



Hills Amenity Society

Spring 2014

Working for the York Hill, Baldwins Hill and Staples Road Conservation Areas

Founded 1972

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Council go-ahead to publish two Hills Appraisals after six years—Page 3

New Hills parking plans soon

Following last year's parking consultation with residents, the North Essex Parking Partnership have identified several parking issues in the Hills area and intend to publish plans to resolve these shortly before a consultation period on the changes. A residents' parking permit scheme was decided against as a remedy to

Proposals will seek to remedy identified problem areas

current problems after the initial consultation. Instead, residents identified key areas that needed attention through more targeted, smaller scale restrictions such as double yellow lines in key areas.

Continued Page 2

Expect to hear very soon about Staples School expansion

Staples Road residents can expect to hear any day now whether plans to extend Staples Road School to full three form entry with the attendant increase in drops-offs and pick-ups and staff cars this will entail.

Story on Page 3

Hills Open Meeting and AGM Thursday 29 May 7.30pm at The Gardeners Arms, York Hill

Topics will include planning proposals, lighting, Staples Road School, planning, issues—and the picnic
Patricia Moxley will speak on why we need trees
OPEN TO ALL RESIDENTS OF THE HILLS



York Hill Picnic

Sunday 25th May 12pm-4pm
It's that time of year again!

Pack your picnic and bring a blanket to celebrate the long bank holiday weekend. After last year's fun you don't need a better excuse to enjoy your Sunday afternoon with friends. Join us on the green and in the Gardeners Arms.

Remember that happy Bank Holiday picnic last summer pictured right?

Let's have a picnic!
Sun 25 May
12-4pm

It's that time of year again! The bank holiday Sunday will be another opportunity to hang out the flags on York Hill Green. Epping Forest Commissioners and the police have approved the closure of roads at the top of York Hill from 12.00 noon to 4pm. So bring out the chairs, rugs and pack your picnic hampers.

After last year's fun you don't need a better excuse to enjoy your Sunday afternoon with friends and join us on the green and in the Gardeners Arms. **It's entirely FREE so just turn up and enjoy.** And if you would like to take part by offering cakes for charity, face painting or help put up flags please contact stephenmcohen@hotmail.com



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**WOODBURY
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In the Hills—for the Hills



Reports by Hills Watch Coordinator...

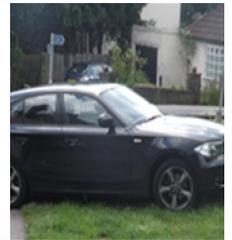
The Loughton Hills Conservation Areas are a designated Neighbourhood Watch area. Please be observant and report anything suspicious.

Parking remedies to be announced soon

Continued from Page 1
Details have not yet been finalised but Shane Taylor at the North Essex Parking Partnership said

"It is envisaged that the planning for those roads will be completed and finalised shortly after the Easter break which will provide adequate time for the commencement of the consultation period.

"The changes will be advertised once they are ready which will include an official consultation period where comments, including objections could be heard."



Our pictures show some of the parking by selfish drivers around York Hill and Staples Road



Local information

- Essex Police (non-emergency) 101
- Neighbourhood police officer: sue.horswill@essex.pnn.police.uk
- Telephone: 101 ext 313415 Mobile: 07968354021
- Wildlife Crime Office: PC Tom Hardingham - 0300 333 4444 (ext 28835)
- Emergency issues should still be reported via 999
- Epping Forest District Safer Communities Partnership Useful Contacts**
- EFDC (reporting fly-tipping) 01992 564608 (reporting abandoned vehicles) 01992 564608
- Noise and anti-social behaviour: Essex Police (non-emergency) 101 and district council on 01992 564000
- Loughton Police direct line 01279 641212

Our Hills Watch co-ordinators write:

Report anti-social behaviour

According to the "Fifteen Watch" group police have been called two Sundays running to attend to anti-social behaviour at the bottom of York Hill. Young men in rented cars were causing particular concern—and police interest. Further to the article in our last newsletter, do report all speeding and anti-social behaviour:

71110@essex.pnn.police.uk with copy to david.linnell@loughtonresidents.co.uk

Help wanted

Please let the Committee know if you would be interested in becoming a Neighbourhood Watch Street Coordinator. If you live in a long road maybe two or three neighbours could join forces and watch out for any disturbances or incidents. Regular updates and advice will be provided by Essex Police .

New Neighbourhood policing contact

I would like to report that we have a new Neighbourhood Police Constable at Loughton Police station. Her name is PC Sue Horswill and her contact details are:

Email: sue.horswill@essex.pnn.police.uk
Telephone: 101 ext 313415
Mobile: 07968354021

Parking problems—what can you do?

