

HIGHBURY COMMUNITY NEWS

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HIGHBURY HEALTH HAZARD?

By Alison Carmichael

Fear about the possible health hazards for the public, especially for children, is driving a growing campaign against the fourth mobile phone mast to be installed in the northern part of Highbury in the last 18 months.

Owners of the aerial mast above the printers, BBM (Business) Ltd, on the corner of Riversdale Road and Highbury Park, just opposite Conewood Street, have appealed against Islington Council's Enforcement Notice ordering them to remove the mast, which was erected in June.

A Local Public Inquiry has been called and will be heard in Islington sometime next Spring. Council Planning Officer, Phillipa Silcock, said *"Hutchison 3G should not have installed the mast without applying for planning permission because its location and size means it falls outside the Town & Country Planning Act Permitted Development Order and the 28 Day Notice rule, which allows some Base Station Masts. The Council's case is on the grounds of visual amenity. We support the local residents in their opposition to the mast."*

Community opposition is based on the genuine fear people have - that the risks of cancer and other diseases have not yet been fully researched; and, that while the jury is out on this matter, such masts should not be installed in residential areas. Public concern and the perception of harm is a 'material planning consideration' which must be taken into account when the decision is made. This follows from a decision by the Court of Appeal on the Newport case in 1998. This found that even if the fear is not based on evidence, genuine concern and fear can be enough reason to reject an application.

The Chair of the Highbury Park Mast

Action Group (HPMAG) said *"This mast is within 100 metres of St John's primary school, very close to 3 nurseries, and right next door to the old people's day centre. We do not know it is safe; neither does the Government. We do feel most strongly that this is a completely unsuitable site for a mobile phone mast".* Alan Ward, Headteacher of one of the two primary schools close to the mast, St John's School in Conewood Street, agrees and said, *'Parents and Governors are united against this mast. We are writing letters and parents are signing the petition.'*

Gerry Hopkinson, who lives a few doors from the mast, believes that it is a national problem that the Government needs to address. *"I'm furious that we were not consulted. We must lobby to change the law to prevent mobile phone operators exploiting the planning process like this."*



THE UNWANTED MAST IN RIVERSDALE ROAD

Cllr Adrian Pulham, Labour member for Highbury West, agreed. He pointed out that Labour Councillors had opposed the two O2 masts erected earlier this year on the Arsenal Stadium and were also opposed to the one now installed on the roof of Aubert Court in Avenell Road. He made a good point when he said, *'The latest mobile phone mast to blight our streets and increase possible health problems for local people is an unnecessary monstrosity. Does anyone seriously think mobile phone coverage in Highbury is inadequate?'*

Indeed, it is more than adequate, but the Hutchison 3G mast is for third generation mobile phone technology such as sending video clips, playing games and other such non-essential entertainment.

Hutchison 3G signed a multi-million pound agreement with the F.A Premier League in June 2001 to secure the rights to provide Premier League content to mobile phones and wireless devices. The company said that it would enable Hutchison 3G to provide top-level football information to customers using its 3G networks in the UK and Ireland. Colin Tucker, Managing Director of Hutchison 3G, said last year, *"We are putting together a wide range of sports services for customers, ahead of our launch in 2002. Football supporters are major users of mobile phones and online services so we feel this will make our products very attractive."*

According to the press statement some of the services fans will be able to receive include: Footage of selected goals seconds after they have been scored, clips of matches, match commentaries, match results, goal scorers and full fixture listings.

If this sounds alarming to residents of Highbury more interested in the health and safety of the elderly and of children

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Food Co-op gets going

HCA member, Grace Robinson, has launched her project, reported in Issue 28, to set up The North & East London Food Access Co-op - with weekly stalls in Andover Community Centre.

Every Thursday, from 10.30-12.30, anyone who turns up at the Centre at 55 Corker Walk on the Andover Estate can be assured of buying fresh vegetables, straight from market, at bargain prices. The Co-op also accepts orders for the following week.

It has been hard work for the organisers, as Grace cheerfully admits. *"The first week was a bit chaotic - we had 80 people all scrambling to buy before we were quite ready. I never expected so many."*

Now Grace wants to expand, and is hoping to have stalls on the King's Crescent Estate. She is also looking to acquire a van with a view to cutting costs and to starting a delivery service.


Volunteers are needed to help with selling. If you are interested or want information, Tel: **7226 7960**. 

Free Nursery Education

Islington Council has a new service to help parents looking for childcare.

Anyone can get information on daycare and out-of-school provision from the new Children's Information Service. For the first time, a single call should help to answer many of your questions.

3 & 4 year olds in Islington can have a free nursery education place for a minimum of two and half hours, five days a week, during term time. Public providers and many independent and private schools offer free, part-time nursery places.

To find out more, contact the **Children's Information Service** on **7527 5959** or see **www.childcarelink.gov.uk** 

Car sharing scheme

At their AGM last month, Highbury Fields Association members heard of a novel car club scheme that could start as soon as enough people apply.

