

LEE MANOR SOCIETY



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Next Regular Meeting
7.30pm on 11th January 2012
at: 66 Effingham Road, SE12 8NU

Open to all residents in the area. Formalities end 9.00pm - nibbles afterwards

Notes of our Meeting on 30th November 2011 at 105 Burnt Ash Road

Present: Charles Batchelor (Chairman), Ralph White (Deputy Chairman), David Plumer, Sylvia Ling, Faye Carney, Frances Mignivolo, Jackie Percy, Dan Griffin and Sheila Peck (Secretary)

Apologies: Andrea Breugelmanns, Anita Whitfield, Sukie Picarda, Steve Griffiths, Jim Mallory, Rev. Richard Bainbridge and Lorraine Burton (Treasurer).

Progress on discussion of controlled parking zones (CPZs)

Charles and Sheila have attended three meetings to discuss controlled parking zones (CPZs) in Lee (and Lewisham more generally). These meetings arose from frequently heated exchanges at our Local Assembly meetings. They are intended to form a locally representative view of CPZs about which there is much concern. These meetings have been attended by local residents (who volunteered their services at a recent Assembly), traffic department officials and councillors. A consensus has emerged from these meetings that existing CPZs are unduly onerous because they cover too much of the day – from 9am to 7pm in some instances – and they have become too expensive, rising from £30 to £120 a year in the space of a few years. The view of the meetings (in summary) is that much shorter no-parking periods – two hours around midday – would be sufficient to deter commuter parking which is the main problem. This would mean that for most of the day residents could make local visits, family and carers could make essential visits and shoppers could drive to local shops without the cost and inconvenience of paying for parking or buying visitors' permits. CPZs would no longer have the deadening effect on local communities that they now exercise. They would not contribute to killing off local shopping parades. It has emerged that CPZs generate generous surpluses for the council coffers so there should be no financial reason for the current onerous and (for the council) money-generating system to continue. Any surpluses have to be spent on traffic measures but the result is residents in CPZs are paying for a large chunk of traffic improvements throughout the borough. The consultation system for CPZs has been shown to be inflexible and unresponsive to residents' wishes while the 12-month review of CPZs once installed is effectively meaningless. We will be putting these views to the Local

Assembly and, assuming they are approved, to the council. These views chime with those formed by the Society in recent years as the spread of surrounding CPZs and increased commuter parking have put growing pressure on the conservation area and its surrounding streets. We have been particularly concerned at the rigidity of the current arrangements.

Solar Panels in Conservation Areas

The council planning department says it is keeping a “watching brief” on the issue of solar panels in conservation areas and guiding applicants to site panels sensitively. These panels are not covered by existing Article 4 directions that require permission to be sought for any changes to the frontages of houses in conservation areas. It is hard to credit that Article 4s (A4s) could have been written in such a way as to permit this loophole but other councils have encountered the same problem. We have urged that any future modifications to existing A4s should incorporate solar panels as should any new A4s. The council appears to be weighing its policies on renewable energy and the cost of modifying the A4s against the visual amenity of conservation areas. This is unsatisfactory in our view.

Planning Matters

Emmanuel Pentecostal Church: The Planning Department has drawn up a proposal for the Local Listing of the almshouses that flank the chapel. It has also called for the retention “in principle” of the chapel itself – though the chapel was insensitively modernized in the 1960s. Local listing is not as powerful a protection as a statutory listing but the council’s own planning statement says: “The council will resist the demolition of locally listed buildings. But should it prove necessary a high standard of design, complementing the surrounding area and which outweighs their architectural and historic value, will be required in any replacement building. The council will endeavor to protect the character and setting of locally listed buildings by as far as possible treating them as if they were (statutorily) listed.” The proposal will go before the Council in February 2012 (not December 2011 as originally indicated.)

2012 Diary Dates

We propose holding our AGM on Wednesday 16th May and – provided this is acceptable to our garden hosts - our annual Plant Mart on Saturday 19th May 2012. Please let us know if you have any suggestions for a speaker at the AGM.

AOB

1. The Northbrook Pub refurbishment is complete and it is now a very attractive venue – our congratulations to the manager, Chris, and his team. We understand that permission is being sought for a conservatory at the rear so that users will be able to take advantage of the garden area.
2. Our new bank account is now set up and we have received our cheque/pay-in books. We expect to receive our debit card very soon.

We would like to thank Charles for hosting the meeting