

BVRA **newsheet**

from the Banstead Village Residents' Association

Vol: 24 No.2 - May 2009

Notice of Annual General Meeting

**The Executive Committee extends to all members of the Association
a warm invitation to the 62nd Annual General Meeting to be held at:**

**THE CHURCH INSTITUTE, HIGH STREET, BANSTEAD,
on WEDNESDAY 20th May, at 8.00 pm.**

AGENDA

1. Welcome by Chairman.
2. Minutes of the 61st Annual General Meeting will not be read, but a summary will be distributed to members at the meeting.
3. Presentation by Dr L Nathan, MB MRCP (UK), senior partner at The Longcroft Clinic, Banstead.
4. Chairman's report.
5. Presentation of audited accounts for the year ended 31 January 2008 - printed on the back page of this NewsSheet.
6. Election of Officers, Executive Committee and Auditor for the year 2008/2009.
7. Welcome to our local councillors, followed by Open Forum debate of local issues.
8. Any other business.

Please bring this invitation with you to the meeting.

BANSTEAD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Chairman's Introduction

To follow up the bad news in our last NewsSheet about the Waitrose fire, the good news is that they have obtained planning permission for the new store and plan to open again by Christmas. More on this and other planning issues in Mike Sawyer's section below. Meanwhile Waitrose did, as you all know, manage to open a temporary facility in the old Woolworth's store, although one might say that it is a shadow of its former self. Perhaps we should be thankful for small mercies.

Our routine activities continue and you will find the details in the various sections below. Since the Wellesford Close application by Whitecote, the developers who bought the Legal and General land now known as the Banstead Estate, was refused planning permission, all has remained quiet on this front – but maybe not for long. The Banstead & District Federation has successfully held to its new schedule of quarterly meetings, and at the AGM in May we shall be able to report on the next meeting which will be held at the end of April. We hope to resolve at that meeting some issues we have in regard to the proper function for the Federation, and its associated funding requirements, where we are not in agreement with some of the other member Residents' Associations – this we can discuss at the AGM and seek guidance from you if the issues remain unresolved by then.

The report below from Lindsay Iorwerth covers the issues over policing in Banstead. It is our impression that there has been no real deterioration in the situation in spite of the economic downturn, which could be expected to increase, for example, the incidence of shoplifting. Also, David Gradidge reports below on a number of council tax issues. We believe that the government has capped the contribution to Surrey Police, which constitutes a significant element of our council tax, being collected by Reigate & Banstead Borough Council and passed on to Surrey. While this may reduce the level of council tax, it will also involve the Borough Council in the hefty costs of reissuing and redistributing the revised tax demands. This is bureaucracy gone mad.

We talked in the last NewsSheet about our running concern over the provision of local health services. As you will have seen from the agenda, our guest speaker is Dr Laurence Nathan, and we hope to hear more from him about progress towards some definite decisions.

So don't forget to come to it if you can possibly manage to do so. We have gone back to a Wednesday evening in part to suit our Councillors better, although I am afraid that our Surrey County Councillor, Mrs Angela Fraser, will not be able to attend as it falls within an election period.

We hope to see you there.

Roger Collins

(01737) 358384

LOCAL PLANNING ISSUES

General: the council has now submitted its Local Development Framework (LDF) "core strategy", following a series of consultations. For those of an enquiring (and persistent!) turn of mind, it can be viewed in the HelpShops and downloaded from the council's web site. As mentioned above, we await the outcome of hearing and eventual SEP.

Waitrose: the most significant was the amazingly rapid approval of the Waitrose application. We trust sufficient attention was

given to the proposal to avoid environmental problems. We are disappointed with some aspects – the bland frontal appearance compared with the old building, the effect on the frontal appearance due to the loss of trees on the High Street frontage without like-for-like replacement, and some aspects of the car park. However, no doubt we will all be glad when the new building is open (possibly before Christmas?) Other local applications: a few of the recent applications that gave cause for concern included:

BANSTEAD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Amberley, Bolters Lane – a proposal to include some of the Urban Open Land field as car parking for the next door care home (refused);

61 High Street – conversion of the shop into a Costas coffee shop (still to be determined);

Pizza Express, High Street – use of forecourt as sitting out area (approved and now in use);

4 Sutton Lane – conversion of a single house into 8 flats (withdrawn);

105 High Street – change of use to Mexican food takeaway (still to be determined).

Mike Sawyer

(01737) 355454)

BANSTEAD & DISTRICT FEDERATION & LOCAL PLANS

Since the submission of views on the revised South East Plan (SEP), which was reported in our last NewsSheet, the government has issued revisions to the Draft Plan and called for further comment from Residents.

