



Landfill lethargy or community campaign - the choice is ours!

Editorial: Knepp Castle: Nick Herbert MP: Laybrook: Odour Monitoring: Horsham DC Strategy: Minerals and Waste Forum: Village Day: Flower Festival



Editorial

Thakeham is at its best at this time of year. Not only are we blessed with fantastic countryside currently in bloom, but also an active community which has been 'blossoming' at recent events such as the Knepp Castle picnic concert and the annual Village Day. And we still have the Thakeham Flower Festival at the end of July to look forward to!

It's important that we take neither our countryside, nor our sense of community for granted. Our environment is under threat from the proposed landfill site at Laybrook and our village identity could disappear if we allow a major housing development to mushroom (pun intended) and the area loses its countryside character. But as the support shown at the Knepp Castle event proved, Thakeham residents are not going to stand idly by and let distant corporations and decision-makers impose their rubbish and their plans on us! A big thank you for your support so far - but the fight still goes on! There is no room for lethargy, and if and when the planning application for Laybrook goes to public consultation, we all need to grab pen and paper (or keyboard) and write to express our concerns.

Knepp Castle Picnic Concert

A fantastic time was had by all on Sunday 31st May at TVA's fundraising Knepp Castle picnic concert. Polo was being played as we arrived and fabulous musical entertainment for the event was provided by Willie Austen and his band, supported by The Fragilistics and The Sirens. The weather was just glorious as we all sat down to enjoy the afternoon on the grass, with stunning views across the lake to the castle. Both local MPs Francis Maude and Nick Herbert took time to come along to show their support for our campaign.

The day would not have been anywhere near the success it was without the help and support of so many local people. Thank you to everyone who kindly gave up so much of their own time before the event and on the day. Special thanks must go to Charles and Issy Burrell who very kindly allowed us to use their land, a truly wonderful location. Also to everyone who generously donated items for our auction and raffle. The auction alone raised in excess of £11,000 with fabulous lots such as holidays to Kenya, Spetses and Menorca, tickets to see Take That in concert, fly fishing, flights and your own personal chef for a night!

Our local band, The Fragilistics, offered a gig in the auction as well. Marcel Hoad from Fowlers did a superb job as auctioneer for the afternoon and ARK Events kindly supplied very welcome drinks in the soaring temperatures.

We raised an absolutely staggering £18,500 at the picnic concert, which will enable Thakeham Village Action to buy in expert advice for the campaign against the proposed landfill site at Laybrook brickworks.



Nick Herbert and the Landfill Campaign

Our MP, Nick Herbert, once again lent his support to our No Laybrook Landfill campaign by appearing, alongside Francis Maude MP, at the Knepp Castle event and speaking passionately in our support. The following are extracts from his subsequent press release:

“Arundel & South Downs MP Nick Herbert has renewed his call for an end to landfill in West Sussex. Mr Herbert was speaking at a major fundraising event organised by campaigners fighting proposals to dump 4.7 million tonnes of rubbish at Laybrook Brickworks near Thakeham.

Mr Herbert, who is Shadow Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, said it was unacceptable that local communities should have to put up with the noise, traffic, pollution, flies, smell and litter from landfill sites.

In a renewed call for a policy of ‘zero landfill’, Mr Herbert said that there were better ways to deal with waste; that we should reduce packaging, increase recycling rates and convert more of our waste into energy.

Mr Herbert has warned that the war against landfill is far from won. Following publication of the final South East Plan last month, West Sussex still faces the prospect of having to accept nearly 2 million tonnes of rubbish from London.

And, with the planning application for a landfill site at Laybrook imminent and the recent extension of Horton Landfill Site near Small Dole, local communities still face an uncertain future. At Sunday’s event, Mr Herbert pledged that he would continue to give his strong backing to local communities in their battle against landfill.

After the event, Mr Herbert commented: “Our successful fight to save our local hospital services showed that people power can work. So I urge local people to fight on to prevent rotting rubbish from being dumped in your community.

We’ve successfully stopped landfill at Washington. Now we must stop it at Laybrook, too. I will do everything I can to support you. In the 21st Century, it’s time to end landfill, and the environmental damage it does, for good.”

Mr Herbert was joined at the event by Charles Burrell, owner of Knepp Castle, and Horsham MP Francis Maude whose constituency is affected by the proposals for Laybrook.”

Laybrook: We are still waiting

It was in the middle of January that Cory Environmental submitted its planning application for a landfill at Laybrook off the B2133 in Thakeham. At the time of writing, it is still being checked and validated by the County Council. This is not due to any laziness by the Council, more the opposite. Unlike most planning applications, for a house extension or the like, this application comes under the environmental impact assessment regulations. As a result, the application must contain all the applicant’s evidence used to back up their application.

When the Council’s officers looked at Cory’s application they found that some information they required was not in the submission. Hence, Cory was asked to supply this. In the middle of June, Cory sent in their response, but the Council officers must of

course thoroughly check that it contains all that they asked for. Should it do so, the task of approving it will be straightforward and the time to send in your objections will start. This could therefore be in July. However, should the officers decide they require more, it will go back to Cory - in which case we could be waiting for weeks or months.