Sharing is claimed to offer advantages over owning or renting. Lower costs are a big draw, typically £125 a year to join and £2 per hour and 15p per mile.

This particularly helps those, including business users, who make occasional short journeys, but don't want the hassle and expense of owning a vehicle. Smartcard technology, backed by computerised admin. systems, makes the scheme easy and reliable to use.

According to the operators, cars are available on demand about 90% of the time. When the right vehicle is not free, there are special arrangements with local hire companies and taxis.

For further information, speak to the operators, **Smart Moves**. Phone **Dan Taylor** on **7700 2639** or see **www.smartmoves.co.uk** 


CPZ...coming to you?

The Council is damned if it creates a Controlled Parking Zone, where people think it unnecessary, and damned if it doesn't create one quickly enough in another area. Just round the corner from the 'H' area CPZ north of Gillespie Road, where some residents have succeeded in getting their roads returned to being uncontrolled, people are demanding the Council extends the 'H' area CPZ quickly to *their* roads. Highbury Hill next to

Arsenal Station, is now jammed solid with commuters' cars from afar who park and then catch the Tube to work, using the road as a free car park. A Highbury Hill resident said *'My wife can't park outside even to get the shopping and children out. We've had parking fines for very brief double parking. We can't wait 18 months for a CPZ.'*

Davina Millership, CPZ Officer, can only speed up the process if these residents lobby Councillors about it, as other areas are also demanding CPZs. At a CPZ meeting, she showed 12 residents the roads Officers want to include next into 'H' area. The extension stops at Aubert Park, includes a bit of Quadrant and the Sotheby and Northolme Road area, but not all of Aberdeen Road. Highbury West Councillor, Adrian Pulham, was there and agreed with HCA reps who noted that a small number of roads will end up being the only uncontrolled roads in Highbury.


"I was surprised to see that the proposed extension ends at Aubert Park. This will create terrible problems for residents and businesses from there to Highbury Barn and Whistler Street, as commuter parking is pushed into their streets. Stavordale Road and Highbury Hill residents have contacted me already. I am calling on the Council to include the rest of Highbury Hill, Highbury Park and Drayton Park, Stavordale Road, Leigh Road, Hamilton Park, Roseleigh Avenue and Martineau Road, in the 'H' area extension consultation. People need to be given the chance to say if they want a CPZ or not. It will save the council money as the area will inevitably have to be included in only a few years time."

HCA has enclosed a blue slip for members living in roads discussed here about the 'H' area CPZ consultation. 

(Continued from page 1)

than in the football results, some comfort can be taken from news that Hutchison 3G may not succeed in establishing itself against the competition.

A very recent report in 'The Business' states that one of Hutchison's financial backers has written off part of its investment in the company on the basis that it will never provide a return. Scepticism is centred round how the company will make money from its 3G services and attract enough users.

Finally, it looks like research is beginning to roll out about the health hazards of mobile phones. The National Radiological Protection Board is due to publish a study on the dangers of mobile phone base stations in June 2003. This may be reassuring if the results show beyond question that fears are groundless; but, if the results are inconclusive or confirm the anecdotal evidence of clusters of ill-health round the masts, the community here will be justified in its present high level of concern. 

*The Case Officer at the Planning Inspectorate will accept letters registering concern prior to the Public Inquiry, quoting Case Number: **APP/V5570/C/02/1098138** Kelly Powell, Planning Inspectorate, Room 3/06B, Kite Wing, Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, BRISTOL BS1 6PN*

*To contact the campaign email: **nohighburyparkmast@breathe.com***

Sign the Petition at: Plant Care II, Nitti Gritty, and Shivas Newsagent.

HCA Contact: Tel: 7359 5731

Mayor's Plan

HCA and Highbury Fields Association held a well-attended joint meeting on 4th September to discuss the Mayor's Draft London Plan.

This plan will shortly replace current government guidance on strategic planning and will set the context for land use in London for a generation. Borough Plans will have to conform to it. It may be a boring subject, but it will affect the way we live.

One of the big problems with the Plan is

the big gap between its praiseworthy objectives - making the best use of land, improving transport, promoting social inclusion and so on - and the actual policies. Many of these seem to have been dreamed up by planners with little knowledge of how they might work in the real world, and with liberal doses of advice from multi-national corporations and developers.

The Plan has been rightly criticised, by the Green Party among others, for having too much focus on the economic development of the City Centre and too little on the problems of social inequality

and on means to promote quality of life for Londoners. Many people feel there is something megalomaniac in the Mayor's vision of London as a "World City" - whatever that may be - with rapid growth of the economy and of the population and with skyscrapers and monuments galore. This could be more a recipe for economic and social instability than a strategic Plan.

