

## **OGRES CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2008**

Part of **OGRES** remit is to monitor planning applications submitted to the council that affect our area. In some cases these applications would have a detrimental effect on our community and OGRES will work with the local residents to raise these issues with the council. If you are aware of, or have any concerns about planning applications affecting your neighbourhood, then please do not hesitate to contact a member of the committee who would be pleased to help. We are also taking an active part in the London Borough of Sutton Core Planning Strategy consultation process, so if you want to have a say in the future direction of planning in Sutton you should join our group.

We continue to keep an eye open for planning applications (via the Sutton council website) and we check them while there is still time to mount opposition or suggest changes if necessary. Committee members regularly attend the bi-monthly Beddington and Wallington Area Committee Meetings, where a range of topics of local interest are discussed. Looking ahead, the committee will continue to keep a close watch on the planning activity and we find that our representation at these regular meetings is one of the most effective ways there are of making the views of residents known to the Council. You can also monitor planning applications by visiting the Sutton Council planning site through the links on the OGRES web site.

We ask your help to remain vigilant if you do see planning notices on lampposts or receive flyers in the post, please notify a committee member as soon as possible, either by contacting one of them directly or via the contact button on the OGRES website.

Committee members also attend the Wallington South Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panel meetings which take place quarterly and help to identify issues of local concern which have an impact on the fear of crime or quality of life in an area. This then helps us to set the priorities for policing through the Wallington South Safer Neighbourhood Team. We also have members active within the Sutton Neighbourhood Watch which involves the Police, Community Safety departments of local authorities, other voluntary organisations as well as individuals and families who want to make their neighbourhoods better places to live.

Many OGRES residents want to park their cars off the street, which generally means paving over the front garden. However there are disadvantages to doing this - many environmental.

The increase in paving causes rainwater to run off into the street drains rather than be absorbed into the ground that can lead to flooding when the system becomes overloaded. The effect on the street scene is also potentially damaging to us as residents in that one of the main arguments for this area being designated as an 'Area of Special Local Character (ASLC)' is that it is an area with a distinctive landscape characterised by verdant front gardens. Complete removal of a significant proportion of front gardens could result in this distinctive character being lost and a review of the ASLC could result in a loss of this status. The overall impact is potentially an increase

in the number of successful developments within the OGRES area that are applied for and granted by Sutton Council.

This year we again walked around the area singing carols and raised over £200 for the Diamond Riding Centre. Thanks go to all those who joined us and as always we are particularly keen to find more volunteers who have a good voice or a persuasive manner on the doorstep collecting cash.

Residents will have seen from the Newsletter that we have tried to make the collection of subscriptions easier with the adoption of an envelope payment system. All the committee members are volunteers and find it difficult to find the time and sometimes awkward to knock on doors “cold calling” for subscriptions. We hope that our members are happy with this system. It is important to collect as many subscriptions as possible in order to demonstrate that we represent a significant percentage of the residents of the area.

Onslow Gardens Residents Association is run by residents who all have other commitments and give their time in order to help to retain the unique character of our area. We urgently need some extra volunteers to serve on the committee. If you have not yet put your name forward may I urge you to do so when it comes to the elections later in the meeting.

I would like to express my thanks to all members of the committee and our Road Reps, who have given so much of their leisure time to these activities and to attending the various meetings and other activities throughout the year.

David Duncan  
4/9/08