



Subscriptions for 2010

Membership subscriptions – £5 per household – are now due for 2010. Our thanks go first of all to those who have already paid.

Paying is much easier if you do it by Standing Order (and it helps us). If you don't already pay this way and would like to from January 2011, please contact our Membership Secretary Madeleine Salter on 01582 831658 or alternatively download a Standing Order form from our website. Please remember that you have complete control over a Standing Order which is unlike a Direct Debit Mandate (DDM). You can find our website at—

www.wheathampsteadpreservation.org.uk

Every member is another voice to be heard – and we thank you for your continued support of WDPs.

**Annual General Meeting:
Friday, 26th February
2010**

**8 pm, Memorial Hall,
Marford Road, Wheathampstead
All are welcome.**

Our guest speaker this year will be

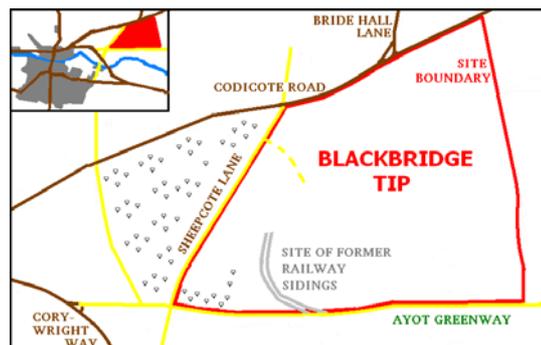
**Audrey Randall,
Chair of The Herts &
Middlesex Badger Group
talking about**

Badgers in Hertfordshire



BLACKBRIDGE TIP REARS ITS UGLY HEAD AGAIN

Local residents and long-standing members of WDPs will recall 'the battle of Blackbridge Tip' during the 1990s, when WDPs was instrumental in preventing Lafarge Redland's from re-opening the tip for what they called 'restoration'. This would have involved bringing 700,000 cubic metres of inert waste on to the site over a period of 5 years at a rate of 200 lorries a day along the Cory Wright Way bypass. When the tip closed in the mid 1970s, a legal agreement between Redland's, Hertfordshire County Council and the local District Council (known as the Tripartite Agreement) prohibited any future tipping on the site¹.



Wheathampstead people were concerned that, in addition to the dust, disturbance and pollution that would be caused by so many lorry movements, dumping more material on the site would compress the rotting waste beneath, causing leaching and pollution of the nearby River Lea. WDPs launched a major campaign to persuade the County Council to drop its support for the restoration scheme, and the District Council to enforce the Tripartite Agreement.

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Blackbridge Tip rears its ugly head again

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Lafarge Redland's took the matter to the High Court and the Lands Tribunal to try to get the Agreement overturned, but the courts ruled in Wheathampstead's favour and the scheme was shelved.

Now Lafarge are trying to resurrect the scheme, as we discovered when the County Council issued its Waste Site Allocations – Issues and Preferred Options consultation document in November 2009². Appendix E of that document lists Blackbridge Tip as one of a number of proposed Re-Restoration Sites. No details are given of what 're-restoration' entails. There is no doubt, however, that if Blackbridge is included in the County Council's final Waste Site Allocations document, Lafarge will try to get it re-opened for tipping. There is big money to be made out of providing facilities for the disposal of waste material.

The consultation period for the Waste Site Allocations document ended on 18 December, so it was important that we (and as many people as possible) submitted comments on the Blackbridge Tip proposal by then. In doing so, we argued that this proposal has been put forward little more than 10 years after the previous attempt to re-open the tip was defeated, and no details or justification for what is now being proposed have been provided on which a reasoned decision could be based.

Our response can be viewed on our website:
www.wheathampsteadpreservation.org.uk.

The next stage is that the County Council will consider all the representations that have been submitted in response to the Waste consultation document and then issue a revised version for further consultation. The final draft document will be examined by an independent Inspector at a public inquiry before finally being approved. This whole process could take many months and possibly a year or two.

If Blackbridge Tip appears in the final Waste Site Allocations document and Lafarge decide to proceed with a scheme for the site, they will still have to get planning permission and have the Tripartite Agreement modified or overturned. There is a long way to go before Blackbridge Tip can be re-opened.

Notes:

1. Blackbridge Tip is located on the north east side of Wheathampstead, between the Ayot Greenway, Sheepcote Lane and Codicote Road.
2. The document can be downloaded at: <http://www.hertsdirect.org/envroads/environment/plan/hccdevplan/wasteplanning/sitealloc/>

STOP PRESS

Some work has been carried out on the site of Blackbridge Tip. Ground has been cleared near the north-west corner of the site to make way for a wide road or track, and some hardcore has been laid on the cleared ground. This new entrance leads off Sheepcote Lane (itself no more than a broad track at this point) close to Codicote Road. What is more, Herts County Council have erected a new barrier across Sheepcote Lane at its junction with Codicote Road.

The intention is clear: to permit access for large lorries on to the site from Codicote Road. We are pursuing the matter with Herts County Council.



Above: A new entrance to the site is being created, and hardcore has been laid down.

Below: A new barrier has been erected by Herts County Council across the entrance to Sheepcote Lane, presumably to replace the existing green gate. It appears to be designed to restrict access to Sheepcote Lane (and therefore to the Blackbridge Tip site) to authorised vehicles. Concrete blocks at the side will prevent smaller vehicles from driving around the side of the barrier.

