

Councillor Chris Best Sydenham Newsletter

Autumn 2009

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My aim is to build a stronger community in Sydenham as well as across the borough through developing:

- **healthy and caring communities**
- **safer and secure communities**
- **vibrant, active and inclusive communities.**

Since this isn't the place to go into any topic in too much depth please contact me if there is an issue you would like to pursue with the Council on cllr_chris.best@lewisham.gov.uk. Please have a look at my web site on www.lewisham.gov.uk/cllrchrisbest and also [my photos](#) for a range of images. You can text me on my mobile 07725 143020 or call me on my landline 020 8659 6445.

Sydenham Assembly

The next Sydenham Assembly will see a change of venue to Our Lady & Philip Neri Church Hall, 208 Sydenham Road next to Sydenham Library starting at **7pm on Thursday 3 December**. The Coordinating Group have agreed ten round table discussion topics that provide the opportunity for you to give your views.

Living and working in an inclusive community is one of my priorities and there will be tables discussing community cohesion, provision for older people and progress on the Youth Assembly. We want people to participate in making Sydenham an exciting place to get involved and will be discussing community gardens (Lewisham's guide now online at www.lewisham.gov.uk/CommunityGardens/) the mosaic on the Naborhood Centre and the arts programme for next summer.

Of course there are some difficult issues that we have been working on and one of these is street drinking. We have removed the benches outside the post office and moving the flower stall has added colour to that part of the high street. I am aware of the problem of drinkers in the park and drug users around the lavatories in Station Approach. As a result of various hot spots around the borough the Mayor is holding a stakeholder summit at the end of November to listen to local views. A number of people have said that we should have a Drinking Control Zone in Sydenham with enforcement by the police on anyone who is drunk and causing a nuisance. There will be a table to discuss the outcome of the summit and ways to tackle this problem. Other issues include diversity in education and what improvements we can make to attract traders to the vacant shops in the high street.

We have been working on a Sydenham Charter and I will be leading a table to discuss priorities and sharing Council powers. One power is enforcement and I am ensuring that this is exercised on planning activities such as installing UPVC windows in a Conservation Area. I am actively encouraging estate agents to remove their “let by” and “sold” boards within the 14 days of completion and again will be pressing for enforcement if they overstay.

For more information and the priority plan please visit www.lewisham.gov.uk/LocalAssemblies/SydenhamAssembly.

Localities and Mayor’s Fund

The Assembly has been voting on the Mayor’s Fund of £50,000 and at the last proposal is currently being approved by the Mayor. Many of these projects are underway and the Sydenham and Forest Hill Youth Forum <http://sfhyouthforum.org.uk/> are working on the data base for Sydenham Traders. Work is also underway on the Youth People’s Forum.

Sydenham Town Centre Steering Group

The Halloween event held on Friday 30 October was a great success for children in Sydenham with some super “scary” young trick or treaters visiting local business in the high street. It was a pleasure to be part of the judging panel and award prizes to three joint winners: the Sydenham Panther, the Joker and Meg and Mog.

Celebrate Christmas by joining me on **Friday 4th December** for the switching on of the Christmas lights at 5.30pm on Sydenham Road (outside the Naborhood Centre) marking the beginning of Sydenham's Christmas festivities. Between 4pm and 5pm revel the children's excitement and hunt the for the Christmas Trees around the local businesses of Sydenham Road and Kirkdale. From 5pm be serenaded by the 'Blossom Street Singers (as featured on the BBC) and Hand Bells Ringers to promote shopping in our local high street.

I chair the Sydenham Town Centre Steering Group which is a working partnership between the Town Centre Manager (TCM), Julie Sutch, the chair and other members of the Sydenham Traders Association, the Sydenham Society, the SNT police team, residents and the Council. The top four priorities for the TCM are helping to bring back into use the vacant shops by working with the letting agents and promoting Sydenham as a destination to shoppers and visitors; working in partnership with the Sydenham Traders Association including developing their web site; the extension of coverage to lower Sydenham ending at Bell Green and improvements to Girton Road car park. Various meetings are taking place to move forward these key projects including acting on the improvements for Girton Road car park.

