

BVRA newsheet

from the Banstead Village Residents' Association

Vol:17 No. 2 May 2001

Notice of Annual General Meeting

The Executive Committee extends to all members of the Association a warm invitation to the 54th Annual General Meeting to be held at:

**THE CIVIC CENTRE, HORSESHOE, BANSTEAD
on THURSDAY, 24th MAY 2001 at 8.00pm**

AGENDA

1. Presentation by P.C. Steve Aylin-White of the Partnership Development Unit, Surrey Police, based at Reigate Police Station, on the revival of the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in Banstead Village, and the role of the community in crime prevention. He will be joined by P.C. Mike Ward, our local Beat Officer.
2. Minutes of 53rd Annual General Meeting held on 11th May 2000 will not be read, but a summary will be distributed to members in the hall.
3. Chairman's report -2000/2001
4. Presentation of unaudited accounts for the year ended 31st January 2001 included in this News Sheet.
5. Election of Officers, Executive Committee and Auditor for the year 2001/2002
6. Open Forum debate of local issues with our Councillors.
7. Any other business.

Please bring this invitation with you to the meeting

May 2001

John Nicolson,
Hon. Secretary

45, Wilmot Way, Banstead
Tel:- (01737) 353038

Annual General Meeting

As you see, the AGM this year is being held slightly later than usual. This is because the earlier date conflicted with a number of local events, which prevented our members from attending. We do hope you will be able to come.

With the local focus of concern very much on crime and its effects on the local community, we thought it would be appropriate to invite as our guest speakers two policemen who are both in the front line of crime prevention. P.C. Steve Aylin-White will hope to persuade us to join the Neighbourhood Watch initiative which can play a major role in reporting potential criminal activity and P.C. Mike Ward, our local beat Officer, will talk about the introduction of CCTV in the Village and what we can all do to help protect ourselves. Have your questions ready and join in the debate.

Committee News

This year we have seen the retirement of four committee members, Christine Ansell, Sarah Carpenter, Gillian Wooldridge and Philip Moran. To them we say thank you for your contribution and commitment and wish them well. It is also with sadness we report the death of our Hon. Auditor, Frank Dadswell, who served the Association so well for over 20 years and will be greatly missed.

I am making my annual appeal for community-minded people to consider contributing a little of their spare time to helping in the protection of our amenities by offering themselves for election to the Committee. As you will know the Association is an independent non-political organisation of local people dedicated to preserving our environment and quality of life. Interested? Please call me, Peter McLaren on 01737-357463 if you would like more information. You will enjoy good company and your views will be valued.

Richard Bowes, a former committee member, has very kindly offered to act as our Hon. Auditor and confirmation of his appointment will be sought at the AGM in accordance with our constitution.

It has been a very busy year for the Association and its stewards - the Committee. We have seen the review of both our Borough Local Plan and the Surrey Structure Plan; the Sainsbury's saga; the advent of CCTV in the village; proposed changes in local government machinery; the inexorable flow of planning applications; the proposed decriminalisation of parking and its implications and many more issues which have commanded attention.

I hope you will find the articles which follow of interest which are designed to keep you up to date with what is going on in the Village.

Peter McLaren

REDEVELOPMENT OF THE FORMER WAITROSE STORE

We reported in the previous NewsSheet that plans were being drawn up for redevelopment of the

building that used to house Dillons and the old Waitrose store. That scheme has moved quickly, and the planning application for the site is due to be considered by the Council at the end of April. The proposals are to demolish the existing building and construct a new line of retail units along the High Street frontage (between the Victoria and the hairdressers), with the remainder of the site developed for residential use with a total of 50 flats and 6 "town houses". There will be a new two-storey block of eight flats on Bolters Lane just to the north of The Victoria, and 14 flats in a four storey block located on the site of the old single-storey business units behind Trings. The remaining dwellings will be grouped round a central square to be constructed behind the High Street. Access for vehicles to the private parking areas at the rear of the site, and for deliveries, refuse lorries, etc. will be via new road to be built where the existing entrance to the old Waitrose car park is located. The current exit from the site next to the steps to the old Dillons store will be closed off.

There is no doubting that this is a large development, but the developers have modified their plans after consultation with ourselves, Banstead Society, the traders and our Councillors. The scheme will be a significant development for the village, but it will result in the removal of the eyesore that the old building had become and the prospect of some renewed retail activity at the western end of the High Street.