What we ask is that you look out for a leaflet through your letterbox, you look out for posters and you keep an eye on www.nolaybrooklandfill.co.uk. As soon as we announce a date, please write in straightaway, by letter or e-mail, to West Sussex County Council in Chichester.

Odour Monitoring

In the last edition of the Thakeham Oak, TVA announced that it was looking to monitor the odours coming from the Sussex Mushrooms site. At a public meeting on 26 January, a large number of residents were concerned about the frequent unpleasant smells which are released into the community on a regular basis.

Since then, TVA has been in discussions with both Thakeham Parish Council and Horsham District Council about the odour situation and this dialogue will continue over the coming months. It should be stressed that this is not a dig at Sussex Mushrooms, but with the potentially imminent application for a landfill site at Laybrook, it would be helpful to all parties if improvements could be made now to reduce odours in our local environment. We believe that Sussex Mushrooms, the Parish and District Councils have this on their agenda.

TVA is going to start monitoring the odour situation and already has some volunteers from various locations across the parish. These volunteers will complete a daily log which will be consolidated into a wider report to build a picture of where the smell is on a given day, together with the wind direction, climatic conditions and smell strength. This could prove helpful in a number of ways. It will 'put a stake in the ground' to define the present odour levels and locations, measure how various future initiatives taken by the mushroom farm impact the community and be factual about whether the smell is getting worse or lessening.

On the basis that this information could prove useful in future strategies for making environmental improvements (and we hear that many positive things are currently planned or in hand) then we would be happy to share the data with Sussex Mushrooms and our District and Parish Councils.

If you would like to be a monitor, please e-mail us on thakehamva@yahoo.co.uk

Horsham DC Core Strategy Review

The local planning strategy treadmill carries on. It is only a little over two years since the core strategy plan for locating large housing estates in the district was approved and now Horsham District Council is going to review it. An outline of the new strategy is expected to be announced in July and TVA believes that sites such as the land next to Water Lane could be included, despite it being an unsustainable location.

Minerals and Waste Forum at Rydon Community College

TVA's Secretary, Jean Locker, was invited to be a member of the expert panel at the Wiggonholt Association's Public Forum on minerals and waste. The event, chaired by Gary Shipton, Editor-in-Chief of Sussex Newspapers (owners of the County Times and the Gazette), was held at Rydon Community College in Thakeham on 8th May. The other panel members were Nick Herbert MP, Richard Bate of Green Balance, Keith Riley of Veolia Environmental Services and Phillip Russell of West Sussex CC Waste Management Services. Over 100 people turned up and it appeared that over half were there solely to oppose Laybrook landfill.

After initial introductory remarks by the panel, came the question and answer session. Questions asked concerned alternatives to landfill, such as mechanical-biological waste processing plants, and increased rates of birth defects near landfill sites. After the meeting, Jean Locker said: "This well organised forum was a chance to debate both waste and minerals issues. That most of the questions concerned Laybrook and landfill demonstrated how strong local concerns are about a rotting rubbish landfill in our midst".

Thakeham Village Day

Once again, we had a wonderful Village Day on the 13th June. The weather gods turned a blind eye to the forecast and provided us with perfect conditions for a successful day. The Village Day is a fundraiser for Thakeham First School and the Village Hall but is also one of those events which make us all see what a great community we have.

The combination of traditional stalls - tombolas, wood craft and coconut shy - and more recent additions such as the Strongman competition and the evening's hog roast and live music, ensured there was something for everybody to enjoy. The children of the village school displayed time-honoured country dancing skills around the maypole, but also gave a modern twist with a samba performance.

As always, Village Day was a great opportunity for everybody to meet friends



and renew acquaintances and also welcome visitors - we have a village and a community to be proud of. A great thank you to all organisers and contributors for all their hard work before, during and after the event. Let's all work together to ensure we can retain the unique character of our village!

If you specifically want to get involved with Village Day planning, more help is critical in planning and organising next year's event - the future of Village Day is at risk unless more people get involved! Please contact Matt Starling on 01798 817214 for more information and to offer your help.

Thakeham Flower Festival - 23rd to 26th July

Summer has arrived and preparations for the 22nd flower festival are well underway. There is an action packed programme to suit all ages! The scarecrow competition is back, along with the dog show, car boot sale, open gardens and children's activities.

The full programme and tickets will go on sale at the beginning of July, but highlights include:

- 23rd July - 6pm: Art Show Preview
- 24th July - 10am: Festival Opens
- 24th July - 7.30pm: Thakeham Rocks with a concert by the Fragilistics (children welcome)
- 25th July - 8pm: Piano Recital by Andrew Collett

These events are in addition to the wonderful Church flowers, art exhibition and - of course - refreshments. Tickets can be obtained from the White Lion or Revd Derek Spencer. A great start to the Summer Holidays!

Thakeham Village Action - Membership Subscription

I enclose a cheque (payable to TVA) or cash for £5. I include a donation of £ _____

Name & Address _____

_____ Telephone No. _____ No. in Family _____

Send to Mark Keenan, Copper Beeches, The Street, Thakeham, RH20 3EP
(1st house on left immediately after the school),
or if you wish to help you can email thakehamva@yahoo.co.uk