Renewal of mains work in Sydenham

Southern Gas Network are continuing with the installation of new plastic pipework along Sydenham Road. SGN met with Sydenham Society, Sydenham Traders and Councillor Marion Nisbet and we will be receiving fortnightly updates on progress. **SGN's website** is regularly updated with the latest on the project's progress – currently work in ongoing on Kent House Road until early December. Major SGN works at junction of Kent House and Sydenham Road with three way temporary signals.

Thames Water are getting through the phases having completed the work around Cobbs Corner roundabout.

The Council doesn't manage utility companies' works, so if you have specific queries about the activities of SGN or Thames Water, contact SGN's contractor Morrisons on 01622 762 135 or Thames Water's contractor McNicholas on 020 8687 8350. However, if after speaking to the relevant utility company you want to discuss an issue with the Council, please call 020 8314 7171 or email highways@lewisham.gov.uk. For further information and for a timetable of the different phases of work see www.lewisham.gov.uk/sydenhamhighstreet.

Improvements to Sydenham Road and Station Approach

Lewisham Council, with backing from Transport for London (TfL), has developed [proposals to enhance Sydenham Road and Kirkdale, from Cobbs Corner to Mayow Road](#). The designs have been developed with backing from Transport for London (TfL) and aim to create a more pleasant environment for pedestrians and shoppers, without adversely affecting the flow of traffic. The Mayor approved the preliminary designs in May. These have since been developed into firm proposals. If TfL agrees to fund the proposals, it will result in £3 million of investment in Sydenham. Additionally, Lewisham Council intends to spend £300,000 on upgrading Sydenham Station Approach. If the finalised proposals are approved, and TfL funding is secured, the work should begin in Spring 2010. By this time, any gas main renewal work in Sydenham Road will be well clear of the proposed scheme area.

Proposals to enhance Sydenham Road and Kirkdale are on exhibit at 59 Sydenham Road until **Saturday 14 November 2009**. The exhibit at 59 Sydenham Road is situated at the corner of Sydenham Road and Queensthorpe Road (the former House of Curtains shop). The shop windows feature a section-by-section overview of the proposed scheme and there is an opportunity for members of the public to talk to the team and view a more detailed exhibition at the following dates and times:

Monday: 5pm-8pm
Tuesday: Closed
Wednesday: 5pm-8pm
Thursday: 5pm-8pm
Friday: 5pm-8pm
Saturday: 11am-3pm
Sunday: Closed

Many residents are in support of this scheme and have set up an online petition at: www.petitiononline.com/sydroad. This is in response to the petition titled "Save Sydenham" on the Downing Street website opposing the council's plan for improvements to Sydenham Road. I have signed the current petition as we are in need of improvements to Sydenham Road and I would be very disappointed if this did not proceed. I would encourage everyone to go to the current exhibition, discuss any concerns with the officers and show their support.

Transport and Highways

East London Line - good news for rail passengers from Sydenham

Over the last year the Forest Hill Society and the Sydenham Society have jointly campaigned to keep our current levels of services to and from London mainline stations after the introduction of the East London Line in May 2010. I attended and supported the public meeting held on the 17 September at the Naborhood which highlighted two areas of concern to local residents. The ending of the evening service into Charing Cross – all trains will terminate at London Bridge from December 2009. There will be a cut in the off peak service to London Bridge from 6 to 4 per hour in May 2010 compensated by the extra trains going to Canada Water (changing onto the Jubilee line). I am working with the Mayor Sir Steve Bullock and Jim Dowd MP on lobbying the Minister of Transport and Southern to review the timetable and continue to provide the evening service to Charing Cross and ensure the off peak services meet your demands i.e. a customer focused railway service.

In May 2010, East London Line will start, giving 8 trains per hour in each direction between Dalston Junction in the north and West Croydon and Crystal Palace in the south. In 2015, this local line will become part of Thameslink, so that four trains per hour which currently terminate at London Bridge will instead continue through north London giving direct trains from Sydenham to Blackfriars, Farringdon and St Pancras International (for the Eurostar).