Residents have reported a high number of parking issues to us lately.

What you can do to help: 9am – 5pm: If you notice an issue within 'working hours' (9am-5pm) you can call the parking authority directly on 01206 282 316. They can then send a parking warden to assess and deal with the situation.

5pm onwards: report this to the non-emergency police number on 101 so they can deal with it .

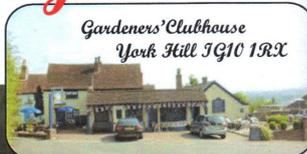
Gardeners Arms

York Hill, Loughton Tel: 020 8508 1655

Comedy Club:

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County Council change of heart on street lighting?

Essex County Council may revisit its decision to switch off streetlights across the county between midnight and 5am and could instead issue a new instruction for them to be turned off between 1am and 6am in some areas of Epping Forest.

Loughton Residents Association representative on the council, councillor Chris Pond, and Loughton Town Council had been pressing the county council to allow the lights to remain on everywhere in Loughton until 15 minutes after the last train arrives and to come on again 15 minutes before the first train in the mornings in recognition of the fact that Loughton's economy and social life is firmly attuned to public transport times.

This was something also suggested by many residents who filled in the Hills Amenity Society questionnaire on the subject of part night lighting last year.

Councillor Pond said while he would welcome the change of turn off time from midnight to 1am, a subsequent later switch on at 6am would still not be convenient for those heading to work early on dark mornings in winter



Dark streets bring dangers: Council may be listening

months.

Currently, other than where roads meet the county council's strict exception criteria (i.e. the High Road and around roundabouts) or where there are legal or technical constraints preventing part night switch off (currently areas including a part of Staples Road, Englands Lane and Smarts Lane), lights are now out between midnight and 5am.

Anyone with queries about the switch off in their street can contact Essex County Council's Customer Services Department via email at cs.comments@essex.gov.uk or write to: Customer Services, Essex Highways, PO Box 11, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 1LX.

Tips for living in a conservation area

Making improvements to your property can be complicated in a conservation area. For full information go to [Epping Forest District Council website](#)—or ask at the council offices. **Planning Permission and Special restrictions apply to conservation areas** and consent is needed for most changes, especially when visible from the public highway. This includes:

- hedges and trees
- the use of front gardens for parking
- windows on front facing elevations
- extensions.
- several special restrictions also apply, in addition to normal planning controls and the rights and obligations of the property owner are not affected.

The Hills Amenity Society advises that you always seek advice from Epping Forest District Council before you undertake any changes to clarify whether you need Conservation Area Consent. See Page 2 for emergency numbers.

Go ahead for York Hill and Staples Road Appraisals

Two of the three appraisals of the Hills Conservation Areas have now been approved for publication by Epping Forest District Council—six years after work began by a special committee of the Hills Amenity Society to draft them.

Conservation Area Officer Maria Kitts announced the good news in an email to Ian Locks who chaired the working party which met over a two year period.

Ms Kitts explained Internal debates about levels of responsibility led to the decision that character appraisals had to be authorised by Cabinet, rather than by a Planning Committee.

Said Ms Kitts: "The good news is that the Staples Road and York Hill Character Appraisals have been officially published, as agreed by Cabinet last month. I have been hanging fire because the documents are with a printing firm as we speak and so I don't yet have any hard copies, which are due in the next few working days.

"Electronic copies of the appraisals will be uploaded to the website asap and I will be writing to all the residents to inform them of where they can view the published appraisals."

The Baldwins Hill Character Appraisal, and a request to create an Article 4 Direction, will be put before the next Cabinet meeting in



Loughton York Hill Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan 2009



Loughton Staples Road Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan 2009



Baldwins Hill Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan 2009

June as there is not one in May due to the council elections.

All three appraisals were revised by the Council before publication but with some of our major proposals omitted.

However the council has agreed to meet representatives of the Hills to discuss some of the key recommendations by the Hills working party.

These included the introduction of a 20mph speed limit throughout the conservation areas and the extension to York and Baldwins Hills of what is known as the Article Four Direction which applies in Staples Road and particularly applies to changes to frontages and boundary markers.

However the main purpose of the Appraisals is to protect the status of the conservation areas and provide a reference point for future planning approvals.

After a relatively quiet few years a spate of major new projects is threatening to disrupt the area once again in future years including the

pulling down and rebuilding of Mulberry and the possibility of a new house and major extension to

Woodberrie, both in Woodbury Hill. A similar concentration of projects applies at the top of Queens Road and in Pump Hill. See "Three in a Row" on our website.

Will you have the best kept garden in 2014?



