



ARBORFIELD GARRISON STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT LOCATION (SDL)

The latest news is that agreements over the southern part of the SDL owned by the Marino Family Trust have finally been signed. This area falls within Finchampstead Parish. We will keep you informed about progress but you can also find out the latest information at

www.wokingham.gov.uk/major-developments/arborsfield-progress-map/

Local events and information

- **Holocaust Memorial Day - 27 January 2017**
In support of this important event Finchampstead Library will have a display and information booklets and books to borrow. The Parish Council's 'Wokingham Remembers' display will also be at the Library, with copies of the booklet about War Memorials across the Borough.
- **Volunteer Recruitment Fair - 30 January 2017**
Come along to the Fair at Wokingham Borough Council Offices at Shute End from 2pm to 7pm to find out about volunteering opportunities. Volunteers are needed for projects including Walking for Health, Steady Steps Falls Prevention, GP Referral Classes and others.
- **Plans for the California Country Park**
A planning application has been submitted to improve the access, parking and café area at the California Country Park. The Parish Council will be commenting on the application. Improvements to the access and parking are much needed but we are keen to ensure the Park retains its Country Park character for the benefit of Parish residents and also local wildlife, and that the needs of users such as the Scout Group are not compromised by the plans. The planning application number is 163385 - do look this up at www.wokingham.gov.uk and submit any comments by 1 February 2017.
- **Finchampstead Neighbourhood Action Group - 7 February at 7.30pm.**
Do you have views or ideas about how to make Finchampstead an even better place to live in? Or do you have local issues you would like to raise? Come along to this meeting at the Library in the FBC Centre to find out how you can get involved.
- **Blue bag deliveries**
The 2017/18 deliveries start on 17 February 2017. To find out when yours will arrive visit www.wokingham.gov.uk and search for blue bag deliveries
- **Street lighting improvements**
The contract to upgrade street lighting across the Borough is well under way, including the installation of energy efficient LED lanterns. In some cases trees have been found to be obstructing the spread of light and / or access to the street light. WBC is organising pruning of its trees, and is contacting the owners of private property with trees causing problems, as it is the responsibility of the owner to ensure their trees do not obstruct street lights.

Please regularly check your hedge(s), trees(s) or other vegetation if they are near a highway. Is it overhanging your property boundary? Is it obstructing the footway (pavement)? Is it affecting safe visibility or sightlines for highway users and yourself? Is it obscuring traffic signs or blocking street lighting? If so please arrange for it to be cut back and / or lifted to an appropriate height, and to be regularly maintained.



Assets of Community Value

The Parish Council has some unusual powers - things it can do - as well as duties - which it has to do. One interesting power was introduced by the Localism Act (2011). This power allows us to nominate important local community facilities as 'Assets of Community Value'.

We have decided to make use of this power, and the first local facility we plan to nominate as an 'Asset of Community Value' is the Queens Oak Public House. The Queens Oak is popular with Finchampstead residents, as well as providing a meeting point for local groups and for hosting local events and activities. It is also an important feature in the history of the Parish, and attracts visitors from outside the Parish for this reason and also given its lovely rural setting and its proximity to footpaths and bridleways.

We expect and hope the Queens Oak will continue to be a thriving business for many years to come. However, as a safeguard, if we are successful in nominating it as 'Asset of Community Value' if the worst then happens and the Tenants or the Brewery get into difficulties and the property is put up for sale, the Parish Council can step in and will be given 6 months to try and find a way to ensure the Pub continues to be a place for the community. If the Parish Council is not successful in this, after 6 months the owner of the property can put it on the open market and therefore it or the site could potentially be put to an alternative use such as residential or other development.

We have to stress that while if the need arises the Parish Council will do everything it can, it will not be able to purchase and / or run the Pub on its own. The Council will need to look at various options including getting support from the local community to both purchase and secure the future of the Pub - which will definitely mean raising funds from other sources, and could mean it being combined with other services such as a post office, library, farm shop or something else benefitting the local community, as has happened in some other areas.

As part of our application we need to show that we have support from the local community, and we are therefore approaching residents, local organisations, and owners and other relevant parties. If you would like to support our nomination just see one of our Councillors, drop in to our Office or send an email to clerk@finchampstead-pc.gov.uk

Annual Gathering - 8 March 2017

Please put this date in your diary - our Annual Meeting for Parishioners, local organisations and others we work with will be held at the FBC Centre at 7.30pm on 8 March 2017. The meeting will include reports on The Parish Council's activities over the last year as well as interesting presentations from Thames Valley Police and others. There will also be an opportunity to chat to Parish Councillors over refreshments.

FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

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