

Action group plans to plant flowers

Work starts on restoring old burial ground

WORK has taken place to restore a Horley burial ground bulldozed by developers.

And now the group of residents which fought to stop houses being built at Lee Street Burial Ground are to plant flowers and help maintain the site.

Co-ordinator of Friends of Lee Street Burial Ground, Mr John Finch, said: "We are pleased with the way things have turned out. It is a victory for perseverance and it was all worth it."

Concerned residents formed the group after developers, Briar Country Homes, moved in over three years ago and began levelling the site with the plan to build two houses.

They had bought the land from the Strict and Particular Baptist Church which once had a chapel sited there.

The Friends researched the history of the burial ground, poring over birth and death certificates, undertakers' records and contacting relatives.

The group managed to track down the last pastor of the area who recalled conducting a funeral service at Lee Street as



■ Lee Street Burial Ground after restoration work.

Photo No: 4850KW

late as 1969.

Meticulous detective work finally established that the development was to be built directly over graves and that there was no Home Office permission to disturb them.

Work was immediately called to a halt by the Home Office and the site fell derelict as it had no commercial value and no-one was responsible for maintenance.

nance.

Towards the end of last year Reigate and Banstead Borough Council stepped in and spent £3,000 to buy the plot.

In the past couple of weeks the site was cleared by young people from the Surrey Youth Justice Service and further work carried out by Reigate and Banstead contractors.

A spokesperson for the borough council said: "Reigate and Banstead responded to the pressure, had discussions, took on board what people wanted done and worked in partnership with the community."

Reigate and Banstead and the Friends of Lee Street Burial Ground will now continue working together to ensure that the site becomes a garden of remembrance.

Lee Street Burial Ground

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