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STOP PRESS – POOL REPRIEVED!

Purley pool under threat again!

Spring 2015

PWRA journal

Purley and Woodcote Residents' Association

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Purley & Woodcote Residents' Association Journal – Spring 2015

The next issue of the PWRA Journal will be published in May 2015.
Letters or editorial submissions are welcomed by April 30 2015.

In this issue:-

Viewpoint - Tarsem Flora, the PWRA Chairman writes	*4 & 6*
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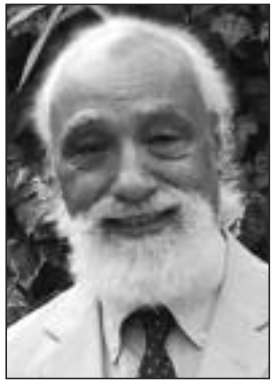
VIEW POINT



Tarsem Flora – PWRA chairman writes:

This time last year the area was devastated by flooding and the closure of A22 between Purley and Whyteleafe. With luck we will not experience the same problem again.

We also hope that the £4.2 million funding request by Croydon, Tandridge and Surrey Country Council for flood prevention projects will be successful.

This fund, if available, will provide new drainage between the M25 and Croydon as well as other improvements in Kenley valley.

However, I do feel that whilst any action is better than nothing we, in all honesty, need a holistic plan to solve the area's flood problems on a permanent basis.

The six year funding programme from the Environment Agency has now been finalised - though some of the projects covered are likely to take much longer than this time frame.

We also hope that the government in power after the May general election will be able to offer better financial help than has so far been offered. Any money invested in permanent flood prevention schemes can only be good value for the future.

Let me now briefly summarise the local issues:-

- the Chairwoman/Chairman of all local residents' associations continue to meet and discuss the Urgent Care Centre at Purley Hospital.

To date there has been some progress and we remain determined to maintain the pressure to ensure that the hospital provides us with the service promised during the refurbishment programme.

I am glad that our prospective Conservative parliamentary candidate Chris Philp has taken this on board for his election campaign.

- most of us have heard that the council has stated its intention to close the Purley Pool in April.

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Continued on Page 6

Leader of Croydon Council writes

The New Year is both a time for reflection on the past 12 months and also a time to look forward to everything that we want to achieve over the coming year.

The last six months have been a really exciting time for Croydon and this excitement will only increase through the course of the year. Since being elected last May we have been working hard to clean up the borough and to encourage people to take pride in their local areas. Hopefully you have seen the benefits of the increased street collections and dramatically improved fly tip removal service. We have also increased the number of affordable homes available to buy and rent and are improving standards in the private rented sector.

Cllr Tony Newman - Leader of Croydon Council

Before the election, I said that we would not only focus redevelopment on the metropolitan centre, but that we would also develop plans to regenerate our district centres. Our promise to each district centre was published last autumn and I hope that you have had chance to read them – I would love to hear any views that you have about how we can work together to regenerate Purley.

Looking to the future, it continues to be a challenging time for local government. Coalition funding cuts continue to target Croydon unfairly and we have been working hard to get Croydon a fairer deal. We have kept a tight grip on the books and I am delighted that we will be freezing council tax this year.

We have also gained an agreement on a cross party basis from the chancellor to explore our proposal to devolve a number of powers to Croydon, giving us greater freedom to make decisions locally allow us to make financial decisions based on a much longer term forecast.

One area that I am determined to tackle is the issue of domestic violence. Unfortunately this terrible crime has been on the rise across the borough and we must all play our role in stamping it out.

In tandem with a number of initiatives we have launched locally, we are compiling a petition to ask the government to create a national register of domestic abuse offenders. This would help the council and police tackle both the symptoms and causes of domestic violence far more effectively.

To that end, I ask if you could support this initiative by signing our petition at:- https://www.change.org/p/the-right-honourable-theresa-may-mp-home-secretary-create-a-national-register-of-domestic-abuse offenders? recruiter =195987931&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=share_email_responsive.

Once the petition reaches 100,000 signatures it will trigger a debate in the House of Commons, which I hope will lead to a change in the law that will help prevent some of the damage caused by domestic abuse. Your support would be warmly welcomed.

I hope that 2015 brings a healthy and prosperous year to you all and, as always, please do not hesitate to contact my office directly if there are any local issues that you would like to discuss with me.

Tony Newman
Leader of Croydon Council

Continued from Page 4

This is sad news, as the pool has become an integrated part of the life of our local community. It currently provides for a variety of functions, including swimming lessons, gym therapy, disabled swimming club activities, the Rotary Club's annual swimathon and is very popular with school children.