This will result in a doubling of the number of trains on the Sydenham line, off peak and evening peak, with additional trains at the height of the morning peak.

The **off peak and evening peak** train service will double from 6 trains per hour to 12 trains per hour as follows:

Northbound - 8 trains per hour between Sydenham and East London Line 4 trains per hour between Sydenham and London Bridge.

Southbound - 6 trains per hour between Sydenham and Crystal Palace, 2 of which run to/from London Victoria, 4 trains per hour between Sydenham and West Croydon, 2 trains per hour off peak only as now between Sydenham, East Croydon and Caterham, evening peak as now these trains run to West Croydon.

The **morning high peak hour** service will be:

Northbound - 8 trains per hour Sydenham to East London Line and 6 trains per hour Sydenham to London Bridge.

Southbound - 6 trains per hour Sydenham to Crystal Palace, 2 of which run to/from London Victoria (this is new as currently there are no morning high peak trains to Victoria), 4 trains per hour Sydenham to West Croydon, 2 trains per hour Sydenham to East Croydon and Caterham.

The additional East London Line trains will take a significant number of passengers away from London Bridge whose destination in London can be accessed as easily from East London Line stations. No peak Sydenham line train will serve stations further than out than Croydon therefore there should be fewer passengers on the Sydenham line trains, while Wallington, Sutton and Epsom passengers will have the advantage of faster peak trains.

Transport for London (TfL) now running stations between East Croydon and London Bridge meaning all local stations, including Sydenham, are now staffed throughout the day “from first to last train”. TfL complete refurbishment of Sydenham station including new indicator boards, increased CCTV and new tannoy system. Before end of 2010, all platforms along the line will be lengthened so that 10 carriage (rather than 8 carriage) trains can be accommodated which will significantly increase capacity.

On 2 January 2010, Oystercard PAYG will be introduced on all suburban metropolitan train lines.

Earlsthorne Mews

A meeting was held between the Council, residents and traders on Tuesday 21 April. The long term aim of those attending the meeting was the adoption of the road by the Council so that it could be resurfaced with street lighting and CCTV installed. Over the Summer we have continued to work on proposals as the Council has given reason why the adoption of the road is not possible and contacted the land registry to find out that no ownership of the land is registered.

I am continuing to talk to the residents and traders to make sure the fly tipping at both ends of the Mews is regularly removed but we need to seek a longer term solution. The previous offer of installing a gate was rejected because of users wanting to drive cars through. I will continue working with the residents and seek to use the several thousands of pounds in the bank account to spend on improvements such as putting up CCTV cameras and PIR lighting.

Trewsbury and Kent House Roads

For some time we have been raising with officers the concerns of residents living in Trewsbury and Kent House Roads and their desire to see traffic calming introduced. The main problem is the speed of traffic and that there is no safe crossing place. In addition there are concerns with the Heavy Goods Vehicles from H. Sivyer Transport Limited based at 160 Sydenham Road which has been used as a haulage and caching yard since the late 19th Century. The response from officers is that whilst both roads are in the Small Traffic Schemes list neither road has been given priority as the accident statistics and other criteria do not support a bid from a very small pot of money.

Sydenham Environment

Mayow Park

Mayow Park Bowls Club, with help from Lewisham Council, has secured £50,000 funding from The London Marathon Charitable Trust. The money will be used to provide a new area with changing facilities, meeting, socialising and storage space, and toilets with disabled access. The new pavilion will be situated next to the bowling green which will improve access to the green and facilities. The Mayow Park Outdoor Bowls Club has been in existence for more than 60 years and the works to create the pad for the new bowls facilities to the east of the bowls green as per the details shown in the notice board started on the 2 November. Initial tasks will involve necessary tree works and the hard works programme should be completed in approx 6 weeks with the containers being delivered in mid December.