The many beautiful and well kept gardens in the three Hills Conservation Areas are one of the most important features of our area. One of the earliest initiatives of the Hills Amenity Society after it was founded in 1972 was to start a competition for the best kept front garden – an award made every year since. Some of the shortlisted gardens in 2013 are pictured. If you would like your front garden to be considered email, call or text HAS chairman, Stephen Cohen

Mobile: 07968720804
 Email: stephenmcohen@hotmail.com

105 more pupils for Staples Road School

As we went to press a decision was still awaited by Essex County Council on whether to expand Staples Road Primary School.

If it does it will herald building works to extend the school to accommodate increased pupil numbers from September 2015. The new classrooms are likely to be built in place of a disused toilet block and a dismantlable classroom on the site.

Staples Road is currently what is known as two-and-a-half form entry with 75 pupils commencing school in the reception class (a form equating to 30 pupils).

To cope with a predicted future shortfall of places in the area in coming years the council has secured funding to expand the school by half a form (15 places) meaning next September (2015) 90 pupils would start in reception.

With an additional 15 children starting each year in subsequent years, overall pupil numbers would ultimately rise from 525 to 630.

Interestingly, at the end of April it was revealed that a total of 32 children living in the catchment area for the school have just been refused admission at Staples Road for September 2014 due to a shortage of places – already 17 more than even the extended school could accommodate. Whether or not an additional 15 places is going to be enough in the long term is questionable although, it is unlikely that consideration would be given to extending Staples Road yet



further.

Some residents have already expressed concern about the impact the increased numbers will have from 2015 and ultimately when another 105 parents could feasibly be dropping children off at school in a narrow road and congested area.

Once the decision has been made expect to see planning notices at the school in the next month or so as well as in the local paper. The application will be determined by Essex County Council but will then need planning permission from Epping Forest District Council which will provide Loughton Town Council, residents and the Hills Amenity Society to comment on the merits of the building proposals.

The Hills Amenity Society will publish further details as it finds them out on its website for anyone looking to comment.

Gable Lodge to make way for new homes?

Gable Lodge, the former

Bupa Care Home on the corner of Church Hill and St John's Road,



could be demolished and the site redeveloped to provide 11 retirement homes for the over 55s.

An application has been submitted to Epping Forest District Council on behalf of Ortus Homes, a division of McCarthy and Stone, to demolish the existing buildings on the site and erect a new three storey building providing 11 two-bedroom apartments and associated facilities.

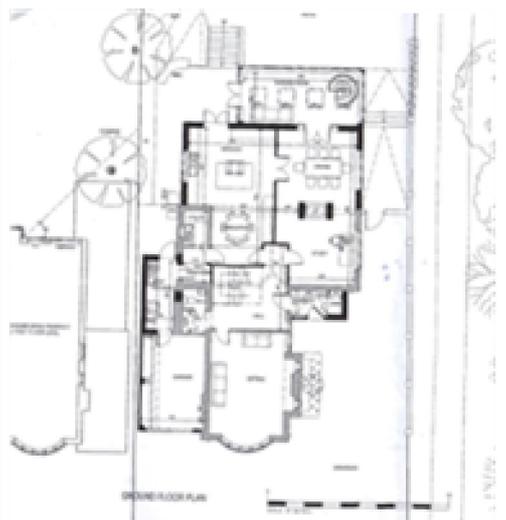
If successful the plans would mark a departure for McCarthy and Stone from their more usual business of providing sheltered housing accommodation. The flats would be aimed at 'a younger retiree'.

The 0.4 acre site features a number of mature conifer trees and is subject to a blanket Tree Preservation Order.

A decision is expected by mid-May.

BIG plans for 5 Baldwins Hill

At 5 Baldwins Hill an application for an underground addition to an earlier proposal has been refused. The outline to the adjacent property in the diagram gives a clue to the size of the extension, marked by darker lines, which received permission over a year ago.



<http://hillsamenitysociety.co.uk>

Go-ahead to knock down Mulberry

In our last issue we reported District Council approval for Mulberry, Woodbury Hill, to be pulled down and rebuilt. We have been asked to state that some details contained in our story "should not be relied on." We are happy to draw attention to the revised article on our website since November at <http://hillsamenitysociety.co.uk/hill-news-update-october-2013> and apologise for any confusion caused.

An artist's impression of how two new buildings either side of Woodberrie (centre) would change the Woodbury street scene.

Development problems loom again...