The proposed pool in Coulsdon is now unlikely and Waddon Pool at Five Ways is not within easy reach and lacks parking. Once lost we will never get a pool in Purley again.

Let us hope Croydon will become a "Listening Authority" and will listen to the views of its local community and keep it open or indeed give us a new one if the site needs to be re-developed.

I hope our readers will participate in supporting the local and the national petition. 'Change UK' manages petitions on a national scale.

- the threat to build housing on surplus school playing fields has been withdrawn by the council.

  This gesture has delighted all of us and let us hope that the council will reconsider its decision to close the pool - so it can be truly recognised as a "Listening Council'

- Purley Baptist Church is getting closer to submitting its planning application for the Island Site. However, at this stage, I am not aware of what the Church will be proposing for this important Purley site.

  However, a meeting is being held at the Purley Baptist Church on February 24 at 3.30pm.

  If you are interested in attending please let me (email: tvflora@gmail.com) or the Purley Baptist Church office know in advance (email: office@purleybaptist.org).

- Purley Business Association has initiated an action plan to make Purley Town Centre into a "Business Improvement District" (BID) and is well advanced with the proposal.

  The PWRA is in full support of this initiative and attends PBA meetings when invited

- the "National Planning Policy Framework" has recommended that "local planning authorities should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental condition of an area". Let us hope Croydon will take this on board.

  I have recently returned from a two week holiday in Thailand, where I had a chance to visit "The Bridge over the River Kwai".

  Most of us would have seen the film but visiting the site was an experience of a life time.

  It included seeing the graves of thousands of the prisoners of war - one third of whom perished during the construction.

  But, to see pictures of these heroes without any flesh on their bodies and the torture that they received should not be forgotten. Why, I ask, must we continue to torture our fellow humans!

And, finally, may I wish all our readers the very best for 2015.

Sir Richard Ottaway to stand down as MP

Many of you will know that I will not be standing for re-election as the Croydon South MP at the forthcoming General Election this May and so this will be my last article for the PWRA Journal.

Croydon South has been at the heart of my political agenda for more than two decades and it has been an enormous privilege and commitment to represent this constituency in Parliament.

The vast majority of my constituency work is based around assisting the many hundreds of constituents who approach me every year to request my assistance with an extensive range of problems which are affecting them. By their very nature these issues tend to be of a private nature, are often very urgent and need to be dealt with quickly.

Along with their personal issues, constituents will also raise issues affecting the constituency, eg train timetable changes and major planning concerns. Other of their enquiries may involve questions or points in relation to Government policy or national campaigns.

There have been major events affecting the constituency such as the severe flooding last winter, the 2011 riots and serious questions about the Borough's health finances, as well as celebrations such as welcoming the Olympic Torch in July 2012.

Looking back over my years in Croydon South, I am proud to have been involved in major local projects such as the Coulsdon Bypass which opened in December 2006. I was also delighted that Barratts' application for the redevelopment of the site at Cane Hill was eventually given planning consent last spring by Croydon Council. I believe this really will open up a thriving new future for Coulsdon.

I am especially pleased to have contributed to the modernisation of the Purley War Memorial Hospital, which I formally re-opened in November 2013.

Continued on Page 8

Continued from Page 7

The Hospital now offers an extensive range of outpatient health care facilities for the local community, replicating most of those offered at Croydon University Hospital. Campaigning over two decades for the Purley Hospital rebuild was a difficult, lengthy, frustrating, but also, eventually, a successful experience.

The game-changer was a 2011 government announcement that there was an extra £400 million for infrastructure projects in the NHS.

The Trust joined me in making a compelling case for the extra cash, and we were rewarded with the £11.15 million needed to completely revitalise Purley Hospital.

In a little over a year, the hospital site evolved from a largely empty shell into a state-of-the-art centre for integrated healthcare services, fit for the 21st century.

Another project I am especially proud of is the Scrap Metal Dealers Act. This initiative started locally, here in Croydon South, but developed into nationwide legislation. My first experience of the devastating impact of metal theft was in 2009, when I witnessed the aftermath of an attack on Croydon Minster.

A few strips of lead roofing stolen resulted in more than £150,000 damage to the building and its historic organ. In Croydon the impact has been severe. The criminals stopped at nothing: churches, schools, railways, telephone company cables, and – abhorrently – bronze plaques on Sanderstead War Memorial. For too long metal theft had been seen as a low-risk crime.