The ECB (England and Wales Cricket Board) have committed 75% funding to the construction of 16 wicket squares at both Mayow Park and Hilly Fields. The overall project cost for the two

squares is circa £225k. The other 25% will potentially come from the Big Lottery or the London Marathon Trust. The ECB has also outlined its commitment to 75% funding for the part of the project which will be the improvement of facilities at both grounds including the refurbishment and extension of the pavilion at Mayow Park.

The work for the construction of the squares and improvement to the outfield at Mayow Park and Hilly Fields will be contracted directly through Lewisham Council and the work will be done by an outside contractor approved by the ECB and Lewisham. ParkSport is a project conceived by Envirowork Lewisham who will work with Lewisham to project manage this part of the works and then will take over the future responsibility for maintenance of both grounds to include the cricket tables.

The project is in three stages starting in the Spring of 2010 with the construction of a square of 12 pitches with the grounds being ready for play in the 2011 season. Stages two and three are the refurbishment and extension of the existing pavilion.

Sydenham Green Waste

Following discussions at the Assembly, and as part of a £1m package to help us look after our environment, we have introduced a free seasonal garden waste service – because of the success now extended to the end of November. I am pleased that you can bring grass clippings, hedge trimmings, dead flowers, leaves, twigs and branches up to four inches in diameter to the Girton Road Car Park where there will be a refuse truck from 9am to 12noon on Saturdays and Sundays. This means that you can get rid of your bulky garden waste easily. Just present it in plastic or reusable bags but remember we cannot accept kitchen waste, vegetable peelings, soil, turf, stones or Japanese knotweed. No trade waste and trailers, vans or open back vehicles will be allowed and you may be asked to prove your address. Garden waste can also be taken to the Reuse & Recycling Centre, Landmann Way, New Cross. Green garden waste bags can be purchased from any Lewisham library and arrange collection through CallPoint.

Sydenham Community Gardens

Lewisham Council is launching a brand new guide to help local communities get together to grow their own food. A derelict or unused piece of land, some dedication, commitment and green fingers are all that's required to get a community garden up and running. Lewisham's Guide to Community Gardens provides general advice about starting, developing and running a community garden, as well as outlining some of the key issues involved. The Guide tells you all you need to know, from how to get permission to use the land and how to secure the site, to recruiting members for the garden and tips for growing delicious, locally-grown fruit 'n veg. The Guide also provides links to useful organisations that may be able to offer funding and/or further assistance, together with some examples of community gardens in Lewisham that are already in operation. Lewisham Council has joined forces with Capital Growth to facilitate community gardens in the borough. Capital Growth's aim is to create 2,012 new food-growing spaces in London by the year 2012. For further information email communitygardens@lewisham.gov.uk or call 020 8314 2068.

Cultural Services

Lewisham Black History Month highlights

Black History Month is an opportunity for all Lewisham residents, irrespective of their ethnic roots, to participate in a programme which includes film, theatre, dance, comedy, music, poetry, book launches,

exhibitions, quizzes, craft, storytelling, talks (including a walking tour) and public debates. Fuller details are to be found in the Black History month brochure, available from all Lewisham Libraries and also (with a handy week by week guide) at www.lewisham.gov.uk/blackhistorymonth.

Sydenham Library

I am still waiting on a date for the major refurbishment works to start.

Sport and Leisure

Forest Hill Pools

Lewisham has now completed the tender process and appointed the design team for the redevelopment of Forest Hill Pools. The Architect is Roberts Limbrick Ltd, the Structural Engineer is WYG Engineering Ltd and the Building Services Engineer is Building Services Partnership Ltd.

The procurement process for these appointments was an accelerated two stage OJEU competition to ensure that leisure facilities can be re-provided at the earliest opportunity. Roberts Limbrick provided a thorough response to the specification and demonstrated an excellent level of relevant experience of similar projects both from conservation and leisure perspectives. They are leading the redevelopment of Kentish Town Sports Centre, an existing Grade II Listed Victorian Baths, into a modern leisure facility including detailed liaison with English Heritage and the Victorian Society. Although some bids from other architectural practices were also of a high quality, Roberts Limbrick's bid was considered to represent the best value for money, with a proposed fee close to the median of the bids and lower than the most expensive by a significant margin.

