



SPRING NEWSLETTER 2008

Bernards Heath under threat again?

About six years ago the District Council's Planning Brief for the Ariston site (the former Fire Station, Judo Club and Pioneer Youth Centre) said that ,when HCC built on that land, the Lower Heath should be kept as open space 'in perpetuity'

But is that going to happen?

There seems to be a new kid on the block (or on the Heath) – a possible site for the Tesco superstore. The idea was parachuted into our neighbourhood in the summer 2007 District Council consultation on its Development Plan Document with the following comment:-

“This option [development of land on Bernards Heath for a large food retail outlet] comprises previously developed land within the built up area of St Albans (east of Harpenden Road and south of Beech Road). A planning brief was prepared by the District Council and Hertfordshire County Council, which supported the principle of housing and some community uses in this broad location. Accessibility is good, both in terms of proximity to the road network and frequent bus services into St Albans and Harpenden. Any new store could plug the current gap in convenience goods (food) provision in the north of St Albans. “

Is Bernards Heath under a new threat from massive and uncritical building on its open spaces?

We are trying to find out more – BUT

The Lib Dems, who run the District Council, claim to have no idea what is going on with the Pioneer whose site is key for any future development on Bernards Heath. The Labour Party, who don't run any of the Councils involved, claim in their newsletter to know exactly what is happening, and that the Lib Dems do as well – but won't tell us. The Conservatives, who run the County Council (which is the landowner and runs the youth services), aren't saying much at all, and our local Conservative councillor doesn't produce any information we can understand.

The Judo Club is still operating but it is nearing the end of its lease after which it is out on its ear but some of our councillors are still speaking of it as a vibrant local asset.

There has been uncertainty about the Pioneer for years now, and that uncertainty is even greater now. The Pioneer is still open, but – along with every other Youth Service facility in St Albans – is under threat from a County-level review of services designed to leave just one centre open per District – and that will probably be at Westminster Lodge. (Please, someone, tell us if we have got that wrong)

THE DISTRICT COUNCIL ELECTIONS TAKE PLACE IN MAY. Please tell the candidates how much you value Bernards Heath (including the Lower Heath) as open space and that we do NOT need a food supermarket in this part of St Albans, and especially not on the old fire station site (and possibly the Lower Heath as well). Can you imagine the impact on traffic on the surrounding roads which are already congested? 24 hour opening? Deliveries through the night? Several hundred parking spaces? 24 hour lighting? Impact on your local shops?

PLEASE ASK YOUR PROSPECTIVE COUNCILLORS WHAT IS GOING ON!

In the meantime, please join us!

Details are in the enclosed leaflet (which we hope you will find useful and informative).

Our website (www.bernardsheath.org) is currently being updated so that it will become more interactive if a campaign to stop a supermarket development takes off – please bear with us while this is being done. In the meantime for further details or offers to help please contact the chairman – details as per the leaflet.

And the rest of our news.....

The Action Day on 16 March was too wet to spread bark chippings on the paths but a hardy group cleared up several bags of litter. We have set another date to do the paths on **13 April from 9.30 am** – please join us if you can – many hands make light work!