That's why in mid-2012 I introduced a Private Member's Bill to regulate the scrap metal industry – and on February 28 2013 it became law. The Bill enforces a strict licensing regime on the scrap metal industry – the principal outlet for stolen metals – to ensure every sale is accounted for. As a result metal theft crime has fallen substantially.

During my career in Westminster I have held several key positions, including Government Whip, Shadow Minister for London, Shadow Defence Minister and Shadow Secretary of State for the Environment. For five years I was a member of the Intelligence and Security Committee with oversight of the Intelligence services.

Following the 2010 election, I became the first Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee to be elected by MPs from all sides. I consider this appointment as a sign of great trust from my fellow lawmakers.

In times of global instability, the role of setting UK foreign policy is crucial in addressing the grinding Ukrainian conflict, the growing influence of jihadist extremism and the increasing need for EU reform.

There is still plenty of important work to be getting on with in the constituency and I shall be working at full speed, right up to the next General Election, when I hope that Chris Philp will be elected as my successor, representing Croydon South in Parliament and David Cameron will be re-elected as our Prime Minister.

May I wish you all the very best for the future.

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A flag for the fallen

Purley resident Helen Rogers has filled a century-old hole in the WW1 Remembrance process by creating a special flag to mark the fallen. Her creation was inspired when she realised that no such flag existed.

After contacting the Royal British Legion, who gave her project their blessing, Helen headed for Flanders Fields and the War Graves for inspiration. Drawing on the sight of the poppies and the words of Lt. Col. John McCrea's 1915 poem,' In Flanders Field', she designed her flag using the golden centred poppies – reflecting the 'torch' in the poem and hope for the future. Helen then added a lark ascending in the top left hand corner as the bird is mentioned in the poem.

Helen says: "The design draws upon several elements of the poem. The poppies, which form the main body of the flag, have since become synonymous with remembering fallen soldiers. A century on from WW1 red poppies still cover Flanders fields, blowing gently in the wind, a memorial to the young men that went to fight."

Helen works for Sussex Police and used Brighton design agency Studio Air to create the flag. The flags are made by Essex-based Eclipse Flags and are available from the website listed below. All monies raised by sales go to military charities.

The project has the full support of The Confederation of Service Charities, the Fire Service, Fort Widley in Portsmouth as well as Helen's employers. Already orders have come from throughout the UK and abroad. Orders for the flag, which costs £12.95 and measures 3ft x 5ft, can be made through www.The PoppyFlag.com

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Purley Pool under threat.....

With the news that the council has reprieved Purley Pool for the time being, readers might be interested in the background to this decision. The first threat of Purley Pool closure was made by the then Conservative administration in 2007. The 2007 arguments were very similar to those used in December 2014 by the Labour council in its move to close the Pool.

Despite threats about an unsound structure and the need for heavy expenditure for repairs, the 2007 closure threat was withdrawn. This was thanks to strong local opposition mobilised by the Save Purley Pool (SPP) campaign, led by Fred Wallis. And, as it turned out, despite the dire forecasts of the Conservative council, only a relatively small amount of money was needed to keep the Pool open.

The latest threat to close Purley Pool surfaced in December 2014, when the Leader of the Council, Cllr. Tony Newman, announced that it would be closed on April 1 2015. He said that a condition report had been carried out and that the roof was falling in and required a large sum of money for urgent maintenance and that it would cost a significant amount year on year to keep it going.

The SPP campaign thought that Cllr. Newman had been poorly advised. SPP has seen the report (minus its terms of reference). However, say the SPP, the report does not differentiate between housekeeping and maintenance nor does it give any evidence for its assumptions about the Pool's useful life.

The facts, says the SPP, are that Purley Pool does need some expenditure, but it can keep doing a good job for many years to come without too great an expenditure. Fred Wallis says that, "The benefit that this facility brings to the local community must first be fully recognised before any decision is taken to close the Pool. When it was built, it was built to last 50 years, which gives a useful life out to 2030."

The SPP concluded that the decision to close this pool – a very popular facility - is wrong. It points out that a large number of pool users will be affected by its closure.

If Purley Pool was closed the council thought that Waddon Pool would replace it. But, for local residents Purley Pool is easily accessible on foot, by public transport or car. From Purley, Waddon Pool is a more difficult and time consuming journey by public transport – and though it is only a relatively short car journey, parking there is inadequate.

STOP PRESS: Purley Pool Reprieved!