The architects will be invited to the next stakeholders meeting so that the emerging design proposals can be discussed and as well as future consultation. The final design will be fully DDA compliant.

The Friends of Louise House have been meeting with officers and seeking advice and guidance on plans for Louise House to become a community resource and have now submitted three proposals.

Please visit www.lewisham.gov.uk/foresthillpools to keep up to date.

Free swimming scheme

In April 2009 the Free Swimming programme funded by the DCMS was launched in the Lewisham. Available at all Lewisham public pools, the programme offers free access to members of the community aged 16 and under or those aged over 60. With over 15,000 people already participating, the success and popularity of this initiative is clearly evident. With an overarching aim to get more people, more active the free swimming programme has seen a 53% increase in the total number of people swimming across the borough. It is hoped this level of growth will continue as the word spreads and more Sydenham residents start to visit the Bridge Leisure Centre to take advantage of the offer.

Investment in Sydenham for Children and Young People

Sydenham Wells Park Youth Centre – MyPlace bid for funding

The Children and Young People Directorate have submitted a detailed bid for £3.5 million to provide a youth centre on the site of disused centre at Wells Park Road (corner of Coombe Rd) to the Government's My Place fund. We should know by the end of December if we have been successful. Young people have welcomed this bid because it offers a safe space off the street for them to enjoy.

Sydenham and Forest Hill Youth Forum

The Sydenham and Forest Hill Youth Forum working on the plans for a youth-led young people's forum, including a big youth event for Saturday 14th November and a residential trip for the young people forming the forum.

Housing

Transfer of Street Properties to London and Quadrant

London and Quadrant have been chosen to work with residents on the proposed stock transfer of council owned street properties in Sydenham, Forest Hill and Perry Vale. The transfer affects approximately 1685 properties, 1120 tenanted and 565 leasehold. At the moment L&Q are door knocking and consulting tenants on what is important to them. A ballot will take place where the majority of tenants have to vote yes for the transfer to take place. One of the benefit of the transfer of ownership is that L&Q have promised to meet the Decent Homes Standard within two years of transfer, including upgrading kitchens, bathrooms and windows. The "offer" documents have been circulated.

Hillcrest estate

Hillcrest Estate have been awarded £50,000 from the 2009/10 Playbuilder Funding to refurbish the existing play area using natural materials and local residents have submitted their proposals.

255 – 269 Sydenham Road

This site is owned by Amicus Horizon Housing Association who plan to demolish the block and replace with new flats. We are still waiting for the planning application and a timescale on when they will be able to rehouse all the current occupants.

Update on Planning

Latest on the planning application to redevelopment The Greyhound

The revised planning application for the partial demolition of the Greyhound Public House, 309-315 Kirkdale SE26, together with full restoration to create a self-contained A3/A4 unit in the centre of a new public square, the construction of new residential blocks with commercial uses (A1, A3 and A4) on the ground floor, restoration of the Spring Hill building and the provision of associated private amenity space, parking spaces, motorcycle parking, storage for cycles, refuse storage facilities and servicing, plus alterations to the existing access from Spring Hill and closure of the existing access from Kirkdale has now been submitted.

Update on other redevelopment

278-280, KIRKDALE, LONDON, SE26

Planning permission was granted in November 2007 for the demolition of the existing building at 278-280 Kirkdale SE26, and the construction of a five storey building with basement to provide a public house at ground and basement levels, together with 7 one bedroom self-contained flats with balconies above. There was an auction on the 28 October 2009 and according to the auctioneer's site the last bid was £422,500 so it remained unsold but is available at £430,000.

No progress on the Nickells site – the planners had only good to pre application stage so there is no planning permission for the site.

Recent Planning decisions**Planning permission has been granted for:****87 SYDENHAM ROAD, LONDON, SE26 5UA**

The alteration and conversion of 87 Sydenham Road SE26 to provide 1 one-bedroom self-contained flat and 2 two-bedroom self-contained maisonettes, together with the construction of an extension at first floor level to the rear and the provision of a bicycle store. I am currently working with officers to ensure the enforcement of the planning conditions. The developer is changing the facing bricks to comply with the planning condition of bricks in keeping with the Conservation Area.