Picking up the mood of the meeting, HCA submitted comments to the Mayor focused on the local area, with particular reference to opposition to tall buildings, aircraft noise, economic policies and proposed housing densities and design. ■

Why Highbury?..... Why? When? What now? What next?

HCA interviews Sue Reid, a children's author whose first book, an historical novel, 'Mill Girl - The Diary of Eliza Helsted, Manchester 1842-1843', was published this summer.

HCA - Why did you write about a child living during the Industrial Revolution?

Sue - I've always been fascinated by history. My mother gave me historical novels when I was young, which I loved, but history was badly taught at my school. The focus was on Acts and dates with nothing about how the rapid changes during the Industrial Revolution must have affected ordinary people. So I approached the publisher with the idea of a novel to bring that part of the 19th century alive for 9 to 13 year olds. Luckily they liked my idea and gave me a modest advance - not in the realms of J.K Rowling's advances, sadly! I then had a great time doing the research for the novel. I had decided to write it as the diary of a 13 year old girl who was forced to leave school to go to work in a Cotton Mill to support the family's income. I wanted to tell a good story.

HCA - When did you do the research and how?

Sue - I fitted it in around my regular work, which is writing short stories for schools, some for a radio series for 7+ year olds called 'Together'. I spent a week in Manchester visiting all the places my fictional Eliza might have been to, seeing what sort of house she'd have lived in, and, of course, going to some working Mills. The one at Helmshore, outside Manchester, is set up as a working museum. I was shown all the processes: carding, spinning, weaving. The weaving shed was incredibly noisy - it hurt my ears after just a few minutes and it made me realise what a damaging life many real children were forced to suffer in the textile mills. I had to think what Eliza would have worn, what she

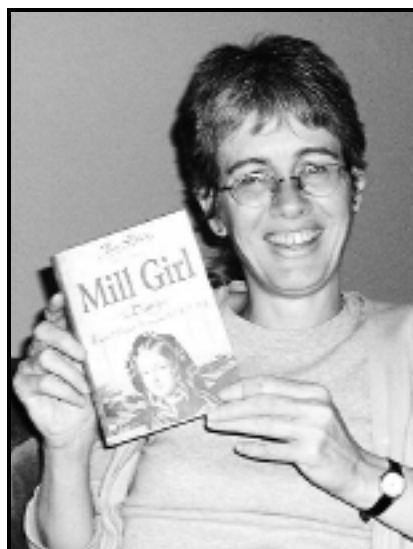
ate, if she went to church, and what a 13 year old girl in her situation might have hoped for in life. I made her write her Diary during the time of the Chartist Riots. That was when, in the summer of 1842, tens of thousands of workers went on strike and marched against the wage cuts and escalating food prices. Eliza's Mill was one visited by thousands of workers in what is known as the Plug Plot Riot - when marchers removed the plugs from the steam engine boilers to bring the Mills to a halt and the mill workers out on strike.

HCA - What do you have to do now to publicise the book?

Sue - After it came out on 21st June my publishers asked me to go to the Hatfield Children's Art Festival to talk to children about the novel. I had never done that before, but it was such fun and the children were so enthusiastic that I want to repeat it, maybe by doing workshops in schools. Now 6,000 copies of 'Mill Girl' have been sold and people say they like it and want to keep turning the page, which is what I hoped for! I don't think my publishers want me to do any more publicity work.

HCA - What are you planning to write next?

Sue - I'm writing historical non-fiction for Walker Books - a bit different from 'Mill Girl' as I have to make it interesting without imaginary characters! A piece I wrote for radio, but too long to be used, has given me the idea for another historical novel. So that's the next book, I guess. ■



SUE REID WITH HER FIRST BOOK

'Mill Girl, Diary of Eliza Helsted, Manchester 1842-1843'. ISBN 0439 981182 published by Scholastic at £4.99. Suitable for pre-teens to 13 years old. Sold at Waterstones, Islington Green and Borders, Angel.

ARSENAL'S PLANS SNIPPETS:

- 33 businesses objected formally to Compulsory Purchase Orders
- CPO Public Inquiry will not be before January 2003
- Court of Appeal did not accede to Arsenal's request in August to speed up Appeal proceedings. No news about the Appeal yet
- Arsenal put in another planning application for Lough Road because a gas main was sited under planned social housing. Residents say there are other hidden horrors to be found still
- Queues of lorries clearing soil from that site blocked pavements and roads, creating traffic jams in Holloway and Caledonian Roads
- Press reports are that Arsenal have not yet found the £300 million for the whole project

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Highbury Community Association

The HCA represents 740 residents and businesses, on all aspects of living and working in Highbury, Lower Holloway and Finsbury Park. Run by volunteers, it relies on donations. Send cheques to HCA Treasurer, 75 Highbury Hill, N5 1SX made out to "Highbury Community Association".

Send letters or articles for next issue to: HC News, 83 Highbury Hill N5 1SX or email hcanews@hotmail.com

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