The council was originally due to make its final decision on Purley Pool closure at the end of February. But, on January 26 it issued the following press release:

The council is to delay the closure of Purley swimming pool and work with the community to keep it open while it can still be used. This follows talks between local campaigners for the leisure centre pool and the council leader Cllr Tony Newman, who agreed a way forward.

As a result closing the pool will no longer be part of the next financial year's budget proposals, which are due to go to the council's cabinet next month. Instead the pool will be kept open until it can no longer be used.

Cllr Newman said: "I'd like to place on record my personal thanks to Emily Benn and Fred Wallis who have worked so hard to bring everyone together so that the council can start to plan a way forward. I think that everyone understands that due to chronic under investment over recent years the pool could not continue forever in its current dilapidated state.

It was quite right to review this as part of the budget proposals, as there simply isn't the money available to make the pool viable in the long-term. The pool has almost reached the end of its life. However, we believe that we can find a way to keep it open until that time comes. This also gives us more time to work with the community on the future regeneration plans for Purley."

Cllr Timothy Godfrey, cabinet member for culture, leisure and sport, said: "Since the closure date of the pool was first proposed, we have listened to residents' concerns and are delighted that we have reached an agreement that allows us to keep the pool open while it can still be safely used and enjoyed by the community.

We continue to explore ways to keep facilities open and to explore how we can re-provide much improved facilities in any new development. We do have to recognise that all council facilities and services are under threat from the funding cuts by the government to local government, leisure provision is no exception. We are pleased to be working with the community to get as much use out of the pool while we still can."

Fred Wallis, speaking on behalf of Save Purley Pool campaign, said: "We would very much like to thank Cllr. Newman and his colleagues for listening to our representation of the facts that indicate that Purley Pool should be kept open for the benefit of the community.

The local representatives look forward to helping the council in whatever way possible to see that the pool and gym can be maintained at a satisfactory level without unnecessary expenditure. We would like to say that Purley pool is at the heart of the south of the borough and real long term benefits can be had by all if a swimming pool and gym is planned for in the regeneration of Purley."

The council will now work with members of the community on a joint survey of the pool. It was agreed that the decision may need to be reviewed if, in the coming months, there is any major investment or health and safety concerns.

Your Purley choice in the NHS

While there is a legal right for a hospital of your choice when it comes to treatment, local GPs seem to be failing residents in Purley. Too often, they are sending local residents to Croydon University Hospital, instead of allowing the convenience of Purley War Memorial Hospital.

When you are presented with the need to travel to Croydon, it is part of your right to enquire if the test or operation is available in Purley. The doctor may suggest Croydon as a default or, worse, may not know what is available on our doorstep (see separate article Use Purley Hospital - healthcare choice on your doorstep!)

You must remember, though, that the choice about treatment and care you receive from local NHS services is a legal right it doesn't apply to all healthcare services; however, when you do not have a legal right to choice, you should at least be offered some choices, depending on what's available locally.

NHS doctors have a duty to inform patients about the options available. The choices patients are provided with focus around choosing a GP or hospital and making informed decisions about treatment or consultant.

Residents have the right to be involved in decisions about their treatment and to be given information to help them choose the right treatment.

If you are referred by your GP or other health professional to a specialist, then you have the right to choose which consultant-led team will be in charge of your treatment.

This choice is a legal right. If you are not offered a choice contact the Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group (tel: 020 3668 1300/www.croydonCCG.nhs.uk). It has to ensure you are given a healthcare

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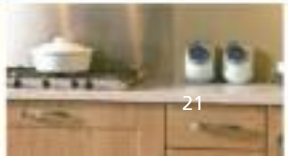

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Minor Injuries Unit The minor injury service assesses and treats a variety of minor injuries including, cuts, grazes and wounds, minor burns and scalds, sprains and strains, minor head injuries, minor eye injuries and removes some foreign bodies. The service runs from 2pm to 8pm, 365 days per year and is staffed by a team of GPs and nurses. No appointment is needed to use this service as patients are seen on a first-come, first-served basis.

Keston Medical Practice Located on the first floor of the hospital, Keston Medical Practice offers a full general practice service to patients living in the Purley, South Croydon, Kenley and Coulsdon areas. The practice is open from 7am – 7pm Monday to Friday. The team consists of seven GPs, three senior nurses, a nurse prescriber and an advanced nurse practitioner.

Moorfields Eye Hospital offers clinics at the hospital for patients.

Do I need to go to A&E?

Getting the right medical care by Purley residents can depend on going to the right healthcare centre. The NHS in Croydon advises a range of locations that non-urgent and urgent care can be obtained.