The developers have indicated that, if they are granted planning permission at the end of April they intend to begin demolition on the site in June.

An artist impression of the scheme is included in this NewsSheet.

Tony Ford

Voice of the High Street.

Traders and businesses form an essential element in the life of the Village, and it is in our best interests that our High Street remains commercially viable, providing for our daily needs. It is our view that the voice of the High Street needs to be heard in a decision-making process but, unfortunately, no formal body exists to represent the interests of the wider business community.

As Ron Phillips (Maxine's Woolshop) explains in the following article your Committee co-opted him so that the Association can be aware of the views of the High Street business community on matters of mutual interest and concern.

We do not know what degree of support will be forthcoming for our initiative, but we are distributing this issue of the Newsheet to every shopkeeper and business in the High Street in the hope that their interest and involvement in local affairs can be awakened.

Chairman

You may or may not be aware that the former Chamber of Commerce in Banstead was dissolved a few months ago due to lack of support.

Since then the Traders have held informal meetings with our local councillors to discuss matters that concern them, and because they do not have a formal body to represent them it was felt that as we live or work in the Banstead Village it may be appropriate for the Traders to seek to establish a relationship with your Association. Your committee kindly invited me to join them at committee meetings on an informal basis and to date I have attended two meetings. I hope that with your approval this can become a permanent arrangement and will stand for election to the committee at the AGM. Banstead Village is a close knit community and a thriving prosperous High Street has to be an essential part of that community.

The Trades people share similar concerns as many of you on matters such as parking in the village and planning etc., things that affect us all and I know that the Trades people hope more can be done to encourage potential customers to visit our unique High Street.

To my fellow Trades people I recommend that you take a few minutes to read this excellent news letter, which comes out several times a year and for just £1.50 per annum you can become a member of the BVRA.

Joining the BVRA will give us, the traders more influence than mere individuals when we have special concerns on issues affecting trading in our High Street.

Ron Phillips

TRAFFIC IN COURT ROAD AND AVENUE ROAD

In an attempt to reduce some of the problems caused by traffic in Court Road and Avenue Road (speed, congestion, dangerous parking) BVRA has prepared a possible scheme for "traffic calming" and better crossing arrangements for pedestrians. A circular letter, describing the scheme and inviting feedback and comments, has been delivered to all the households in the two roads, as well as the adjoining roads (for example De Burgh park and Courtlands Crescent). Depending on the comments received (and at the time of going to press we have not yet reached the closing date of 21st April) it is the intention to promote our ideas to the Borough Council and the County Council. Although for some time now the council has earmarked these roads for, as they call it, a "traffic management scheme", there have always been competing requirements for resources from elsewhere in the Borough. This year is no different, but we hope that by developing some proposals that have the support of local people we can get a head start for next year's allocation.

In parallel with this, St. Anne's school are progressing with their proposals for reducing some of the difficulties caused in Court Road and Bolters Lane by the "school run" traffic. Another success has been achieved by the school, as those familiar with Court Road will have observed. The County Council have installed a series of bollards (unfortunately plain, dull concrete ones!) along the edge of the footway outside the school frontage. This is to prevent drivers from mounting the pavement, which they did in their

frustration at not being able to pass cars parked for the drop off and pick up and which clearly posed a safety risk to pedestrians. The school is pressing on with other initiatives as well - we are liaising with them to ensure that their efforts and ours are complementary.

Tony ford

St. Anne's School - traffic congestion

We said in January we should report progress on this problem.

The Borough Council seems to have no coherent policy on public car-parking permits for schools but the head teacher at St. Anne's learned that the other primary schools in Banstead have been giving out free 30-minute, twice-a-day permits to parents for several years. So she started doing the same in January and 95 families now have the new permits (compared with 73 of the previous shorter permits). She intends in future to give permits out to new parents/guardians at their first 'induction' into the school.

The school has gathered data about where the pupils come from and how they get to and from school and the head teacher has gathered a working group of parents and governors to make what the council calls a 'school/green travel plan'. One possibility is a walking bus from the North side of Winkworth Road to the school via the car park behind the High Street, where it could pick up children who have been brought there by car. But the group's first meeting has been postponed because the Council staff concerned with the project have been temporarily diverted onto a problem arising from the epidemic of foot and mouth disease. Meanwhile the school is investigating the scope for car sharing, using computer software lent by the Council.