We have also been asked to submit our views, both as BVRA and as the Federation, on the Reigate & Banstead Borough Council's Core Strategy Development Plan Document (the DPD) which we described last time as 'the heart of the (Council's) Local Development Framework'. This is a more concise document than the SEP and has been easier to address, but we are concerned that the fraternity of developers have also been submitting their views, which include their perception that the Green Belt in the northern Borough should be reviewed; this of course is a view with which we wholly disagree. The Council has just informed us that we are invited to a 'Pre-Hearing Meeting' on 20 May to discuss procedures and administration for an Examination in Public (EIP) of the DPD, which will be conducted by Inspector Simon Emerson. We shall attend, and we believe we shall also be invited to attend, and perhaps speak at, the

public hearings for the EIP which are scheduled to commence during the week beginning 6 July. It may be some time before we really know what the Government is planning to impose on our Borough Council, for example on the number of houses to be built in the district.

My apologies that this is all news about future events, but they are events that will shape our future environment; in the autumn NewsSheet we hope to be able to report on what is actually likely to happen. Meanwhile, if you are concerned about the issues in the DPD you could come and ask our Councillors about them at our AGM, and/or let us know before July what concerns you.

The Federation will be holding its next quarterly meeting on 24th April. At the last meeting in January we were told about the Council's Leisure and Housing policies by Kevin Hetherington, who gave us a very useful run-down on the current situation. Although the availability of funds has been affected by the Icelandic Bank saga there are some commitments to developing leisure activities; many lie outside our area but the Lady Neville café and improved children's playground should be going ahead in the summer.

Roger Collins

(01737) 358384

MORE ON COUNCIL TAX

As usual delving into local government finances carries a health warning. At the least, you get a severe headache.

The recent council tax bill increased by 3.5%. Note that the RPI increase was only 0.14% for the year to January 2009. This, however, is dominated by reductions in mortgage costs and hides a big increase in food prices.

Surrey C C dominate the tax bill accounting for 73.6% with their portion increasing by 3%. However Surrey Police increased by 4.9% and Reigate & Banstead increased by 4.95%.

If you look at the total expenditure by

BANSTEAD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

each authority and then the portion funded by Central Government, a clearer picture emerges. Surrey C C funding by the centre held steady at 56.6% of budget. However, both Surrey Police and R & B continue to be squeezed. Surrey Police's funding fell from 51.9% of budget to 51.2% and R & B from 39.7% of budget to 38.1%, so accounting for the large increases in their portions of the overall Council Tax bill.

Surrey Police continue to have a running battle with Government who have capped their increase yet again. They complain bitterly about the lack of funding from the centre being the third lowest per head of population in the country.

They have appealed against being capped. If they lose, it could lead to the expensive task of recalculating the tax and sending of a revised and lower bill.

Local councils are far from immune from the effects of the credit crunch. They will suffer from a reduction in income for all sorts of reasons and will face increasing cost pressures as Central Government scrapes around for savings over the coming years.

Short term the situation has been made worse by their exposure to Icelandic Banks. Press reports indicate that the situation may have changed for the better over the last few days (April 20th), however both Surrey and R & B will suffer a severe loss of investment income as well as cash flow problems. Capital projects may get deferred or scrapped. It is worth noting that of the 130 or so local authorities who had deposits with these banks, Reigate & Banstead, in relation to its size came out at No 1 with £15.5m at risk.

David Gradidge

(01737) 353981

POLICE MATTERS

The police panel meeting for this quarter took place in the Church Institute on Friday

24th 2009. Regrettably, the move to a new location and the appearance of a number of information leaflets at various venues in the High Street had not persuaded more residents to attend.

About a dozen hardy souls made it to the meeting. Three members of our local police force were present but no Councillors had been persuaded to attend. Although these meetings were established to discuss policing issues in the local community, when councillors are present, the items raised in the meeting usually focus on council related topics such as the state of the roads. Anyway, no councillors this time around and no burning issues relating to policing from those residents that did attend.

