



JULY 2016

IRVINE ROAD AREA RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

# newsletter

Your voice in the local community

<http://www.irara.org.uk>

IF YOU ARE NOT  
ALREADY A MEMBER,  
JOIN IRARA NOW!

THE IRARA CAMPAIGN TO PRESERVE THE ANCIENT IRVINE ROAD ORCHARD AS A COMMUNITY RESOURCE AND LOCAL WILDLIFE RESERVE

## Orchard fight continues



The Irvine Road Orchard: A significant wildlife habitat and part of the local green space.

As reported in a previous newsletter, the ancient orchard at the rear of Irvine Road was purchased by a local property developer with the intention of building an unknown number of houses on an area that is currently protected as open space and designated as a wildlife site.

However, over recent months and as part of the production of Colchester's new Local Plan, the Orchard's status has been subject to review and the Council has now proposed that some development (40%) of the Orchard should be allowed. The Council's latest proposals have confirmed our fears.

IRARA has long campaigned for the Orchard not to be developed but to become a valuable local resource – for the community and local schools. Of course, IRARA does not want the area developed but there is a significant risk that simply fighting all development will require a prolonged effort with no guarantee of success and a risk that we end up with an extensive development and no provision for

the community or the resident wildlife. With the land owned by a developer and an increasingly pro-development Council and national policy, IRARA believes the risk to be very real.

As a result, we have opened up discussions with the Orchard's owner, Jonathan Frank of Lexden Restorations, to explore whether a compromise could be reached that would allow some development but also provide a community orchard that would be valued by the local residents and protect the most valuable parts of the Orchard's wildlife.

Based on the conversations so far, we believe that a compromise is worth exploring further. If you want to hear more we are planning to invite Jonathan Frank to meet the residents at a date in August and if you want to attend please email [info@irara.org.uk](mailto:info@irara.org.uk) so that we can let you know the venue and if plans change.

You will also be able to keep up to date with developments via the website at [www.irara.org.uk](http://www.irara.org.uk).

[www.facebook.com/IrvineRoadAreaResidentsAssociation](http://www.facebook.com/IrvineRoadAreaResidentsAssociation)



## IRARA and local councillors apply to have schools access route adopted as permanent public footpath



The path between the schools: A vital daily access route for pupils from 3 schools, as well as the logical choice for the principal pedestrian route from Shrub End to Lexden and the town centre. This photo was taken in 2003, before the gates were installed and proves that until then members of the public had unfettered access to this route, more than 38 years.

The main pedestrian access route between Philip Morant School, St Benedict's School and the Colchester High School for Girls is in the news again.

Philip Morant School, who own the Southern section of the land between their campus and playing field, have taken to closing the gates at regular intervals to prevent use of the path that connects the two ends of Norman way to 'express their ownership' of it.

This is effectively an attempt to annex a permissive footpath which has been in regular use since before the schools were built in the 1970s, and, IRARA believes, an essential first step to developing the playing field (on the right of the photo above). Local residents who have used this footpath 'as of right' for over 20 years were invited to submit declarations to that effect, as this would normally be the qualifying requirement for adoption as a permanent public footpath.

Following the submissions we are happy to report that an application has been made to Essex County Council for re-designation as a public footpath. Our thanks go to committee member Michael Coster and Prettygate Cllr. Sue Lissimore for championing the cause.

It's not as simple as that, of course, as PMS have predictably objected on 'pupil safety' grounds. This, apparently, is an allowed objection by Schools and it seems unclear if they are required to substantiate this claim, so we will have to wait and see. It is a fact, however, that in the 50 years since the school was founded in 1965, no incidents involving pupils' safety have been recorded in the area.



## Parking problems – again!

A number of residents have contacted IRARA about parking issues and you may have received a note through your door from residents discussing the pros and cons of residents parking permits.

When we balloted residents regarding parking permits about 5 years ago, opinion was divided, but firmly against parking permits and this appears to remain the predominant view. The advice we received from CBC then was that 'polite notices' don't work and nothing less than a fully managed residents' only parking scheme would do the job.

IRARA has regularly surveyed the surrounding streets during working hours, at evenings and weekends, as well as asking residents for their views and the principal points seem to be:

- The main problem is not commuters during the day, but two and three car households at evenings and weekends, & visitors.
- Almost no one wants permits. Some are in favour of 'polite notices' or other measures to discourage parking in front of their houses.
- On average, permits would cost the average household £200 per year for 2 permits plus 1 visitor's permit per week.
- Most permit parking schemes do not apply between 6.00pm and 8.00am, so would not solve the main problems.
- Having off-road parking is of limited use only if access is constantly blocked.
- Existing residents-only schemes do not usually make distinctions for individual streets, so might not benefit us.

There is nothing to prevent householders from erecting signs, but they have no legal standing, so are likely to be ignored by inconsiderate parkers. IRARA has successfully spoken to the Grammar School in the past about parking, but the main problem continues to be householders and their visitors at evenings and weekends (us!). All we can do is urge everyone to be as considerate as possible when parking.



Member of Federation  
of Colchester Residents'  
Associations

Member of Open  
Spaces Society

### Irvine Road Area Residents' Association Membership application/renewal form 2016/17

Annual membership of IRARA is £3.00 per household and is open to anyone living in Athelstan Road, Audley Road, Capel Road, Irvine Road and adjacent parts of Maldon Road and Shrub End Road.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No: \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to receive newsletters via: email  hard copy

I/We wish to apply for membership

I/We wish to renew our membership

Would you be interested in helping with some of the association's activities (for example, leaflet drops, litter clearing etc.) Yes  No

Please fill in this form and hand it to your representative or send it to: Simon Grinham, IRARA Treasurer, The Old Sweet Shop, Athelstan Road, Colchester CO3 3TR.