The chairman of the governors has obtained the willing permission of the Maryfield Convent in Roehampton, which owns the grounds, for the County Council to move the boundary wall back a couple of feet to facilitate the erection of protective railings along the footway outside the school. But without prior consultation the County has just now erected 13 concrete bollards along that footway and round the corner into Holly Lane. Railings would have been better but the bollards are preventing cars being driven along the footway.

The school has still not been able to recruit any lollipop people for the cross roads where Court Road, Holly Lane, Garratts Lane and Bolters Lane meet. The Banstead Volunteer Bureau says it cannot help because the post will be paid, which is sadly ironic. If you know anyone who might be interested, do urge them to get in touch with the school (telephone 350012). They will be doing a really a valuable job, while also earning a few quid - which can't be bad.

We can't expect to see much in the way of positive results from these initiatives yet but the school at least is doing what it can. However, success will depend in the end on adequate enforcement of the parking restrictions at the critical times. The police do not and will not undertake the task for reasons we understand, so it can only happen if the Council takes over responsibility.

The enabling legislation for what is called 'decriminalised parking enforcement' was enacted many years ago, but it requires the co-operation of the County and Borough councils and they are making heavy weather of it. Both councils seem to be worried about possible public antipathy and that the costs may be greater than the revenue. But we are informed that the well-known method of minimising both the costs and public antipathy on the Continent and elsewhere in this country was not mentioned in a report by the County to the Borough last November.

We can only keep prodding both parties at every opportunity.

David Rudd

Best Value - A Performance Plan

In January this year, the Borough Council published a document entitled "Statement of Values, Objectives and Priorities for Action". This commits the Council to:

- Give more power to communities;
- Build a more secure society;
- Release the potential of the Borough; and
- Restore faith in local politics.

As part of its radical re-organisation, the Council has identified its main themes and objectives, these are:

- To put the customer (you!) first in everything it does;
- To drive down costs in order to achieve a balanced budget; and
- To re-align the organisation to emphasise the importance of front line service delivery.

To give you a flavour of the jargon used throughout the document, it talks about "seamless customer enquiry tracking providing aids to routine inspections" in the context of the delivery of front line services reflecting customer priorities!

What the document does not tell us is what minimum standard of service we can reasonably expect and frequency of delivery as applied to such areas as repair of footways and potholes in roads; drain clearance; removal of rubbish from streets; maintenance of designated public footpaths; grass cutting and removal of waste; maintenance of trees on verges and street cleaning generally.

In our response to this consultation, we have asked for this information to be made available to us, together with the Council's Annual Financial Report so we can see how and where our money is spent. We have also suggested an enhanced supervision of Council contractors to ensure a higher standard of service and the application of sanctions for failure to deliver, in common with practice in the private sector.

It remains to be seen what response is received from the Council and the extent of "Best Value" we receive from the huge increase in Council Tax levied from its long-suffering customers. For the statistically minded, the increase was 12.6%.

Chairman

The Surrey Structure Plan

Surrey County Council has been grinding along with its revised Structure Plan for nearly five years now. This is the plan which 'guides' the local councils across the county on what they must or are allowed to include in their local plans - on which they must then judge the thousands of planning applications that pour into their offices every year (see our article on page 5). Structure plans and local plans are supposed to be reviewed and updated from time to time but the statutory consultation processes are so cumbersome that the cycles get extended and often overlap. Consequently, we now have the County Council updating its Structure Plan behind the Borough Council updating our Local Plan (see our January NewsSheet) which is causing difficulties.

The Structure Plan must itself take account of the Government planning policy, which comes from the Department of the Environment, Transport and Regions (DETR), but DETR's new 'guidance' for the South East of England was delayed so long that Surrey decided to publish its so-called Deposit Draft in January without the final version of that guidance. We (among many others of course) were invited to comment and did so in February. We sent a courtesy copy to the Director of Environmental Services here in Reigate and he kindly sent us a copy of the Borough's slightly earlier representations to Surrey on that Draft. We were pleased to read that on most of the important issues the Borough and we had taken much the same line.

