

# BVRA newsheet

FROM THE BANSTEAD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION – TAKING ACTION TO SUPPORT OUR VILLAGE

Vol. 36 / 2 - Spring / Summer 2020 Banstead-BVRA@outlook.com www.Banstead-BVRA.org

## CORONAVIRUS (or COVID-19) by David Talbot



**WHAT a year..!!** It started out with bad news from China, which rapidly spread to the rest of the world and resulted in lockdowns in order to try to prevent the spread of the virus. The lockdowns have caused massive disruption to our everyday lives with severe restrictions on what we can do. Who would have thought that a microscopic virus would have such a massive effect across the world. It's changed everything from work, travel, shopping, holidays, social get-togethers (now done by video-conferencing) and much more!!!



However, the infections are thankfully coming down and some of the restrictions are slowly being lifted and life is starting to get back to some kind of normality, albeit with advice to stay safe - see some of the signs in our village.

But, please be careful out there - it's not over yet. Current Government advice says that we can all help control the virus if we all stay alert. This means you must:



- Stay at home as much as possible
- Work from home if you can
- Limit contact with other people
- Keep your distance if you go out (2 metres apart where possible)
- Wash your hands regularly
- Do not leave home if you or anyone in your household has symptoms.



### **Notice of Annual General Meeting**

The Executive Committee extends a warm invitation to all members of the Association to the **73rd Annual General Meeting to be held at:**

Banstead Preparatory School (formerly Greenacre), Sutton Lane, Banstead  
on TBC (**hopefully September**) commencing at 7:30pm and concluding by 10:00pm.

Our guest speaker is TBC - Please note there is free parking available in the school car park  
Please bring this invitation with you to the meeting. See back page for agenda.

## **MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR by David Talbot**



Welcome to the belated Spring / Summer edition of our newsheet, which like everything else has been affected by the Coronavirus (see my article on the front page). One of the few things that we have been able to progress during 'lockdown' has been the removal of some of the left over tree stumps in our lovely village. Please see Cliff Glanfield's article later on in this newsheet. Thanks to all our contributors, especially to Dr John Peacock for his rather worrying article on tree pandemics. Please see our regular features on planning and infrastructure and some background for us all on the proposed Government changes to our local councils by David Gradidge. In our neighbouring borough of Sutton, we have the huge developments associated with the expanding London Cancer Hub and the new specialist hospital both on the site of the old Sutton Hospital. These developments may well have an impact on us especially in the transport arena.

**Help needed** - Catalina Vassallo-Bonner has been our secretary and planning officer for many years, but has decided that it's time to step down from her secretarial role. Huge thanks to Catalina for supporting us but we are now looking for someone to take on this special role. Please let me know if you can help.

For more details please checkout our website (address on front cover) and our newsheets - if you are not already a member of our organisation please join us (subscription just £3.00 per year). Our email address is shown on the front page. We would love to hear from you.

**Just a quick reminder that we are still hoping to be able to hold our AGM sometime in September. Please keep a lookout for this on our website.**

## **SOME GOOD NEWS by David Gradidge**

I refer to butterfly sightings. We are lucky in that Banstead is surrounded by areas of Chalk Downland and ancient woodland in which you can still find rare butterflies like the Small Blue and the Silver Spotted Skipper. Another species that has been hanging on over many years is the Dark Green Fritillary, a large and very mobile butterfly. Last year at Park Downs, 55 were recorded over a 10 week period. Yesterday, June 15<sup>th</sup>, 42 were seen on Banstead Downs, an incredible number for anywhere in the UK. By the time you read this, they will mostly be over but do take the chance of visiting the Downs.

## **ACCESS ROADS by Brian Ransom**

The misuse of the Winkworth Road Access road has faded away with the reduced traffic levels during lockdown but we have kept plugging away at the Police and Surrey County Council (SCC) during this time. Councillor Ken Gulati, who has supported us throughout, recently heard from the SCC Highways department and was told: "At the end of Covid-19 restrictions they will be assessing if they can install some Yellow Backed Pedestrian warning signs at the approach to the informal pedestrian crossings [i.e. at the Commonfield to Salisbury footpath crossings]". The Highways department will also assess if it is possible to install 'Give way' signs at the access road junctions with Salisbury and Commonfield roads.

