly purchased property. Protesters have argued that in a series of proposals, the owners have been determined to over-develop the small plot by cramming the maximum number of properties into its boundary. The first application was for over thirty flats on an area the size of a large garden. *Continued on page 4*



# View from the hill

## *Controlled parking, London Road, Victoria development, Film Club*

● There was a strong reaction to the consultation on controlled parking and most respondents in Round Hill are opposed to the idea. That was the initial impression from the questionnaires returned to the consultants appointed by the City Council, although it is unclear how far residents in other areas share that view. The consultation documents themselves were clear and well presented despite a few minor errors such as the ambitious attempt to provide parking bays on both sides of Ashdown Road but it now seems likely that the fate of Round Hill will be decided partly by the needs of adjoining neighbourhoods. The issue has always divided opinion in this part of town. Although car owners stand to lose out in the plan, residents of Round Hill Crescent as well as pedestrians throughout the area, have suffered from heavy parking and pressure from shoppers and commercial vehicles.

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● The future of London Road will be discussed at this year's AGM with Councillor Keith Taylor. There will also be an audio-visual presentation of *The Round Hill Year*. Following Tesco's withdrawal from the scheme put forward by St James's Investments, the outlook is



substantially different with wider possibilities for this strategically important thoroughfare.

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● Work is progressing on the conversion of the Victoria Pub into two large town houses but the scale of work required to construct the 'light wells' needed to illuminate the lower ground floors hint at the size of the job proposed for Ashdown Road (see page 7).

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● The City Car Club have restored their vehicle in D'Aubigny Road. The bay is now subject to parking restrictions to ensure that other road users respect the space reserved for the Club car.

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● With nights drawing in and credit still crunchy, would you like to join your neighbours to watch and discuss films? The newly formed **Roundhill Film Society** has space for a couple more members — meeting once a month and taking turns to choose a film — no specialist knowledge required, just an interest in film. Contact **Jacqui** 07505 399375 or **Pat** 07981 161740 for details.



Notice of  
**Annual General Meeting**

**The Round Hill Society's  
AGM**  
will be held on  
Wednesday 16th September 2009  
at 7pm  
Downs Infant School, Ditchling Road

*We will present a short film "The Round Hill Year"  
and discussion on the future of London Road with  
Councillor Keith Taylor*

# Dancing in the street

*Street party rouses the neighbourhood with music, play and commerce*

D'Aubigny Road was closed to traffic from early on Saturday 20th June 2009 and with streams of bunting, tables, chairs and astro-turf, the street was transformed into a party venue ready for an afternoon of stalls, games, food, drink and music.

The street market was very popular throughout the afternoon with over twenty tables selling cakes, games, bric-a-brac, books, chutneys or jams, pickles and plants. And there were even taster sessions in massage and auricular acupuncture.

A barbecue selling vegetarian and meat hamburgers and sausage rolls did steady trade and visitors could also pick up fresh, line-caught mackerel. A local bakery business, The Taste of Calabria were offering delicious expertly-produced breads and pizzas.

The Curst Sons, an extraordinary country-bluegrass band, played a fantastic set and the stunning Brighton-based sambistas Barulho thrilled the crowds, bringing a rousing finale to the afternoon. Younger folk enjoyed face painting courtesy of a range of talented artists, as well as a dressing up area, giant board games and of course, bouncy castle. Leonardo—Maestro of Magic—put on a great show for Round Hill's younger residents. A local ambulance was also on site, with paramedics offering guided tours of emergency kit and talking about their work; and there was a recycling information stall providing advice.

The Round Hill Society would like to thank the many people who played a part in making the event such a success and especially the residents of D'Aubigny Road who welcomed the invasion of their street with unanimous enthusiasm and good humour.



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# Green light for development

*Application to build new houses behind Princes Road is approved*

Continued from front page. As successive proposals have been refused by the local authorities and the Planning Inspectorate, the scale of development has been slowly reduced in order to find the greatest volume of properties that will be allowed. Four houses, it seems, is the answer.

There remains uncertainty however for the beleaguered residents of Princes Road. Given the prevailing economic



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conditions, it is not assumed that the developers will embark on construction immediately. They have watched their potential profit margins collapse during the planning process, and there is speculation that they may now seek to cut their losses by disposing of their property in the area. Obtaining planning permission for some level of development, even if relatively modest in comparison with their initial scheme, would be a necessary precursor.

There is also the fact of the conditions that have been imposed on the developers. In total, twenty-four restrictions have been placed on Carelet, all of which will need to be met before the new houses can be occupied. These provisions cover the preparation of landscaping drawings and clarification on some elements of the design. Crucially they also include measures to protect the Horse Chestnut tree at the entrance to the site on Princes Road and building adaptations to deal with the high noise levels on the site.

The news comes at a time when people in this part of the city are coming to terms with living next to the new waste processing facilities at Hollingdean. With the plant reaching full operating capacity over the summer, those living near to the building have suffered from invasive odours and considerable noise during working hours. Levels of disturbance have been far higher than local residents expected. Surveys to quantify the disruption are under way but the wisdom of approving a new residential development even closer to the Hollingdean facility was another issue for those opposing the Carelet application. Perhaps unsurprisingly, many of the same Committee members who approved the waste facilities were in no mood to accept the unsavoury reality of the plant for its immediate neighbours.