Thus, back in 1999 DETR demanded that Surrey County Council must allow 90,000 'dwellings' (houses, flats, etc.) to be built in the County between 1996 and 2016, which was absurdly high. Last year the County Council conducted a survey with its eleven district councils to estimate the real county-wide capacity for that period and came up with 35,000, including 6,550 in our Borough (2,600 of them in Horley). The Borough (and we, after reading the survey) supported the figure. However DETR has now published its belated Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG 9), which specifies a building rate in Surrey of 2,360 dwellings a year at least for the next five years and probably until 2016, that is 35% more than the real annual capacity on average over the whole period. So the County's estimates must presumably go back into the melting pot but the Council cannot now decide what to do until after the local elections in June.

Turning to the rest of the Deposit Draft, we were delighted that Surrey is at last paying attention to the cumulative impact of more and more houses on such things as water supplies and (especially important in Banstead) sewage disposal - to ensure that enough provision for the increasing burden on the infrastructure is made in good time. And we are very glad that the Borough has urged that this policy should take account of small unplanned, incremental changes, which are the norm in the Borough, as well as large developments. The Borough would like to require all developments, even single new houses, to be charged 'impact fees' for that purpose. We are not sure that would be the best way but the subject needs to be investigated - as our members who have suffered from the escape of stinking sewage in their neighbourhoods will agree.

On housing densities, the Borough wants Surrey to rewrite its policy of requiring at least 30 dwellings per hectare as the norm, which would impair the character and amenities in the neighbourhoods of our typical, small-scale, incremental developments and worsen our traffic congestion. We support that wholeheartedly.

The Borough also dislikes the County's new Parking Strategy and Standards, and so do we. They impose a maximum of 1.5 off-street parking spaces per new dwellings in some places (which is far too little and will clutter the streets with parked cars) while at the same time insisting on the old minimum standards round the corner. In short, it's a muddle.

Surrey is now at one with the Borough (and us) in supporting the 'proximity principle' (newly part of DETR policy) in waste disposal, whereby waste should be disposed of as near as practicable to where it is produced, rather than where it can be dumped most cheaply. For more than a decade now Surrey people have watched helplessly while waste imported from London and elsewhere has been dumped into our rapidly shrinking landfill sites under the old 'laissez faire' system and we have been prodding the planners and councillors in Kingston to take a stronger line for the last seven years, (as some readers may recall).

The planning process often seems mysterious, but it is much better than no planning. Much of the time it amounts to a top-down stream of mainly unwelcome Government requirements, via the counties and the districts to the residents. But sometimes the bottom-up surges from residents and other voluntary bodies cannot be ignored. We shall keep on stirring the water when we can.

David rudd

Planning Applications

We looked into 123 applications for planning permission last year and objected to 20 of them. Seven of those 20 were refused (one refusal was confirmed on appeal), two were withdrawn and one amended to our satisfaction. Seven were granted (one on appeal) and the other three (including one appeal) are still pending at the end of March.

In four other cases, we requested special conditions and in three of them, they or equivalent conditions were included in the permissions.

Towards the end of the year, we started looking into some applications in Chipstead and Woodmansterne, where we still have some members after the boundary changes. We found nothing to object to but we concluded that we could not undertake to comb through all the weekly application lists to find and examine the applications, which might potentially affect those members - and then consult the respective RAs, which might have other views.

Recently a couple of members in Woodmansterne asked for our help in objecting to two applications in their road. However, it emerged that the Woodmansterne Residents' Association was very well informed and that we should have nothing useful to add to its objections.

So will members now in the Chipstead, Hooley and Woodmansterne ward please note that we are relying on you to contact us if you would like our help or advice regarding an application in your neighbourhood - or of course on one you are making yourself - but we do not want to get our wires crossed with the Chipstead and Woodmansterne Associations.

Please give the application number (or at least the road and house number), what the application is for and whether the Chipstead or Woodmansterne Association is taking an interest. My telephone number is 356427.

David Rudd

CCTV FOR BANSTEAD

There were delays in starting the work needed to install the CCTV cameras. However most of the work has now been done and it is hoped that the system will have been fully installed and tested by the end of May. Planning is now in progress leading towards an "official switch-on" of the system in early June. Watch out in the local press for information on this which it is hoped will include demonstrations of what can be viewed and recorded by the police in Reigate and Banstead Police Stations.

Chris Penfold

Epsom and St. Helier NHS Trust

The Trust has been seeking the views of the public to various proposed changes in the way the local Health service operates. To this end, a number of Public Meetings have been held to inform people and obtain their comments.

The reasons for change are both local and national, with the population as a whole living longer. People over 65 are making greater use of hospital in-patient care, whilst children are using it less.