Although reluctant to be specific about the statistics for local crime PC Sue Rowe outlined the main cause for concern at present in our neighbourhood. Some homes in the neighbourhood have recently been broken into with the sole purpose of stealing keys for cars that have been left outside the property. BMW's and Minis seem the popular marks on thieves' shopping lists. If you are leaving home and your car is outside your property, make sure the keys are secure and not left lying on the hall table or other likely pick up point. There were the usual warnings about leaving valuables in cars, CD's satellite navigation devices and lap tops are frequently taken from parked cars.

There have been some burglaries in the Holly Lane area of the village. Please take care to secure your home when leaving even for a short period. Be vigilant on behalf of neighbours who are away on holiday or just out for the day.

As you may be aware from the last newsletter, feedback from the panel meetings is used to monitor 'customer satisfaction' of our local police force. At

BANSTEAD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

these meetings, those present are asked to vote on the issue they would most like the police to focus on in the coming quarter. Two concerns were raised, vehicles travelling at high speed on Bolters Lane and parking outside Marks and Spencer and vehicles parking on the pavement. PC Rowe affirmed that any cars parking outside M&S or on pavements on the High Street will be issued with parking tickets. With this assurance, it was decided that speeding in Bolters Lane was the matter that currently most concerns local residents. We look forward to feedback at the next meeting.

As for the next meeting? The date and venue are yet to be decided. It will be sometime in July and the date will be confirmed on the Surrey Policy website and hopefully on various notice boards around the village. Please do attend if you can.

Lindsay Iorwerth (01737) 353906

THE STATE (!) OF BANSTEAD

General:

I have gone on (and on I hear you say) about the poor state of the infrastructure in Banstead. Well this past Winter, as I'm sure you know has made things a whole lot worse. Pot holes have bred and multiplied, with the full extent of the frost damage yet to be uncovered. Not everything is down to the weather though. Just a glance at some of the repairs shows what looks like questionable workmanship and materials. Surrey C C will blame lack of resources but that is not a good enough answer.

To put into some sort of context, I've had a look at the weather data for the winter. We had got used to a series of mild winters and this one brought everyone down with a bump. Frosts were more numerous in the 3 months than for any time in the past 20 years. The memorable snow fall on Feb 1st/2nd at over 1 foot was the greatest single

fall for much longer than that and perhaps for over 40 years.

All the items mentioned below have been raised with Surrey C C officials.

State of the roads:

The Horseshoe may have been patched up having got into a disgraceful state by the middle of February. However it is already starting to fall apart outside the library and will no doubt get much worse very quickly before anything gets done. There is vague talk about major repairs - ie kerb to kerb, but don't hold your breath.

Elsewhere, although some filling in has taken place, the holes were not squared off, the edges not sealed with tar and materials used have not properly bound, resulting in a number of early failures. The War Memorial roundabout is a good (bad?) example.

Pot holes may well get repaired, but in other places it is whole areas of the top surface of the road that has been reduced to rubble. Yewlands Close and Pembroke Close are examples. If you want to treat yourself to a really bad road, not in the ward, try Shelveys Way off the A217.

Holly Lane

Water continues to upwell for gullies near to Gt Ellshams and then to scour each side of Holly Lane carrying quantities of material with it down the hill. The previously "repair" to the dangerous edge erosion adjacent to Holly Lane East has not been remedied and there is only scant warning of the dangers ahead. This problem has been raised on numerous occasions with Surrey C C. More permanent repairs are promised, even using concrete! However the root cause remains and I see little hope of any long term remedy.

The High Street

All the old problems remain, but just recently Lake Victoria had enlarged making

BANSTEAD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

if difficult to use the parking spaces down the road. The road gully here cannot cope with the excess water. Bollards outside the Parish Church were demolished some time ago, but have not been replaced with the holes filled in with tarmac. Some 30 or so redundant posts supporting parking restriction signs alongside double yellow lines should have been removed long ago.

The overall road surface is bad to say the least with numerous areas of erosion. It would be appropriate to hope that the High Street could be resurfaced to coincide with the reopening of Waitrose.

Redundant Lighting Columns

That's lamp posts to you and me. The broken post outside The Well House has at long last been removed. I am grateful to those of you who have sent me details of some more posts. Surrey C C have been sent a list with photos. It seems that the contractor who erects replacements is not the same as the contractor who removes old ones. We will keep trying.

Gritting of Pavements

We have not had a satisfactory answer to this one. Questions were asked after the problems in January, and the events in February confirmed our view that gritting of pavements (or even snow clearance) in Banstead was not a priority. We all know that Banstead gets all the snow that's going and that the South side of the High Street will be a dangerous skating rink. Carillion (Surrey's contractor) is supposed to do the roads, but pavements are another matter.