## How did we get here?

*The process to develop this site has spanned five applications*

**1** The first application for the site was made in autumn 2004 for a six storey block of over thirty flats. Described by the Council's planning committee as one of the worst examples of city cramming they had seen, it was roundly rejected. Round Hill residents, who have been present at every committee

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**Round Hill Society**  
by



meeting to consider Carelet's schemes for Princes Road, turned out in force to protest about the plans.

**2** In 2005 a revised proposal was submitted. The new housing block was to include twenty-one flats over four or five storeys. As with the first application there were over three hundred letters of objection and the amended plans again met with the unanimous refusal of the planning committee in February 2006.



**3** The third set of drawings for the site were published later in the same year. Plans for a block of flats had been abandoned in favour of a terrace of family houses. Carelet's architects proposed that nine three-storey dwellings be squeezed into the site. Again, the planning committee firmly rejected the proposals and this time Carelet appealed against the decision. However, they later withdrew their petition and there was a hiatus as they considered their next step.

**4** Early 2008 saw the fourth application which was largely unchanged from the previous set of proposals. Now featuring eight houses, this was the only proposal which was not decided by the City's planning authorities. Delays in processing the application led Carelet to file an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate on the grounds of 'non-determination'. The City Council discussed the application in any case and showed that they would again have rejected the plan, a decision which was later confirmed by the inspector. However, following the local elections of 2007, there was a marked difference in the committee's approach and indications that future applications would be received more positively.

**5** Finally in 2009, the plan was scaled back to a terrace of four houses. The development retained the gatehouse and lift on Princes Road which had featured in all of the previous applications. Local opposition to the plans was determinedly robust with over two hundred letters of objection sent to the City's planners. This time however, the application was granted on a majority of the Planning Committee. This marked the end of the process since UK planning law allows no possibility of appeal against a decision in favour of development.

● *The Brighton & Hove Federation of Disabled People offers a confidential counselling service for disabled people, their friends and carers. More details available from the website [www.bhfederation.org.uk](http://www.bhfederation.org.uk) or by telephone 208934.*

● *Rise, a Sussex-based charity offering advice and support to victims of domestic abuse, is planning an Undercliff Run for Women on October 11th. After the success of its inaugural run last year, the organisation is expecting hundreds of participants to take part in the event, running under the cliffs from the Marina to Rottingdean and back. The charity answers over 1,800 calls a year from people suffering from the effects of abuse. Applications are invited on their website: [www.riseuk.org.uk](http://www.riseuk.org.uk).*



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# Gardeners raise hundreds

*Open days for the National Gardens Scheme and the Sussex Beacon Garden Gadabout well supported by Round Hill's gardeners*

Dear neighbours,

We wanted to thank everyone who supported the Round Hill gardens that were open for charity this summer; not only those who visited but also those who so generously baked (and bought) cakes, lent chairs and tables and contributed in so many ways. In particular we wanted to thank the other garden openers who joined with us (some at very short notice) to share their gardens.

Unfortunately the first of the three days, when a couple of gardens were open in the National Garden Scheme, was wet but we still had a very respectable 58 visitors and raised £252 which goes to a group of charities including Macmillan and Cancer Research. The two days of the Sussex Beacon Garden Gadabout, however, were bright and warm, and in our garden we had about 130 visitors each day, raising a fantastic £618. The other local gardens open in the Gadabout also did really well, raising hundreds of pounds as well.

We're already looking towards next year and are really keen to find other gardens willing to open with us in the Garden Gadabout. We don't have exact dates yet



but it's likely to be in July once again. We're looking for interesting gardens, not show gardens, and courtyards, allotments or even front gardens are all welcome so please don't be shy in putting your outside space forward – if you'd like to have a chat about what is involved, please do get in touch via 625300 or [steve@vadamedia.co.uk](mailto:steve@vadamedia.co.uk). It's great fun to do and knowing that you're opening for charity is a great spur to getting all those garden jobs done that you've been putting off for ages!

Thanks again for your support,  
**Steve Bustin & John Williams**, 1 Belton Close

## Exterior House Painting *Seeking work for summer 2010*

### Some local jobs:

- 3 D'Aubigny Road (2004)
- 85 Round Hill Crescent (2006)
- 14 Mayo Road (2008)



**Rob Stephenson**  
673511

## Rough guide to Round Hill

The Round Hill Society is considering a self-guided walking tour of the area detailing some of the fascinating history which lies just beneath the surface of this urban landscape.

If you have any requests for items you think we should include or if you would be like to be involved in producing the guide, please contact **Dave** (699476) or **Rob** (673511) or e-mail: [news@roundhill.org.uk](mailto:news@roundhill.org.uk).