Both Epsom General and St. Helier Hospitals will continue to operate as acute centres - most other Trusts only operate one. St. Helier will have an upgraded Maternity Unit dealing with high and low risk service, whilst Epsom will retain its Unit for normal deliveries. Both hospitals will have new Accident and Emergency Units.

Following feedback from the Public Meetings, the final recommendations will be submitted to the Trust Board during April 2001.

More detailed information can be obtained by writing to: - Epsom and St. Helier NHS Trust, 4th Floor Ferguson House, FREEPOST 10382 Carshalton SM5 1BR Or by telephoning Sasha Godbold on 020 8296 3440

Dennis Woolmer

"Let There Be Light"

It has been over a year since the Millennium Lights were installed on the High Street. The Committee responsible for the project has always been aware that, due to the lack of mature trees, the western end of the High Street was not as bright as the remainder. In an effort to correct this imbalance, lights were installed on two lampposts (those closest to Woolworth's and Campbells Jewellers) in October last. This was made possible by funds allocated from the Borough's Town Centre Management Budget.

Maintenance work has also been carried out. All the lightning remains in place, ready to provide some sparkle for the High Street in the coming Christmas Season - we are investigating the possibility of switching the lights on from November 23rd. The Committee, having completed the project to this stage, while wishing to do more, should funds permit, really needs to hand the job over to the Village's Business Community who would most benefit from a more attractive display in the High Street. Our Councillors are understood to be suggesting the formation of a Traders' "Christmas Committee" to take on this role.

Chris Penfold

Membership Subscriptions - reminder

As reported in our January NewsSheet the membership subscription for this year, ending January the 31st 2002, has had to be increased to £1.50. per Household. This increase, the first since 1990, will enable us to stay out of the red!

Road Resurfacing

We have been informed by County Highways Services that carriageway repairs, in preparation for surface dressing, are to be undertaken in Sutton Lane, between the junction of Grange Gardens and Downs Road, Belmont. Temporary traffic signals will be installed for the duration of the work which we are told will be carried out later this year.

We are asked to point out the Council does not permit its contractors to undertake private work - "can I do your drive Gov.?" Any such offers should be reported to Simon Burgess on his direct line 01737 276238.

Swimming Lessons

The Coulsdon Sports and Social Club offers swimming lessons for adults (aged 18 years plus) at both beginners and improvers level in an indoor heated pool located at Chipstead Valley Primary School on FRIDAY evenings. For further information contact Geoff Tomlinson on 020 8647 9313.

**BANSTEAD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST JANUARY 2001**

INCOME	2000/2001	1999/2000
	£	£
Subscriptions received	2,002.00	2,053.00
Interest from bank (net)	11.81	4.63
Interest from Halifax (net)	20.36	29.70
	<u>2,034.17</u>	<u>2,087.33</u>
 EXPENDITURE		
Production of NewsSheets	660.00	1,017.50
Subscriptions paid	5.00	5.00
Printing & stationery	204.31	181.60
Postage & telephone	92.62	90.04
Hire of rooms	277.50	191.10
Annual General Meeting expenses	497.50	475.22
Sundry expenses	49.54	98.25
Excess of income over expenditure	247.70	28.62
	<u>2,034.17</u>	<u>2,087.33</u>

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 JANUARY 2001

CURRENT ASSETS	31.1.2001	31.1.2000
Cash at bank - Treasurer's account	2,363.33	2,149.99
On deposit with Halifax plc	1,050.06	1,029.70
Sundry debtor(s)	14.00	—
	<u>3,427.39</u>	<u>3,179.69</u>
 CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Excess of assets over liabilities	3,427.39	3,179.69
Represented by:		
General fund:		
Credit balance brought forward	2,777.41	2,748.79
Add: surplus income for the year	247.70	28.62
	<u>3,025.11</u>	<u>2,777.41</u>
Fund for Preservation of Banstead Amenities:		
Credit balance brought forward	402.28	402.28
	<u>3,427.39</u>	<u>3,179.69</u>

These accounts are published UNAUDITED due to the sad and untimely death of our Hon. Auditor, Mr Frank Dadswell. The audit will be undertaken when a replacement auditor has been identified and duly appointed by the Executive Committee.

P. McLaren
Hon Treasurer

March 2001

AN ARTISTS IMPRESSION OF THE SCHEME

see page 2

