

# BURNTWOOD ACTION GROUP



NEWSLETTER No 5

JUNE 2010

## A time for rejoicing?

The champagne corks aren't popping yet but we are now much more confident that Burntwood's surrounding greenbelt is less threatened than it was a few weeks ago.

You will be aware that the threat to Burntwood's surrounding greenbelt came from the previous government's pressure on the West Midlands Regional Assembly to set a high target for the number of new homes to be built in Lichfield District over the next sixteen years.

The new coalition government appears to have a completely different approach to how the country should satisfy its need for new homes in the foreseeable future. On 30th May Eric Pickles, the new Communities Secretary said:

"The previous government gave the green light for the destruction of the Green Belt across the country and we are determined to stop it. We've promised to use legislation to scrap top-down building targets that are eating up the Green Belt but I'm not going to make communities wait any longer to start making decisions for themselves. That's why I have written to all councils to let them know that from today they can make planning decisions in the knowledge that Regional Strategies will soon be history.

"It will no longer be possible to concrete over large swathes of the country without any regard to what local people want. From now on communities will be trusted to make the right decisions."

At present Lichfield District Council is unsure about how its Local Development Framework will progress. Last week Councillor Neil Roberts, Cabinet Member for Development, said:

".... we are awaiting formal guidance from the new government that will shape the way housing and development plans are created for the District and specifically how housing numbers will be determined."

Despite this apparent good news, some landowners are out to make a quick buck and developers find it easier to build on green fields than on previously developed land. For these reasons we must remain vigilant and the Action group

will remain in existence to monitor development plans and fight any that threaten our surroundings. We will, however, continue to work constructively with LDC to help to identify previously used land, which could be used for new homes.

## Health Centre Update

Outline plans for two new health centres at Greenwood House and Burntwood Leisure Centre sites have been passed by the Strategic Health Authority (SHA) and the Primary Care Trust (PCT). Jim Barlow, Primary Care Manager said "The consultation exercise confirmed consistent support for the preferred site options" and he thanked everyone who took part in it. The PCT will now produce a full business case for the developments and if this is approved by the SHA a developer will be appointed to start work in the autumn of 2010, with 2013 as the target for opening. The two new multipurpose buildings will house GP surgeries, offices for PCT staff and facilities for Social care, Mental Health, Children and Lifelong Learning and voluntary organisations.

## Burntwood Tip

You will probably have read in the local press about Staffordshire County Council's plan to close Burntwood's Household Waste Recycling Centre at Chase Terrace and local councillors' campaign to have the decision rescinded. Our committee supports realistic moves to cut wasteful council spending but is unanimous in supporting this campaign to keep the 'tip' because:

- The site is much more convenient for Burntwood residents than alternatives at Cannock, Lichfield or Rugeley.
- Negotiating weekend traffic to the Poplars site in Cannock or the Trent Valley site in Lichfield can already add over an hour to the job of dumping a few bulky items.
- Fly tipping already scars some of our surrounding countryside and this would probably worsen the situation.
- Local residents and councillors have not been consulted about this proposal and have been treated with contempt by county officials.
- This is one more example of Burntwood residents being treated as second-class citizens when facilities are being provided from local taxation.

If, like us, you feel strongly about this issue please add your name to the petitions. These are available at Morrisons and some other local stores.

**To contact us** please use:

- one of our post boxes at Burntwood Health Centre, Hudson Drive, the Post Office, Swan Island or "Wild Orchid" flower shop, Rugeley Road.
- the letterbox of 37 Farewell Lane or 8 Church Road.
- OR our website: [www.burntwoodactiongroup.co.uk](http://www.burntwoodactiongroup.co.uk)