169-171, SYDENHAM ROAD, LONDON, SE26

The demolition of the existing building on the site of 169-171 Sydenham Road SE26 and the construction of a part three/part four storey building, incorporating balconies, terrace and a roof garden, comprising a cafe/retail unit (Use Class A3/A1), 3 one bedroom and 3 two bedroom, self-contained flats, together with the construction of a garage/bicycle store, with access onto Hazel Grove, associated landscaping and provision of bin storage spaces.

GARAGES ADJACENT TO 109, NEWLANDS PARK, LONDON, SE26

The demolition of existing garages adjacent to 109 Newlands Park SE26, and the construction of a part 2/part 3 storey building incorporating balconies/terraces, comprising 8, one bedroom self-contained flats, together with landscaping, the provision of 8 integral cycle spaces, refuse stores and a car parking space.

46 VENNER ROAD, LONDON, SE26 5EF

Lawful Development Certificate in respect of the alteration and conversion of the integral garage at 46 Venner Road SE26 to provide a habitable room.

THE BRICK STORE, SPRING HILL, LONDON, SE26

Details submitted in compliance with conditions (1) facing materials, (4) site investigation, (11) hard & soft landscaping, plus boundary treatments, (12) measures to prevent dust pollution, (13) lighting and (14) specification for green roof of the planning permission dated 17 May 2007 for the alteration and conversion of the existing building (known as "The Brick Store") on land rear of Peak Hill Avenue and fronting Spring Hill SE26, from B1 Business unit to provide a one-bedroom live/work unit, together with the construction of a new curved sedum-covered roof over the building, formation of a courtyard / lightwell and alterations to the elevations.

114 SYDENHAM ROAD, LONDON, SE26 5JX

The formation of a terrace with perimeter railings, at first floor level to the rear of 114 Sydenham Road SE26, together with alterations to the side and rear elevations. No new external finishes, including works of making good, shall be carried out other than in materials to match the existing, unless the local planning authority agrees in writing to any variation.

Enforcement of planning permission**65 A AND B SYDENHAM ROAD**

Removal of original windows and replacement with UPVC without planning permission on a Conservation Area.

Planning objections**25 CHURCH ROAD, SE19 2TE**

I have written to the London Borough of Bromley to object to the change of use from Bingo Hall (Class D2) to church use (Class D1) on the grounds of the loss of the current leisure usage and supported the aspiration of a cinema at this location as I think a cinema would enhance the vitality of Crystal Palace. I have supported the concerns of residents with the number of large churches in the immediate area and the catchment of this particular church which I understand may well spread to Surrey. Residents have also expressed their concerns with traffic flow as well as possible noise nuisance.

Links, events and up and coming meetings

Sydenham Assembly - www.lewisham.gov.uk/LocalAssemblies/SydenhamAssembly

7pm – 9pm Thursday 3 December

5.30 Friday 4 December – Sydenham Christmas lights

Sydenham and Forest Hill Youth Forum - www.sfhyouthforum.org.uk

1pm – 4pm Saturday 14th November Youth Event

Sydenham Society – www.sydenhamsociety.com

Sydenham Garden – www.sydenhamgarden.org.uk

10.30 am Saturday 7 November AGM

11am – 3pm Saturday 12 December Christmas Fair

Sydenham Music Festival – www.sydenhammusic.org.uk

Sydenham Arts Festival – www.sydenhamartsfestival.com

Sydenham Town – www.sydenham.org.uk

Please subscribe to the Arts Service [ebulletin](#) on the web site for the range of events coming up over the next month.

Surgery details: from 10.30 to 11.30 on the 1st Saturday at Sydenham Library, 3rd Saturday at the Naborhood Centre, 44a Sydenham Road (next to the Post Office) and 4th Saturday at Hillcrest T.A. Club Room, High Level Drive, SE26

Please email onto others and if you'd like to receive information this way please let me know of any changes to your email address