

Durand Academy at St Cuthman's

by Val Porter

With massive national media publicity, all of you will now be fully aware – if you were not already – of the planning application by Durand Academy to build a 600-pupil weekly-boarding school on the site of the former St Cuthman's School above Redford. Peter Harvey writes about this in his Chairman's Column on p.6

Setting aside the media furore and some pretty irrelevant angles, here is the current situation. The application (ref. no. SDNP/13/01358/FUL) is as follows: *Expansion of existing boarding school (class C2 use), comprising: alterations to 'Wispers' for staff accommodation, administration and stores with demolition of external fire stair, laundry building and extension to provide new assembly hall; conversion of garage building to staff accommodation; demolition of luggage store, classroom and technology blocks and ancillary buildings and construction of two new school buildings; erection of a new refectory in the walled garden, alterations to gate positions to walled garden, conversion and extension to tool sheds to provide an energy centre; construction of six new boarding house buildings; construction of new sports pitch with a polymeric multi-use games area (MUGA) and running track; construction of a subterranean sports centre beneath MUGA; parking for 40 cars, 2 minibuses and standing for 3 coaches; minor internal access alterations; together with full landscaping across the site, addition of bin store, sub-station and associated infrastructure. St Cuthmans School Tote Lane Stedham Midhurst West Sussex GU29 0QL*

On 10 April there was a well-attended open meeting in Milland Memorial Hall, convened by Woolbeding and Redford Parish Council whose planning consultant explained the grounds on which WRPC would object to the application, which has been 'called in' by South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA). You can find out a great deal more about the application and local views about it by looking at the WRPC website: www.woolbedingwithredford-pc.co.uk. Very detailed documents in connection with the application (and there are a lot of them) can be viewed on the official SDNPA planning portal: <http://planningpublicaccess.southdowns.gov.uk/online-applications>

The SDNPA site also shows you all of the several hundred letters of objection that have so far been submitted, along with a small number in support. A very active local group, Save Our Park, has been leading the campaign against the application and you can ask to be kept up to date by sending an email to the group (saveourpark@yahoo.co.uk)

In theory the deadline for comments from the general public was 9 May but in practice the response has been so large that there will surely be some leeway.

Your editor has read nearly all of the comments made to SDNPA and it is striking that a great deal of very careful thought has been given by most people in their responses, rather than knee-jerk nimby reactions. For many there has been a dilemma: on the one hand they would like to support in principle the aspirations of the energetic head of the present Durand primary school in Stockwell, South London. For these local residents their main overall objection is first and foremost a matter of scale and secondly the urban design of the buildings in a national park.

Others object on the basis that the whole concept of a weekly mixed boarding school for secondary-age city children has not been fully thought through, including the effects on the children of bussing them to and from London each week and then confining them in a beautiful setting without giving them the freedom to explore their rural environment, and essentially isolating them from interacting with our local community. Many have expressed deep concerns about the financial viability for the whole project, which is already receiving many millions of pounds in government support. Such matters are perhaps beyond the remit of the planning authorities.

- In planning terms, the main objections are as follows (and there are many more).
- Introducing a community of almost 700 people (children and staff) into this small 20-acre site is in effect adding a village the size of Milland or Stedham.
- The new buildings will be six times the size of the previous St Cuthman's school and on a site half the size of the original. The buildings will overwhelm the Grade II-listed original building (Wispers). The design of the new buildings is urban and inappropriate to the setting. Dormitory blocks are three or four storeys high.
- The narrow local lanes are inappropriate for the substantial amount of HGV traffic during the lengthy construction phase and for the regular coach convoys that will transport 600 children between London and St Cuthman's twice a week, let alone the increased traffic from staff and suppliers during term-time. There may also be problems of access by emergency vehicles.
- There will be significant negative effects on wildlife and the landscape, accompanied by light pollution and loss of tranquillity, and all within the supposed protection of a national park.

It looks as if there is still a long way to go with this application. It has been suggested locally, and not entirely flippantly, that a better site for the project would have been the old King Edward VII hospital, where developers seem to be struggling, or the old Syngenta site in Fernhurst, both with direct access to the A286. Or – an intriguing new idea – that Durand Academy should be built on Liphook's Bohunt Manor Frontage Land (what a mouthful!) that is currently the centre of another school controversy (*see separate article*). More realistically, perhaps, there would be far fewer local objections if the size of the project could be limited to something closer to the 100 or so pupils who used to attend St Cuthman's School and who were a welcome part of the community.

The Durand application is another major test of the muscle power and wisdom of the rather new South Downs National Park Authority. It's an interesting one to watch.

From nits to enuresis

The following appeared in the Chichester Society Newsletter for September 2011. It's part of a much longer article but my gosh it illustrates just how health services have changed! It's all about a clinic in Chapel Street, Chichester:

Chichester Council built the original Clinic in 1930. It was run by the Council Medical Officer, Dr Smedley. The day-to-day business of the clinic was managed by Sister Harris who treated patients for nits, scabies, minor ailments and dressings, helped by the Queen's Nurses (now known as District Nurses), who were all single girls in a hostel at 1 Cawley Road. During the war, the building became a day nursery for women working in factories, or the Land Army. On 10th February 1943 German bombs destroyed the Girls School and damaged other buildings in Chapel Street, but the clinic and Cathedral remained undamaged.

After the war the clinic became the centre for all infant developmental tests. District nurses, school nurses and health visitors all used the premises. Family Planning clinics began in 1960, and at the first session there were three staff: the chairman, a doctor and a nurse – heavily outnumbering the one patient!

After the rebuilding of the clinic in 2000 the services provided included family planning, audiology, enuresis clinic, speech and language therapy, podiatry, domiciliary physiotherapy, community mental health including clinical and counselling psychology, art therapy and occupational therapy.

The Titty Wittering Challenge 2013 Saturday 22nd June 2013



Walking the Walk for Others,
raising money for:
Dreams Come True
Hampshire & Isle of Wight Air
Ambulance
Community First Responders

This follows two previously very successful challenges in 2009 and 2011. The event follows the **Lipchis Way** starting in **Liphook** (at the Millennium Centre) and goes via **Titty Hill** to Midhurst. Then it's Singleton, Lavant, Chichester and finishing at **West Wittering**: a total of 38 miles. There are 6 events in the Challenge: a 38-mile walk or run, a 19-mile walk or run and a 10-mile walk or run.

CLOSING DATE FOR ENTRIES: 24 MAY. Contact by email to info@hbct.org.uk

The route from Liphook goes over Stanley Common to Elmers Marsh and Older Hill, over the Linch Road to Woolhouse and Iping and beyond ...