# New questions for Ashdown

*Motor business no longer trading from Round Hill site but new planning drawings have been submitted for the same plot*



The business which had been operating from Ashdown Road since last October has now moved to premises in another part of the city. Raj Motors rented land behind the houses on the eastern side of the street for their car valet and dealership. The business apparently thrived but caused problems for residents in this formerly quiet area. Vehicles advertised for sale began to fill the kerbs of Ashdown Road and neighbouring streets and there was soon a steady series of visits from transporters to collect or deliver cars. Many residents were concerned about the safety of the operation and the damage that might be caused to neighbouring properties if fire were to break out in the congested yard.

The City Council served an enforcement notice on the business in March for operating without planning permission and by early July it was apparent that activities on the site were being scaled back. By the middle of the month, the site had been vacated and according to its website, Raj Motors is now based at Pelham Terrace on Lewes Road.

The news was a relief to many in the area but uncertainty remains over the future of the site. A planning application to build three new houses on the plot was submitted in June last year. Although not decided, the developers, Pearl Developments, have been engaged in talks with city planners and, twelve months on from the initial proposal, registered a revised set of drawings.

Although the size of the structures is similar to the initial application, the plans have been revised to give more living space. The new buildings would comprise two houses, each with two bedrooms on a lower ground

floor and a study and kitchen/diner at ground level. Proposals for the division of 2 Ashdown Road into flats have also been amended substantially with the new drawings indicating only a two bedroom flat on the ground floor and two one bedroom flats upstairs. Parking allowance has been made for the occupants of the two new houses, making use of the adjoining garage and the entry to the rear of the property converted to a car port.

The new plans address some of the worries expressed by residents during the first consultation but many of the problems remain. Although the architects have been careful to ensure that the new properties would not overlook neighbouring gardens, they would be close to existing dwellings, well below the distance considered a rule of thumb for new builds.

Another disadvantage with the plan is the huge volume of earth that would need to be excavated and removed to create a series of basement rooms. The City's Local Plan requires strict procedures to minimise waste during development but the approach planned for this site would result in a considerable mass of material taken offsite for disposal.

The new plans for the subdivision of the house are much improved but incongruous in a time when family housing is the top priority for the City's planners, and the changes are also likely to increase pressure on local infrastructure such as the availability of parking spaces.

It is not clear how the new drawings will be handled by the City Council. Since they have been registered as part of the existing application, they are not subject to the usual timetable for consideration of new proposals. The Round Hill Society is expecting some form of consultation on the new plans however before they go before the planning committee.

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## Round Hill Society Committee

Chair	Jean Brennan	87 Round Hill Crescent	693100
Vice chair	Marian Gerrett	77 Princes Crescent	688009
Secretary	Rob Stephenson	51 Upper Lewes Road	673511
Treasurer	Kevin Tansley	11 Wakefield Road	672648
Conservation Advisory	Ted Power	55 Princes Road	688102
Newsletter & website	David Guest	16a Wakefield Road	699476
Committee members	Carol Hall	36b Princes Road	687636
	Mandy Jones	81 Princes Crescent	
	Annie Rimington	8 D'Aubigny Road	
	Paul Thompson	29 Richmond Road	883004

## Directory

### Window Cleaners

**Col Scarratt E** col.scarratt@ntlworld.com  
**Bishop Window Cleaning M** 07939 161904

### Builders

**Chris Nesbitt** Plastering, bricklaying **M** 07867 864619  
**Earthwise Construction** Green design, construction and renovation. Contact Ben East **T** 0845 680 0015  
**A Team Builders Ltd** Plastering, damp proofing. Contact Giles Walker **T** 385478 **M** 07725028393

### Carpenters

**SAB Carpentry** 27 Princes Rd **T** 702632 **M** 07963 841536  
**Richard Simpson W** simpsoncarpentry.com  
**M** 07754 850135 **E** richard@simpsoncarpentry.com

### Gardeners

**Sadie at Plant People T** 562425 **M** 07881 992762  
**Bruce Jonas** Tree Surgeon **T** 693247  
**All Out** Tree Surgery and garden clearance. Contact Giles **T** 243026 **M** 07989 537828

### Decorators

**Preston Decorators** Princes Road **M** 07976 893087  
**Rob Stephenson** 51 Upper Lewes Road **T** 673511  
**Peter Skinner T** 558790/889964

### Plumbers

**Tim Packwood** 88 Waldegrave Road, **M** 07703 253740  
**G J Saunders** 80 Melrose Ave, Portslade, **T** 882827  
**C R Laker** 76 Rugby Rd, **T** 501006 **F** 507745  
**Tom Plumb M** 07973 551841  
**Lynette Ward** CORGI regd **M** 07910 763689 **T** 302574  
**E** lynette1.ward@ntlworld.com

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**Jim Gustard** Waste clearance incl trade & bulky waste 174 Hollingdean Tce **M** 07773 396212 **E** j.gustard@ntlworld.com

Please send your recommendations or warnings to the editor, including your own details for verification.

The Round Hill Reporter is published by the Round Hill Society to keep residents in the area in touch with local news, events and each other. We try to present a fair and balanced view but the opinions expressed in this paper are not necessarily shared by all.

Letters or ideas for articles are welcome - please contact the editor at the address shown above.

**Deadline for the December edition**  
14th November