A request for the access roads to be designated as 20mph speed limit has also been added to SCC Integrated Transport Scheme list for possible future funding. As Cllr. Gulati says "at least it's a start" - I agree but we, the residents, must keep pressure on SCC and the police for further measures to be taken - Surrey County Council to implement traffic calming measures and the police to enforce the present restrictions. Mr Steve Blythe, who was struck on February 26<sup>th</sup> by a queue jumping driver, has been told he will never walk properly again so it's very galling to hear that the driver who struck him, who had no business to be in the access road will not be prosecuted. Not even for the very minimum offence of entering the access road when he had no cause to. He chose to queue jump the waiting traffic and Steve will pay the price of that decision for the rest of his life.

## **PLANNING MATTERS by Catalina Vassallo-Bonner**

In our winter Newsheet my colleagues on the BVRA Planning group reported on the three particular planning applications that have taken up quite a lot of our time and which are Bolters Corner Rest Home, the Priory School site and the proposed residential home at Wellesford Close. Decisions have now been reached on all three. The owners of the Bolters Corner Rest Home now have permission to erect a four bedroom bungalow at the rear of the existing building to provide extra accommodation for staff.

McCarthy & Stone, having lost their first and second applications to demolish and build 44 independent living apartments, decided to go to appeal and see if that was a more successful route to success. The appeal was held in public in Reigate at the end of February and was successfully upheld by McCarthy & Stone. They have permission to demolish all the buildings including the frontage, build the 44 apartments that they wanted and provide the original number of parking spaces that they asked for. Two interesting facts emerged during the course of the appeal; one that the social, economic, environmental effects and savings to the national purse and NHS would amount to £350,000 per annum and two, that the future residents would be become a financial asset to Banstead via an overall local spend of £160,000 per annum. Our third major planning application was that of Wellesford Close. The Reigate & Banstead council Planning Committee refused the application to build the 68-bed home. That was on the 23<sup>rd</sup> December last year. H.M. Inspectorate has now approved the appeal application lodged earlier this year and any further comments should be sent to its Bristol office by July 29<sup>th</sup>. The decision will be made via Written Representations. Since the start of the Covid-19 lockdown and home working there has been a decline in the number of planning applications submitted. There are appeals outstanding in Garratts Lane, Orchard Close and the High Street and at the same time a number of planning approvals, refusals and withdrawals.

## **LATE NEWS by David Gradidge**

Our Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, has announced "the most radical reform to the planning system since the second world war making it easier to build better homes where people want to live". The press release specifically mentions town centres where redundant buildings could be replaced by housing without normal planning application. Another part excludes village shops. Further detail is promised before the end of July so it is best not to comment further until then.

## **BANSTEAD WILDLIFE FIELD by Brian Ransom**



Like gardening? Do you want to help the community? Then why not volunteer to refurbish the Sensory Bed within the Banstead Wildlife Field? Sadly the Sensory Bed (see picture below) has become overgrown and rather unkempt over the past few years and is in need of some TLC to restore it to its original concept. The BVRA is looking to help set up a small team of

volunteers to take responsibility for this area of the wildlife field by removing the unwanted and overgrown plants, pruning the existing specimen ones and replanting with new suitable plants in the autumn.

Surrey County Council's Greenspaces team have agreed to refurbish the retaining walls of the raised Sensory Bed and BVRA has agreed to fund the purchase of the new autumn planting. Be part of Banstead's green revival and volunteer now!

Email: [ransomb64@gmail.com](mailto:ransomb64@gmail.com)



**The BVRA Newsheet is supported by;**

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## **BANSTEAD VILLAGE IN BLOOM by Marion Hayns (BViB)**

**WHAT A PRETTY PICTURE!** Many of you will recall that hidden delight – the beautiful little garden owned and tended by wheelchair user Robert Endacott tucked away behind Lloyds Bank which won the Banstead Horticultural Society's Best Front Garden Competition in 2017. However, Robert's care for the Village has extended beyond his front gate to ensuring that the fencing alongside the alley leading down from the High Street is kept repaired and colour washed.

In addition, he has created and maintains a colourful bed extending from the alley into the churchyard where once it was nothing but a rubbish tip covered in brambles and ivy. I know that many of you take pleasure in walking through this peaceful graveyard now that the work of sensitive and dedicated volunteers has wrought such an improvement over the past couple of years. Tree canopies have been lifted and shrubs carefully pruned so as to allow the entire area to be opened out, tête-à-tête daffodils and swathes of crocuses have given colour to an otherwise dank and dreary winter and as a consequence we are noticing that visitors are taking much more care of this beautiful space in the heart of our village.

