

The South East plan is available on the website at www.southeast-ra.gov.uk and you should have received an outline through your door. There is a questionnaire to be completed and returned by 15th April before there is another consultation date in the middle of the summer holidays.

It is interesting to read the back page of the SEERA 'Draft for public consultation, January 2005' which prints the caveat (b) The timescale has left little opportunity to date for public involvement in the development of this draft South East Plan.

We have now been given the chance to have a say so please fill out the questionnaires and return them with a letter stating your concerns by the 15th April.

If you need another copy - telephone 'Your Shout' on 01483555208 or see the website at www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan. The address to write to is Your shout, Bray House, 61 Breakspear Road, Ruislip, Middx HA4 7SE. The same is available from the website and can be filled online, or telephone Freephone 0800 028 0888.

We would like to thank all those who helped deliver the leaflets at such short notice and Marge Harvey for organising the meeting

Stephen Green

DOCTOR FOSTER ON REDHILL ROAD?

Peter Desmond voices his concern, shared by many regarding road maintenance.

Steve,

At the risk of being boring, I return to the subject of the lake at the foot of College Close. This morning, 22nd Dec, I walked to the village, spending 5 minutes on the way calculating the moment to make a dash past the giant puddle, avoiding the 10ft high wall of water thrown up by passing cars. The drain is blocked. I suspect that it was never unblocked in response to your message. Recently, I have noticed hieroglyphics, in both green and blue paint, alongside some of the road drains, presumably as an indication that someone somewhere (a painter with surplus paint?) is taking action. However, a puddle cannot be painted out of existence, the drain has to be cleared, preferably at regular intervals, and this is the task of the local authority.

Let us be blunt; we pay the taxes and our elected representatives should be ensuring that we get the services to which we are entitled. Come on Councillors, **Do Something**.

Regards

Peter Desmond

Steve Protheroe assures us that he is on the case, together with Marge Harvey.

Council Tax:

In February, we had an all-day Council meeting to discuss the budget and agree the council tax for this year. It was the culmination of several months of discussion on how to keep the tax down. We began 2003 with horrifying forecasts of a 15/17% rise! I vociferously pressed for less, for, as I said in Council, it's no use improving our quality of life, if huge chunks of our income go in tax! In every department costs were reduced by greater efficiencies, finally resulting in the lowest cost rise for 30 years – 3.7%. The government's one off grant also helped, but we need this to be annual, rather than temporary. We'll take this up after the election but, as our residents requested, we haven't cut back on services.

Rubbish:

Of course, one of our greatest successes has been in dealing with waste. Our example has been copied all over the country. We're building incinerators to help reduce the need for landfill sites like Southleigh Forest. I chaired the last panel meeting when a few improvements were suggested to Onyx by an unusually large public attendance. The hope is that the imminent opening of the new Portsmouth incinerator will absorb most of the waste now tipped there but the fear is that Onyx might apply to extend their workings as the Paulsgrove site is now full.

The South East Plan:

What exactly is this? South East England's Regional Assembly (SEERA)'s response to John Prescott's demand for more houses – he wants to build hundreds of thousands of them in the south east whilst demolishing 400,000 in the north of the country. By now, you will hopefully have received a leaflet telling you how you can respond – please do make your opinions known otherwise it'll be assumed that we all agree with a massive house building programme. Hampshire already exceeds the planned numbers of houses in the area so green field sites may have to be built on in future. How will this affect our quality of life? And our environment? Do we really want new towns built in the countryside? What kind of heritage is this to pass on to our children?

Holding out for Hampshire:

In this mayhem, HCC's position is that the current rate of house building is correct in order to maintain the growth and development of Hampshire's successful economy. Correct that is if the government will pay for the essential infrastructure – roads, hospitals, schools, libraries, transport, water, sewerage, waste collection, doctors and nurses, police, fire service, space and facilities for healthy activities which will all be required if the housing stock increases to 640,000 here in the south east. Yet, although water, sewerage, transport and hospitals are already under pressure, the