- For minor illnesses and injuries, keep a well-stocked medicine cupboard
- For advice or minor ailments, visit your local chemist.
- For non-urgent advice, call **111** for expert advice.
- If you need to see a doctor, call your local GP practice.
- If you need urgent care without an appointment, visit the **Minor Injuries Unit at Purley War Memorial Hospital**
- If it is a serious condition dial **999** or go to A&E at Croydon University Hospital

Scrutiny Moves out of the town hall

Last year the Croydon Scrutiny Committees decided to hold more meetings outside of Croydon Town Hall to provide an opportunity for more public and user voices to be heard.

Overview and Scrutiny committees are committees which to bring democratic accountability to public services provided in the area by any public sector organisation or a private sector body providing public services.

The first such meeting to come to Purley was held in the United Reformed Church. Unfortunately (writes Phil Reed) few turned out to hear the sub-committee, chaired by Cllr. Carole Bonner, deal with a range of topics including:

- adult safeguarding
- NHS Immunisation Programme
- Better Care Fund
- quality of life for people with chronic conditions
- Healthwatch Croydon update
- SW London Joint Health and Overview Scrutiny committee update

Further meetings around the borough are due take place through 2015; details will be announced nearer the time. It is to be hoped that the word about the roaming nature of the scrutiny committees will be more in the public domain by the time they next visit Purley. Though their work is by their very nature specialist the general public will, I am certain, be pleased to see the work of council sub-committees at close hand.

Probus Club of Purley is 30!

The Probus Club of Purley celebrated its 30th Anniversary with a very successful and enjoyable black-tie dinner for 60 members and guests at Purley Sports Club in November. Incredibly, of those who met back in 1984 one survives: the first Chairman, Ken Bromley, now in his nineties still manages to attend some monthly club luncheons.

Over the past three decades, there has been a monthly lunch at Purley Sports Club. Only once has luncheon been cancelled because of bad weather. A varied and interesting programme of social events is held – and is well supported by the members. Presently there are 52 regular members.

Committee Members

Owen Kelly, Membership Secretary, says: "The club remains what it has always been - a gathering of retired professional and business men, loyal to a well-established and well regarded local organisation."

For further information on joining Purley Probus please contact Owen Kelly 020 8660 0404 kelly1@which.net

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Frost Estate Agents refurbish for on-going customer service

Three month's hard work and a major investment have resulted in the January reopening of Frost's newly refurbished flagship office in Purley. Frost, Purley's largest and longest-established estate agent, has made this major investment to provide their customers with an even better experience.

Jenny Gregory-Dade, Director of Frost, explains: "Frost is in business in Purley for the long term and our major investment in the newly refurbished office is a reflection of the company's 150+ year commitment to the town. As well as providing a first-class environment for doing business, our refurbished offices provide a fabulous backdrop for an illuminated window display showcasing our sales stock."

The revamped Frost offices opened just in time to take advantage of the start to 2015 and a property market which continues to steadily grow. "Frost has prospered in Purley thanks to its specialisation in property sales, a large dedicated team of experienced property experts and the everyday involvement of Ben Gershon and myself who own the company. As a result the company has exceeded through repeat business and recommendations, thanks to its excellent customer service and expertise".

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Kenley, Purley & Woodcote Councillors:
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Kenley Councillor
Steve O'Connell, Tel: 020 8763 8644
email: steve.o'connell@croydon.gov.uk

Purley Councillors
Badsha Quadir, Tel: 020 8668 3672
email: badsha.quadir@croydon.gov.uk

Donald Speakman, Tel: 020 8405 6752
email: donald.speakman@croydon.gov.uk

Simon Brew, Tel: 07803 618096
email: simon.brew@croydon.gov.uk

Coulsdon West Councillors
Jeet Bains, Tel: 020 8404 3470
email: jeet.bains@croydon.gov.uk

Luke Clancy, Tel: 020 8668 3672
email: luke.clancy@croydon.gov.uk

Mario Creatura, Tel: 020 8668 3672
email: mario.creatura@croydon.gov.uk

Member of Parliament:
Sir Richard Ottaway

Constituency office: 8660 0491
House of Commons: 020 7219 1590

Cllr. Mario Creatura, Coulsdon West, writes: "It's been a busy few months on the council, but locally I am working with Syed Kamall, one of our MEPs, to try to improve the often patchy phone signal strength in the Purley and Coulsdon area.

Through the NoBars campaign, frustrated callers can now access a user-generated map showing the holes or 'not spots' in London's mobile phone networks. They can quickly add the places where their network has let them down. The map is the centrepiece of our 'No Bars' campaign.

