

# New Frankley in Birmingham Parish Council

## Annual Parish Assembly

18th May 2009

### Annual Report of the Parish Council

#### **Longbridge Area Action Plan**

Although the Parish Council broadly supported the regeneration of the former MGRover site at Longbridge, following the publication of the draft Area Action Plan, it had misgivings regarding –

- The manner of the consultation exercise on the various options proposed carried out by Birmingham City Council and its partners was felt to lack firm plans as to what was actually being proposed, ignored the effect of the development on the Great Park, Frankley and the Rednal Triangle as well as excluding areas of Longbridge which would be affected by the regeneration proposals;
- The proposals for the retail outlets on the site, which at the original planning brief stage proposed a small town centre serving the local community with no large superstores; however, it has become apparent that the revised proposals for the retail centre now included a large superstore which the Council considered would have a negative effect on the local shopping centres;
- It was clear that the developers considered that the extension to the Cross City link to Frankley would be an impediment to the proposed development. The Rail link was considered to be of vital economic importance to the area allowing residents from the area easy access to employment opportunities in the wider West Midlands; the proposed bus/rail link connecting Frankley with Longbridge Station would not, it was considered, provide a link which would attract travellers;
- The employment target of the AAP was that 10,000 jobs would be created by the development but as the majority would be in the high technology area, as the skill base of the local area was low, it was considered that there would be few jobs for local people.

The Council raised the above matters at length with City Council officers, unfortunately unsuccessfully. Accordingly, the Council determined to present its concerns at the Plan's Examination in Public which was held in November last year. Although the Council was given the opportunity to present its concerns and question the representatives of the City Council and its partners, after considering the Council's and its partners' submissions, the decision of the Inspector was that, while there were items of the Plan which needed amendment, the Plan was basically sound.

The Council still believes that opportunities were missed which would have enhanced the regeneration of the site and surrounding areas and provided a rail extension to Frankley.

### **Regeneration of the Holly Hill Shopping Centre**

Last year, following a tendering exercise, Taylor Wimpy were appointed as developers of the land around the centre. The proposals put forward by Taylor Wimpy were to build apartments/family houses on the land behind the centre and a supermarket adjacent to the existing centre. Unfortunately, due to the credit crunch, Taylor Wimpy have pulled out of the development and currently the City Council is talking to the Housing Corporation with a view to negotiating an agreement to build social housing on the land. Although the proposals would not include a new supermarket, with the recent introduction of Cost Cutters in place of OMCO, the centre now has a supermarket which it is felt meets the needs of the community.

### **Frankley Neighbourhood Caretakers**

The Parish Council has been talking to the City Council, albeit unsuccessfully, with a view to the City Council agreeing to devolve the powers to operate a Frankley Neighbourhood Caretakers scheme to the Parish Council. Unfortunately the City Council refuses to agree to devolve the powers down to the Parish Council which would enable the Parish Council to operate/manage its own Neighbourhood Caretakers Scheme. As a result, the Parish Council, in order to enhance the services provided by the City Council, have agreed to continue part-funding the Constituency Neighbourhood Caretakers Service on the understanding that, the service provided to Frankley is superior to that provided to the rest of the constituency.

As members will be aware, the Parish Council has recently agreed to continue its arrangement with the Constituency Neighbourhood Workers Team to provide an enhanced Caretaker service on Frankley. It is generally accepted that since the inception of this agreement there has been a general improvement to the

environment of Frankley. However, the Parish Council cannot rest on its laurels as more work needs to be done to improve the environment. Whilst there are still difficulties in getting the collection of contaminated green waste bags, the major problem is that some residents continue to put their household rubbish or recyclables out days before the actual collection day. This often leads to bags being split and the contents spilled. Additionally, although the City Council operate a Bulk Waste Collection which can be booked by telephoning 0121 303 1112, some residents leave unwanted furniture, building materials etc on the grass verges in the hope that someone will arrange the collection of rubbish.

Therefore, the Parish Council, in conjunction with other agencies of the City Council will have to undertake a programme to encourage households to ensure that only compostable green waste is placed in the green bags, that the black bags and the recyclables are only put out for collection the night before the collection day and that residents are encouraged to use the Bulk Waste Service for the removal of bulky waste.

### **Frankley Flood Team**

The Parish Council, in conjunction with the Neighbourhood Forum, are currently establishing a Frankley Flood Team. Because of Climate Change there is the possibility that, in the future, winters will be milder but wetter with periods of heavy rain. Whilst flooding cannot be prevented, its effects can be mitigated by ensuring that all water courses on Frankley are kept clear and highway drains are kept clear. The Team are currently in the process of arranging for 'flooding hot spots' to be regularly checked so that, in the event of heavy rain, the water can drain freely. The Forum is also applying to the Parish Council for funding to purchase two grit bins for the storage of sand and a sand bag filler which will enable the Team to provide sandbags at short notice to divert floodwater from residential properties.