I read that Epsom & Ewell Council took things into their own hands buying salt at great expense. It would be interesting to know if Surrey had enough stock to start the winter and whether they ran out like other authorities.

All for now - I shall return to the subject

of gullies and a general road survey next time - you cant wait!

David Gradidge (01737) 353981

PUBLIC NOTICE BOARD

We have recently submitted a planning application for a non-commercial notice board for local information, to be managed jointly by BVRA and the Arts Society. Assuming it is approved the cost will be borne by Surrey County Councillor Mrs Angela Fraser. The board is to be sited in the pavement outside Waitrose (temporary store) and the Lotus Room restaurant.

Mike Sawyer (01737) 355454

BANSTEAD U3A

Forthcoming meetings include:

Banstead U3A are sponsoring the METROPOLITAN POLICE MALE VOICE CHOIR ,a performance at 7.30 p.m. at United Reformed Church, Woodmansterne Lane, Banstead. Tickets costing £10, include refreshments during the interval, are on sale at IBIS book shop, also at Banstead Music Shop or at the door. This event is part of Banstead Arts Festival Society festival Week.

Banstead U3A next Open Meeting will take place at the Community Hall, Park Rd, Weds July 15th, at 2.15 for 2.30 when a talk will be given by TONY SCOTT, "Stradivarius and all that". Light refreshments after the talk. Admission £1. Free on-site parking.

CAN YOU HELP?

Back in 2002 two wrought iron "Banstead Village" signs were erected, one at each end of the Village, to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II. The one in Garratts Lane has a small flower bed at its foot. In the early years I often

BANSTEAD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

noticed how poor the plants had become, so in 2004 I began to tend the bed during the four seasons, since this bed is the responsibility of Banstead Residents and not the borough council. It only takes a couple of hours every two or three months, but the time I have now has become more limited due to increased family commitments. I wonder if anyone who enjoys gardening would be prepared to spend an hour or so occasionally. It makes such a difference when entering the Village to give a good impression.

If you can help, please phone.

Mary Palmer (01737) 354108

ROAD STEWARDS

There are always vacancies for road stewards so I am always on the lookout for willing volunteers. Most vacancies get filled

but there is often a gap that has to be covered.

At present there are vacancies in -

- 1 Palmersfield Rd
- 2 Parts of Lambert Rd
- 3 Parts of Commonfield Rd
- 4 Forge Steading

The job of a road steward is not very onerous and entails

- Delivering Newsletters 3 times a year
- Collecting the annual subscription (not more than 3 tries)
- Looking for new members and feeding back any useful information

You don't have to live in the road but it does help.

David Gradidge (01737) 353981

BANSTEAD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST JANUARY 2009

| | 2008/2009 | 2007/2008 |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| | £ | £ |
| INCOME | | |
| Subscriptions & Donations | 3124 | 3191 |
| Sundry Income | 30 | 50 |
| Interest received | 91 | 120 |
| | 3245 | 3361 |
| EXPENDITURE | | |
| Production of News Sheets | 1497 | 1602 |
| Subscriptions | 31 | 30 |
| Printing, postage, stationery & telephone | 147 | 672 |
| Hire of rooms | 365 | 424 |
| Web Site | 100 | 228 |
| Sundry expenses | 35 | 144 |
| Expenses - South East Regional Plan | 653 | 0 |
| Donation - Appeal costs - Courtlands Farm | 500 | 0 |
| Donations - Banstead in Bloom | 500 | 0 |
| Donation - Repairs to the Institute frontage | 382 | 300 |
| Excess of Expenditure over Income | -966 | -39 |
| | 3245 | 3361 |

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST JANUARY 2009

| | 31/01/09 | 31/01/08 |
|---|----------|----------|
| | £ | £ |
| NET ASSETS | | |
| Treasurer's account - Lloyds TSB | 1115 | 585 |
| Deposit account - Lloyds TSB | 3900 | 6000 |
| Debtors net of Creditors | 195 | -109 |
| | 5210 | 6476 |
| REPRESENTED BY | | |
| General Fund as at 1st February 2008 | 6176 | 6215 |
| Less deficit for the year | -966 | -39 |
| | 5210 | 6176 |
| Provision for repairs to the Institute frontage | 0 | 300 |
| | 5210 | 6476 |

J D G Gradidge
16 The Maples
Banstead
Hon Treasurer
April 13th 2009