The campaign will let customers, instead of the network service providers, set the agenda on mobile-signal coverage. By comparing information from phone users across the city a clear and complete picture of the daily failings of each network service provider can be obtained.

All that a frustrated phone user needs to do is visit www.nobarscampaign.co.uk and spend a few seconds sticking a pin on the interactive map to show where the phone signal on their network is poor or non-existent.

The campaign data will be collated into a report which will present to the Government, the Mayor of London and the network providers, demanding they address this serious problem. If this affects you, please support the campaign by adding to the map the places where you have difficulty getting a good signal."

Cllr. Steve O'Connell, Kenley, writes: In these increasingly straitened financial times I was delighted that George Osborne's Autumn Statement gave Croydon the go ahead to develop as a Growth Area. If we can work up a compelling case to retain Business Rates and Stamp Duty we will all benefit.

It must be said that the Chancellor's agreement didn't come easily, and required lobbying from Mayor Boris Johnson, your MPs, the Council and myself. Devolving tax powers has always been something that I know the Mayor has been seeking for London and if Croydon can become the Pilot Borough, then all to the good.

I fully expect to see this Council cut services in our part of the Borough and this prophecy has been self-fulfilled with the shameful proposed closing Purley Pool. I know that you will join me and your other representatives in fighting this attack on the South. If Boroughs can get to keep more of their taxes, hopefully even Labour Croydon will be in a position to improve services, everywhere. One can hope, and fight.

Cllr. Simon Brew, Purley writes: In November, the Croydon Business Improvement District (BID) team heard an important update from Westfield /Hammerson on the redevelopment of Croydon's town centre. They await resolution of a court case hopefully later in 2015, and if that goes as hoped, completion is currently forecast for 2019.

A campaign has recently been launched to form a Purley BID; a committee formed from local business (including Purley Tesco), is currently determining the most important local issues. Parking in Purley High St has always been a thorny issue and I'm pleased that the council recently approved (subject to local consultation) the provision of five additional parking spaces in the High St; this should improve access for shoppers, which in turn should result in increased business for local shops.

Conversely, the Labour Council's threatened closure of Purley Pool in April 2015 would have a deleterious impact on the High St, both for local businesses because of the reduced footfall, and of course for the thousands of people and school-children who use the pool on a regular basis. Chris Philp, the Conservative parliamentary candidate for Croydon South and Cllr.Steve O'Connell, have launched a petition: http://www.surveymonkey.net/s/SavePurleyPool which has already attracted well over 1000 signatures; please sign it if you feel strongly about this issue.

Cllr. Donald Speakman, Purley, writes: The question of extending either Heathrow or Gatwick airport is of vital importance to Croydon and Purley. We are mid-way in the growth corridor between London and Gatwick. This corridor stretches to the South Coast.

Purley residents are ideally situated to take advantage of the 22,000 new jobs which would be created by a second runway at Gatwick. Purley businesses can also benefit from increased investment in the Centre of Croydon and at Gatwick Airport.

The expansion of Gatwick would be the creator of 120,000 new and related jobs. The related jobs would, in the main, be in the service sector mainly in, healthcare, finance, tourism and hospitality.

An apprenticeship fund of £3.75 million will be created by Gatwick. This will lead to 2,500 new job opportunities. £1,500 will be given to help with the start-up cost of each new apprenticeship.

A second runway at Gatwick will create more flights and more worldwide destinations compared to Heathrow. This will increase competition between airlines producing a better service and lower fares.

Thus saving that dreadful trek from Purley to Heathrow currently required when travelling to many long haul destinations.

Financially a second runway at Gatwick will be funded by the private sector at no cost to the public purse and be built by 2025. Contrast this expenditure to the billions of pounds required from the taxpayer to expand Heathrow and tunnel the M25.

Whatever the decision we can only hope it will be made sooner than later to help provide the promised new jobs especially the apprenticeships.

Members wanted at Aperture Digital Photography Club

This digital photography club has been offering tips and advice to budding photographers and the more experienced for a number of years. Based at Purley Baptist Church Hall, Banstead Rd, Purley (next to the Library), the Club meets twice a month from 8.00 -10.00pm, generally on the 1st and 3rd Monday evenings of the month (except August). Parking is available in Banstead Rd or in the Hall car park and there is a good public transport service nearby.