If you were in any doubt that recession has turned to property boom, look no further than the Hills as development problems—blocked muddy roads, noise, mess—loom again for residents in six areas which in particular can expect disruption over the next few years: the top of Queens Road round into Pump Hill; Woodbury Hill (again); Baldwins Hill opposite the hollow; Staples Road around the school; York Hill near School Green; and, for good measure, the bottom of Church Hill. See our website for personal views—and we are happy to add yours if you send them to the Editor at i.locks@btinternet.com.

Scene-changing plans for Woodbury Hill

Plans have been lodged with the District Council for a major development at Woodberrie, on the corner of Woodbury Hill and Kings Hill. On the east side are plans for a major new house (left in the artist's impression below) while on the west side a "contemporary extension" is planned. The development would dramatically change the street view in the very narrow, holly-hedge bounded lane which is Woodbury Hill. Plans can be seen at EPF/0894/14 on the council's website and comments should be lodged by 25 May. This will be the fifth application to build on the site. See Hills website for personal comment.

Ask...If you are planning a major project and would like some advice on how to do this sympathetically or what the rules are in a conservation area the Hills Committee would be pleased to help. Just get in touch.



Extra floor wanted for York Crescent blocks

Following strong objections by residents, plans to add an additional floor to two of the five flat blocks in York Hill Crescent have been rejected by Epping Forest District Council against officer recommendation.

Four one-bedroom flats would be added to the 1920s-built development. Many residents of the blocks objected primarily on the grounds of the disruption that would be caused during building works, the impact on their properties and concerns about park-



ing. No new parking provision was proposed in an area where this is already a big concern. There are a number of garages on the development but these are not necessarily occupied by tenants of flats but instead rented to private individuals and

residents regularly do battle with school traffic in the mornings and vehicles parking for Fifteen in the evenings to find a parking space in the area for their cars. Loughton Town Council also objected to the plans which it

considered an over intensification of a plot at a sensitive location on the edge of a conservation area and again raised concerns about the lack of parking in an already congested area. However, the council officers' report said that the proposed development was in an "urban area" where new housing was needed and difficult to provide. They suggested conditions to keep disturbance during works to a minimum and said that it was reasonable in an urban area not to provide parking. A decision on whether to appeal against the decision is awaited from the applicants.



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Comment

Housing boom is back—and here's the irony

I met a man in The Gardeners the other day who said words to the effect "I would much rather be living up here" (than somewhere like Connaught Avenue). And what a desirable area this is. But the pressure to fill every inch with buildings and make it just like anywhere else is immense.

In this issue we have devoted a third of our space to stories about major plans to knock down, dramatically expand, garden-grab and in other ways change the character of the place we all moved to at one time or another.

Why did we move here? Some would say "to make a truckload of money", others "because it is unusually beautiful so near to London", others "for the views and access to the forest". Sadly the Government is making it increasingly difficult for Council's to resist plans which are scene-changing against the never-ending pressure for bigger homes with more bathrooms and bedrooms, rumpus rooms, cinemas and pools.

We have often carried articles reflecting the deep sores which such development can cause for those whose hitherto peaceful lives are suddenly upended. But here's the irony. Six years ago the Hills Committee established a working group to speed the process of producing Appraisals for each of our three conservation Areas in order to help retain the character of the area. We completed them in 2009—and it has taken until now for the first two to receive District Council approval for publication. Let's hope that the five year wait will be worthwhile.

We're on the web!

hillsamenitysociety.co.uk

Hills Amenity Society

Working to enhance and protect the Conservation Areas of York Hill, Staples Road and Baldwins Hill



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Parish Pump—around the Hills

Giant pot hole filled—but for how long?



According to the gangmen this was a "real beauty" - the deep chasm which opened up in York Hill months back and was part of the council annual pre-election pothole programme. When it rained the hole again became an outlet for groundwater but the new filling survived—for now. We have reported the problem to Essex County Council using their report website
<https://secureweb1.essexcc.gov.uk/Highways/Report-a-highway-problem>.

Artics keep on coming

While the articulated lorry that found its way to the top of York Hill due to a SatNav error (pictured) was still the most dramatic there have been continuing incidents at the bottom of York Hill. Efforts continue to track the source of the error which sends them into the Conservation Area.



Good attendance at Hills lunch

There was a good attendance at the Hills Lunch kindly hosted by Wendy Fisher. Scott Hartley from 2 Forest Way was presented with the Hills Amenity Society Shield, awarded annually for the best front garden in the area. Let us know if you would like to be visited by the judges for consideration in this year's contest.



Subscriptions for year due 1 May

Membership of The Hills Amenity Society costs just £4 per household a year payable to The Treasurer, Woodpeckers, 37 Woodbury Hill, Loughton. New members always welcome.

We are all volunteers! Your support is greatly appreciated.

Join up now



Hills Amenity Society