Once Covid-19 restrictions were lifted in mid May allowing the Friday team to return to working outside whilst observing social distancing, we quickly set about restoring the wheelbarrows and beds we had worked so hard on last year, all the while having to find more imaginative ways of getting water to them before we lost all the plants to the recent drought.

By the time that you read this article we are hopeful that the six cast iron planters for which we received funding via our CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) bid will be placed in position on the northern side of the High Street bringing life and colour to that side, and the new tables, chairs and umbrellas (the latter funded by BVRA) will be in position at Pistachios in the Lady Neville Park. In addition, work will also begin in the autumn on the new Sensory Bed alongside the rear of the cafe which has been generously supported by Specsavers of Banstead. We are most grateful to all of you who support and encourage us in so many ways and if you would care to join in with us you would be most welcome.



## **WINKWORTH WOODLAND COMMUNITY PROJECT by Brian Ransom**

After the hiatus of 'lockdown', the Winkworth Woodland Community Project members restarted our interrupted year on the 13<sup>th</sup> June with a small celebration of our 4 years of volunteering! Coffee, cake and socially distanced chat were enjoyed by all. If you would care to join us we volunteer on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday and 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of every month 10:00 to 12:00 o'clock, please bring your own hand tools.

## **TREES by Cliff Glanfield**

There is no Surrey County Council (SCC) budget for replacement trees and we are therefore proposing to fund some tree planting around the village. Saplings of a sufficient size and quality to plant on grass verges are about £250-300 each to purchase and plant. We are hoping to plant a few in November this year and are considering locations, preferably near to where stumps have been removed, but if anyone has any suggestions please contact Cliff Glanfield (cliffglanfield@yahoo.co.uk). The SCC tree planting policy has recently changed, allowing private contractors to be used by exception and we are hoping to pursue this route, otherwise if we were to use SCC contractors we would have to wait another year to see trees planted.

## **TREE STUMPS** by Cliff Glanfield



It is Surrey County Council policy when removing a dead or dying tree to reduce it to a stump about 1m high then leave it. For at least the last five years or so there has been no budget to actually grind out the stumps, which has left about 30 unsightly stumps around the village.

In an effort to remove some these eyesores, BVRA have funded the grinding out of 9 stumps on the main thoroughfares of Winkworth Road, Park Road and Garratts Lane at a cost of £1,600.

Please see the before and after pictures of one of the stumps in Garratts Lane. We hope to fund some more stump grinding in due course.



## **INFRASTRUCTURE** by David Gradidge

By the time you read this, the repairs to the pavements in the High Street should be finished. It was somewhat more than just resurfacing and perhaps will show up the boundaries between Surrey and the shops. Bolters Lane and the North part of Sutton Lane have been resurfaced, although more work is needed. I have not been about enough to know if any other roads have been tackled but I am sure the entrance to Wellesford Close remains the worst road in Banstead. Surrey have published future plans that include repairs to Garratts Lane and Court Road. On other matters, do go to Banstead Wildlife Field for your exercise, you will find a bench funded by BVRA which we are thinking that it should recognise the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE day.

## **ASH DIE BACK – a tale of pandemics** by Dr John Peacock (Banstead Common Conservators)

In the 1960/70s, Dutch Elm Disease swept across Europe from North America, devastating Elm trees in its path. The fungus that caused the disease simply blocked the trees' vascular system blocking water and nutrient supply. Within 20 years, virtually all English Elms have disappeared from the UK, with only scattered survivors in hedges and woods that start to grow as individual trees but then die back because of chronic disease.

30/40 years on, a similar disease (this time bacterial) hit the UK, this time affecting Ash trees. Infected trees were imported from Europe, even though the disease was already destroying Ash all over Europe. The first evidence of disease is the death of terminal shoots, hence "die-back". When it first appeared, the authorities decided to track and trace, everyone was asked to report any trees that showed symptoms, however, the disease spread rapidly and this approach became overwhelmed. The disease is still ongoing but evidence from Europe suggests that more than 90% of trees are affected with very few showing complete resistance and most dying.

In Banstead, where Ash is a common tree, the effect has been mixed, nearly all trees show some evidence of die back. It seems younger trees are worse affected than larger specimens, in many places, large stands of saplings 4-8m high are dying or dead. Larger trees appear to be able to respond to die back early in the season by producing abnormal secondary growth in early summer. Wherever you look however, you will find some completely dead trees, some with dead branches but all will show some dead wood even if only at the tips of branches. Certainly, over the past five years the number of large dead trees has increased annually and it seems certain that our Ash trees are going the same way as the Elm. In a lifetime we will have lost two of our most iconic forest trees. It is worth noting that there are other new threats to other species, such as Oak Processionary Moth. One thing is certain just as with Elms and now Ash these lethal pandemics have the potential to change our native woodlands permanently.