The Club is seeking new members of all ages and offers a wide range of activities including talks, demonstrations, assignments, outings and social gatherings. In December, for instance, the Club took part for the second time in 'Help Portrait', an international initiative, to bring portrait photography to people and families in need. Please see details at: **http://help-portrait.com/about/**

The Club also has a Facebook site where members can display their work and exchange information on matters photographic. For more details, please see **http://www.apertureclub.org.uk/**

The Club's Paul Sandford writes," Why not come along and see what the Club has to offer? Some readers may have acquired a new camera at Christmas. We can help you learn to use it to the full."

Prospective members and guests are welcome. For more information and to register your interest, please contact Paul Sandford at apvsandford@aol.com or by phone: 8668 1729.

What's on
at Purley Library?

Purley Library is arranging a full programme of events through the year for children. All activities are 'drop-in' – with no need to book in advance.

For more details please see: http://www.croydonlibraries.com/news-events/

Come and join in the fun!

Tuesday February 17, 2:30 - 3pm: Chinese New Year stories and craft for children under 7

Thursday March (World Book Day), 3.00 – 6.00pm: Make and decorate a bookmark/bookplate

4.00 - 4.30pm: Storytime for children under 7

Talks at the Purley Lit

Purley Lit continues its 2014-15 talks programme on February 24. Talks are from 8pm to 9.30pm in the United Reformed Church hall, Brighton Rd – there is a visitors fee of £5 for each talk. Please ring Margaret Hall (8668 1764) for further information about Purley Lit or see the Society's web site www.purley-literary-society.com

24 February Dickens's London: Diane Berstein, a Blue Badge Guide, prowls around the fact and fiction of the capital in Dickens's life.

10 March The Thames Barrier: Alan Mitchell, deputy project manager, remembers the 2013 floods and explains how clever engineering keeps London dry.

24 March The Uncommon Harp: Margaret Watson plays all sorts of music with a variety of playing skills, while telling stories of her experiences with the harp.

NEWS • NEWS • NEWS • NEWS • NEWS

High-Tech in Happy Valley & Farthing Downs

Technology and nature are joined to give walkers a unique insight into the fauna, flora and history of two of Croydon's largest tracts of open countryside. A new hi-tech nature trail has been recently unveiled in Happy Valley and Farthing Downs, popular walking locations in the neighbourhood.

The new trail uses QR codes, which can be scanned by smart phones or similar devices to tell visitors about the areas' wildlife and history as they follow a scenic trail through woodland and wildflower meadows. The trail is ideal for families, school groups and anyone with an interest in their local environment.

Visitors will be able to learn about the burial mounds of Saxon chiefs, rare wildflowers and orchids, butterflies, birds, and a whole host of other fascinating features.

Using a QR reader app, visitors will be able to scan the distinctive codes, and be directed to a web page which gives background information in text and pictures about what they can be seen around them.

Croydon flooding project reaches key milestone

An emergency reservoir to better protect residents from future flooding is now as big as three Olympic swimming pools thanks to an £850,000 council fund.

As part of the investment, Croydon Council has finished the £250,000 expansion of the Purley Oaks depot reservoir, which is now deep enough to hold 8,250 cubic metres of floodwater.

Last winter, hundreds of households in the Purley and Kenley areas were affected after the Caterham Bourne overflowed, flooding homes and key routes like the A235 Brighton Road and A22 Godstone Road.

The council put in emergency measures to limit the flooding impact, including preventing the Kenley waterworks serving 46,000 local properties from shutting down.

Other progress since the council's cabinet approved the funding in October includes:
- Appointing contractors to map future Caterham Bourne flooding hotspots
- Starting a £45,000 project to improve drainage in Kenley
- Planning a new backup floodwater storage area off the A235

The job of mapping flooding hotspots from the Caterham Bourne has gone to specialist contractor Atkins, and is funded by an Environment Agency grant and Croydon and Surrey councils.

The Kenley project includes looking at adding more drains, clearing ditches in residential areas and designing a permanent flood storage area off the A22 Godstone Road.

The backup A235 floodwater storage area will be installed between the town centre and Purley Cross, and the exact location and size will be decided in the coming weeks.

If you live in or own a property near a watercourse, for more information visit the council website's flooding pages at http://www.croydon.gov.uk/environment/flood-water/

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Membership Matters

I'd open my report by welcoming the many new members that have joined the PWRA – one of the largest residents' associations in the area. As you know only too well my perennial theme is that the more members the Association has – the more influence it has with the council and other bodies.

Also I would like to express my gratitude for all those members that have been in contact to tell me that they are sending their completed standing order form directly to their bank. This is a great saving in time and administration. To the others of you who kindly pay their PWRA by standing order it would be greatly appreciated if you could send your standing order forms direct to your bank.

