



We care, we inform

Wickford Action Group

People before Profit

Wickford Action Group, Newsletter No 1 – Summer 2007

The Wickford Action Group is a non-political group of concerned Wickford residents who want to see the town we love improved and regenerated to the benefit of existing and future residents, which means more housing for our children, and proper infrastructure investment in roads, schools, doctors and dentists to name but a few.

What we **don't** want, are the monstrous blocks of flats, which the council are telling us is the only way forward. The **Wickford Action Group** is fighting as best we can to protect Wickford from over development, and take every opportunity to try to convince the planning committee, chaired by a Wickford councillor, to take the resident's views into consideration, which they have disgracefully failed to do so far.



Artist's impression of Wickford Town Centre as it will look soon!

Left to right: **200 houses** proposed for land, which would be green belt if the Council had got plans in on time. **36 flats** approved on the Frasier's site. **24 flats** approved in Woodlands Road. **24 flats** being built above New Look. **10 Flats** approved on The Broadway. **84 flats** approved in Runwell Road. **173 flats** approved in Lower Southend Road, (Riverside Place). **87 flats** proposed on the old Toyota Garage.

Under the Master Plan, first published in 2005, we were promised, in return for allowing developers to build these blocks of flats, wonderful tree lined avenues, new meeting places, new swimming pool, library and community centre etc. Well, as you can see above, a total of **351** flats have already been approved within the Master Plan area, but where are the promised benefits? And now, two years later, the Council has just agreed to look for a 'Strategic Partner' to deliver the goods.

But with 351 flats already approved, hasn't the horse bolted?

Councillors Buckley & Horgan:

please have a re-think before Wickford town centre is wrecked beyond recovery!



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Welcome to the first edition of our Newsletter.

Our aim is to keep you informed, as far as we can, of the comings and goings which will affect the future of Wickford, the town we are proud to call our home, but which is being subjected to development by some companies, self interest groups, and other individuals who have just one agenda – PROFIT, no matter what the cost to the town or the environment.

We are sure that many councillors and public employees are working with Wickford's interests at heart, but we feel that some of them have no idea of what is really needed in the town, and we need to ensure they keep their eye on the ball.

Others just have a different agenda, with developers and their friends just wanting to line their own pockets and the town can go to blazes!

Public Meeting

The Community Centre has kindly allowed us to use the main hall for this community event.

Since our first Public Meeting in March, many more flats have been approved in Wickford, and we want an open discussion on whether the **residents and council tax payers** of Wickford are happy with the way things are now panning out! We apologise to those people who could not get into our first public meeting, and to those who did attend but could not get a word in edgeways! Please try to attend this one, which is in the **Main Hall**, and should accommodate all!

Date: Thursday 27 September 2007

Time: 8:00 pm

**Location: Wickford Community Centre
Main Hall**

Full information will be provided nearer the time, please check on our website.

What the papers say



This was the editorial in the Echo on 18 July 2007:

“Take a look at Wickford, Mr Brown”

“A RESISTANCE movement is mounting in Wickford that could represent the shape of things to come in communities throughout the South East.

This small commuter town is the subject of hundreds of planning applications for sites dotted around the centre. Residents fear the much-vaunted Wickford masterplan will, in reality, produce a battery hen farm. The Wickford Action Group is also raising questions about infrastructure, questions politicians and developers have become adept at evading.

House building firms are keen enough to throw up profitable homes, but are less forward in planning for doctors' surgeries, schools and sewage farms. Gordon Brown has thrown his weight behind the building of three million new homes, but he also has to consider the flipside - a region so jam-packed, the quality of life plummets.

Anyone wanting to see these effects, travel to Wickford. The Wick development more than doubled the town's size in not much more than a decade. Now developers are asking for more, but increasingly residents are saying enough is enough. Wickford could become a classic study for planners everywhere”

New members welcome

If you share our passion, and would like to join us, please contact the chairman, Alan Ball, who will be pleased to invite you to our next meeting. We look forward to seeing you - new ideas and opinions are very welcome. We meet every six weeks or so on a Tuesday or Wednesday evening in Wickford, and the meeting usually lasts about an hour and a half.

We would be particularly keen to hear from people with a **legal or planning background**, since we often find that ordinary people like us are out-manoeuvred by planners, developers and estate agents who know their business.