## **LOCAL AUTHORITIES - ENGLAND by David Gradidge**

We understand that the Government is planning major changes to how local authorities are organised in England. As a bit of background, set out below is the current situation. It is a bit of a complicated mess.

There are 343 local authorities in England divided into 5 categories:

<b>Two tier Authorities</b>		<b>Examples</b>	<b>Single tier Authorities</b>		<b>Examples</b>
County	26	Surrey	Unitary	55	Cornwall
District	192	Reigate & Banstead	Metropolitan	30	Birmingham
			London	32	Sutton

Above this level are 10 Combined Authorities like GLC and Liverpool City Regional CA.

Over the last 10 or more years Unitary authorities have been slowly created out of the amalgamations of county and district councils. Here are some examples –

- Cornwall. Cornwall Council was created in 2009 by the abolition of the 6 district councils. They have 123 councillors and the population is 566,000 spread over a very wide area. Note it is not called Cornwall County Council and for some good reason excludes The Scilly Isles.
- Buckinghamshire. Created April 1<sup>st</sup> 2020 by the abolition of 5 district councils. No elections have been held and currently they have 202 “shadow” councillors. Population is 540,000, but this excludes by far the largest town – Milton Keynes at 269,000 and already a unitary authority.

The two above are the largest unitary authorities in England.

Now, many old Counties exclude the larger conurbations as separate unitary authorities. So Hampshire excludes Portsmouth and Southampton, and Kent excludes the Medway towns. Surrey has no comparable major towns. Unitary Authorities come in all shapes and sizes with the smallest by far in population terms being Rutland County Council at just below 40,000. Slough is the smallest by area. They are a mix of conurbations, towns, counties and parts of counties. The population density varies between over 5000 per sq km in Portsmouth to not much more than 50 for Northumberland.

Looking at Surrey, the population is 1,190,000 and there are 11 district councils. Dividing Surrey into two would create the two largest unitary authorities in England. Creating three would average about 400,000 population and four would be around 300,000 population. There is no direct comparison with any other county but this last figure is not far out from the average in most places.

How would it happen? This is a government initiative and not a proposal to the government from below so whatever has happened in the past will be irrelevant. If the proposal is to cut Surrey in two, all local involvement, as we have now with planning, would be very difficult if not impossible. We will have to wait for the white paper but no doubt there will be bits of detail in the meantime.

## **ROADS STEWARDS by David Gradidge**

There are a few vacancies as ever. It is most important that we find volunteers to fill these gaps.

- Barnfield / Flint Close
- A part of Greenhayes Avenue
- Harbourfield Road
- Yewlands Close
- A part of Sutton Lane

If you want to take part or know anyone who might be interested please contact me at [dgradidge@waitrose.com](mailto:dgradidge@waitrose.com)

## **FINANCES by David Gradidge**

The most noticeable feature of the accounts is the drop in subscription income. The lockdown put a stop to collections in March, but this hid a more worrying underlying loss of membership from a variety of causes. I have mentioned before that the increase in 'let' properties is one factor.

Other features –

- Stationery costs in 2018 included £392 for the reprinting of receipt books
- A new bench in the Wildlife Field
- A substantial contribution to the cost of managing the Village lights
- The fund for the replacement of trees stood at £2,250 at the year end, over £1,500 of that has just been spent on the removal of stumps.
- We have approved money for the refurbishment of the old village signs and a contractor has quoted for the work.
- Bank balances at the year end were £10,947 down from £13,112. The major item was the new village sign in Bolters Lane which was funded by public donations deposited into our bank account.

## **EXTRACT FROM THE ACCOUNTS**

	2019/20	2018/19
	£	£
<b>INCOME</b>		
Subscriptions & Donations	4,586	5,595
	<u>4,586</u>	<u>5,595</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Production of Newssheets	1,232	1,396
Less contrib from R Saunders & Co	-300	-300
Hire of rooms	106	167
Printing, postage & stationery	124	707
Website	140	141
Subscriptions	71	111
Insurance	80	80
Sundry expenses	47	15
Donation to 2019 Village Lights Fund		500
Refurbishment of Village Benches	0	139
BVIB Wheelbarrow	0	200
Bench in Wildlife Field	362	
Banstead Village Lights 2019	1,000	500
Other donations	347	240
Tree replacement Fund	750	750
Village Sign Fund	300	
Excess of Income over Expenditure	327	949
	<u>4,586</u>	<u>5,595</u>