Today I am pleased to report (writes Lesley Frazer) that some two thirds of the current membership of the PWRA now pay by standing order. However, I would like to remind members that 2015 PWRA subscriptions are now due by the end of March. I know that a good number members paid their subscription for two years in 2013 – and so their 2015 subs are now due.

For all of those of you renewing your subscription for 2015 a bank standing order form (the preferred method of payment) is on the page overleaf or you can send a cheque to me at the address below. If you are paying by cheque please consider making it out for £10, thus paying two years subscription in one go – thus saving you the cost of postage and reducing the amount of PWRA administration.

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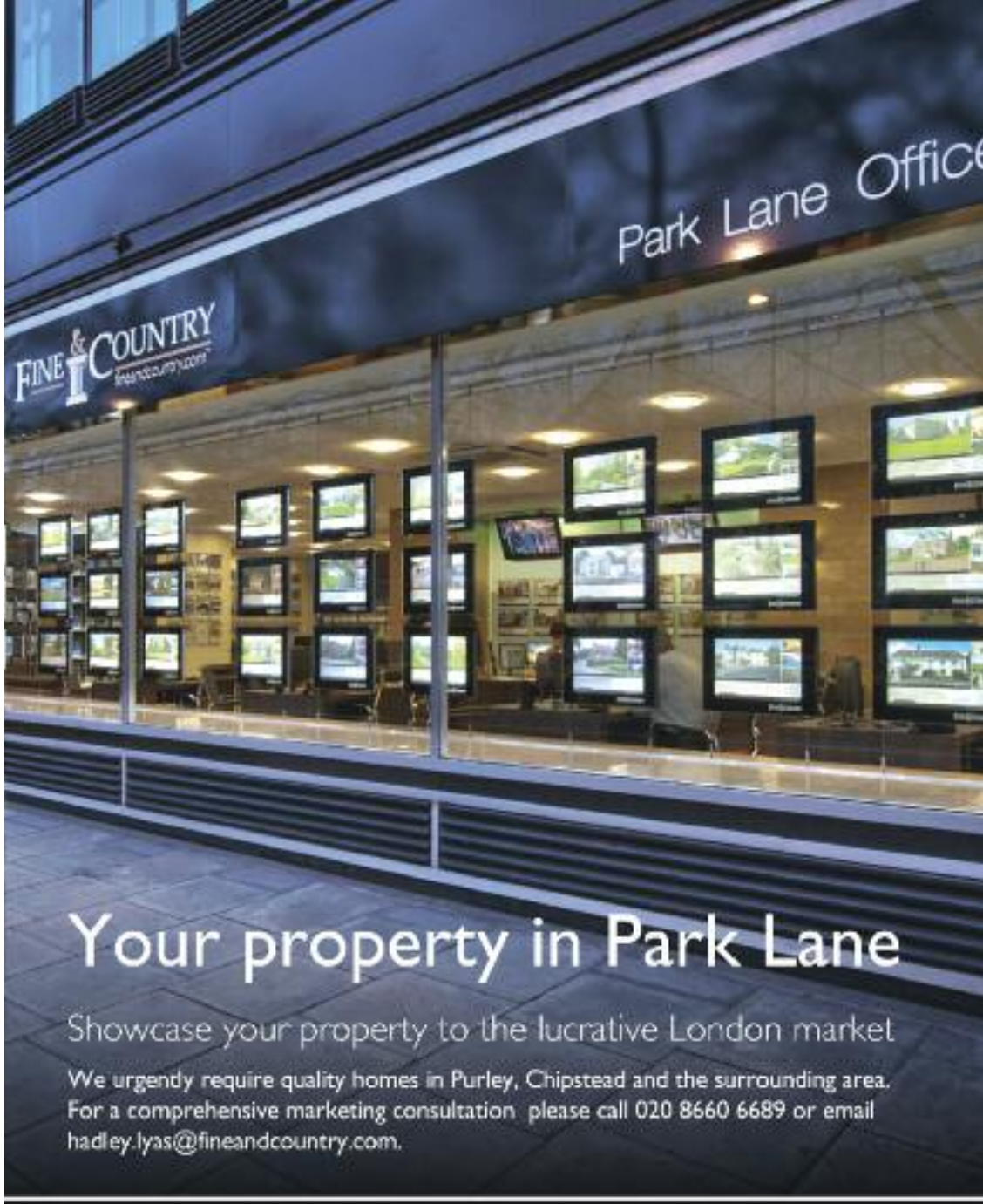

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