### **USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS**

#### **BVRA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**David Talbot** - Chairman

**David Gradidge** – Treasurer, Transport and Infrastructure

email: dgradidge@waitrose.com

**Catalina Vassallo-Bonner** – Planning

**Cliff Glanfield** - Data Records Manager

**Secretary** - position vacant, please let us know if you are interested in helping.

**Barbara Birch, Ben Martin, Brian Ransom,**

**Melanie Ramsay and Richard Heath.**

Group email: Banstead-BVRA@outlook.com

### **LOCAL COUNCILLORS**

**Ken Gulati** – Surrey County Councillor

email: ken.gulati@surreycc.gov.uk

**Nadean Moses** - Borough Councillor

email: Cllr.Moses@reigate-banstead.gov.uk

**Eddy Humphreys** – Borough Councillor

email: Cllr.Humphreys@reigate-banstead.gov.uk

**Sam Walsh** – Borough Councillor

email: Cllr.Walsh@reigate-banstead.gov.uk

### **MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT**

**Crispin Blunt, M.P.**

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38-40 Bell Street, Reigate RH2 7BA

## **FUTURE EVENTS**

As you will hopefully know, our two big village events (the May Fayre and the Village Day) and most of the regular other events (Banstead Arts Festival, flower shows, quiz nights etc) have been cancelled for this year. We are still hoping that we can hold our AGM sometime in September, although this will be dependant upon the situation nearer the time. If it does go ahead, the agenda will be as follows:

1. Welcome by chairman David Talbot.
2. Minutes of the 72nd AGM - summary distributed to members at the meeting.
3. Address from our guest speaker, following which he / she would be happy to answer questions from the floor.
4. Report by the chairman, including our slightly modified constitution.
5. Presentation of the accounts for the year – extract printed on page 7 of this newssheet.
6. Election of Officers, Secretary, Treasurer and Independent Examiner.
7. Welcome to our local Councillors, followed by Open Forum debate.
8. Any other business.

An update on some of our big events, but please see our website (address on front cover) for further details and up to date information as it becomes available.

### **BANSTEAD VILLAGE MAY QUEEN GROUP by Melanie French & Sheila Patel (BVMQG)**



As you all may know, we took the decision in March to postpone the May Fayre to September, due to Covid-19. However, in conjunction with the Royal British Legion, we have taken the decision that it is safer for all concerned if we cancel the Fayre for 2020. We cannot risk putting on a Fayre before the threat of Covid-19 has been minimised. There is no guarantee that this will happen before September, and we cannot put on a successful and enjoyable Fayre if the residents of Banstead are worried that they will become ill if they attend. The date for the Fayre next year will be the **1<sup>st</sup> of May 2021**, and we will of course be donating our profits to the **Royal British Legion, Banstead**.

### **BANSTEAD ROYAL BRITISH LEGION by Mike Sawyer (Banstead RBL)**

As you will see elsewhere the 2020 May Queen event that we were to partner has now been cancelled. Disappointing though this is, it has to be the correct decision in view of the potential health risks associated with large gatherings. We hope that we will be able to join with the May Queen group in a full and safe manner next year. In the meantime we have started our planning for this year's Poppy Appeal, but this is subject to doubt and we await advice from the government and Royal British Legion nearer the time. The imperative is to find a safe way of holding our local appeal. As ever we would be grateful for volunteers to help with putting up the large poppies on lampposts, which are now becoming such a recognisable feature on the approaches to, and the centre of, our village. If you are able to help please email us at [nms.brbl@virginmedia.com](mailto:nms.brbl@virginmedia.com), or ring/text to 07740 867 075.



### **BVIB QUIZ NIGHT by Marion Hayns (BVIB)**

In view of the ongoing uncertainty surrounding the resumption of social activities we at BVIB have made the difficult decision to cancel our very popular Annual Fundraising Quiz Night this autumn. Due to take place on October 31<sup>st</sup> it has been rescheduled for **Saturday March 6<sup>th</sup> 2021** at the Community Hall, Park Road commencing at 7:30 PM as usual. We trust that by then life as we knew it will have resumed something approaching normality! Please do make a note of this date now – we are entirely reliant on fundraising and your donations to carry out the projects we have instigated over the last three years and which have made such an appreciable difference to the general ambience of our lovely Village.