

BVRA newsheet

from the Banstead Village Residents' Association

Vol. 32 No. 1 - Winter 2016

Introduction

Firstly, may we wish you a (slightly belated) Happy New Year.

This issue contains an analysis of the replies to our Members' Survey. We were delighted with both the numbers (around 40% of our members) and the care and thought shown. This response is extremely high for such a detailed survey and we are extremely pleased, and encouraged. This does, however, need a measured response from us in the setting of practical plans to seek ways of addressing the many issues and concerns that have been raised. More on this in David Gradidge's article and detailed report later on.

We have also been encouraged that four more members have shown a very timely interest in our work and have been invited to join our executive committee or assist with specific areas of work. This is a working method we are now actively encouraging and would be pleased to hear from any members prepared to give just a little of their time (on an occasional basis) to help us in achieving our goals.

Another key involvement over the next few weeks is our initiative in response to the national "Clean for the Queen" campaign, which supports local communities in a major clean up of their streets. More of this later on in Marion Hayns' article.

It is also pleasing to report the growing strength of the new Banstead Business Guild, more of which in a later item. We intend to work closely with them, and have already received donations from one of their members towards the Xmas lights and the "Clean for the Queen" initiative.

And finally, we understand from the statements made by the proposers at a public meeting before Christmas that they anticipate submitting a further planning application for a cemetery in Croydon Lane. At the time of writing this has not emerged, but again, more of this in a later article on planning.

Mike Sawyer and Sally Hull

MEMBERS' SURVEY

Overview

We have been encouraged by the comments received from our survey on your views on the state of some aspects of Banstead Village, with nearly 800 responses from our 2,000 or so members – even better than last time.

It is mostly reassuring to see the consistency with the views received 9 years ago on so many of the questions, but there are a few significant changes.

A detailed summary is contained in the white insert document, but in simplistic terms you tell us you feel safer, have fewer complaints about the state of your roads and street lighting, more complaints about your pavements, have less concern about crossing the High Street but more about parking.

Conclusion

Lots of areas of practical concern. We intend to catalogue and follow up all these matters with a number of small survey groups and will relay our suggestions to the appropriate authorities – mostly Surrey or Reigate and Banstead Councils. We will keep you informed of progress (or lack of response?) with these authorities as matters move on. Needless to say we would be grateful for willing helpers, so if any of the areas detailed in this report ring any bells with you, please let us know if and when you can help.

Promise we don't bite!

Mike Sawyer

BANSTEAD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

CLEAN FOR THE QUEEN (CFTQ)

You may have read of this wonderful initiative from Country Life magazine to mark the 90th birthday of Queen Elizabeth 2nd this year.

Reference has been made to the results of the questionnaire elsewhere in this newsletter but what came through overwhelmingly was that almost all of you who took the trouble to reply were very happy living in Banstead but found the shabby state of the pavements and roads to be unacceptable. BVRA propose to spearhead "The Great Clear Up" on the weekend of the 12th –13th March.

You are then invited to the "Big Thank You" at 3pm when Tim Vine, our local celebrity will be present together with other local dignitaries. We are hopeful that this will take place in the Orchard in front of All Saints Church but as yet it is unconfirmed. We plan on offering refreshments to all who have helped and are looking to local firms to support us in this.

Nearer the time more detailed publicity will be put up in local shops, the local library, newspapers and social media. We will contact those of you that have given us your email addresses

Please put this date in your diaries now – we are sure that it will prove to be a very worthwhile and fun time – a chance for you to meet up with those new neighbours from down the road whose names you can never remember!

If you have particular concerns that you would like to bring to our attention in planning this "great clean up" we should be delighted to hear from you - johnh.bvra@hotmail.com. We cannot promise any great miracles but together we can all do our bit to enhance our lovely village.

Marion Hayns

PLANNING

Major applications

We are aware of a number of pending proposals for development, or re-development, in the green belt adjoining our Village. The most significant is the promised further application for a **cemetery** in Croydon Lane. Although we have not seen a new submission yet we did have sight of a presentation at a public meeting before Christmas. From the few details on display we remain as concerned as before that this proposal

is not of sufficient benefit for our village to justify this breach of green belt policy.

We are opposed in principle to the change of use from agriculture. Green Belt policy (including the local plan) requires the applicant to demonstrate exceptional circumstances to justify development in the green belt. The proposers have not convinced us of any over-riding circumstances so far and we remain of the view that the damage that would be caused by the development to the environmental and character of the area are unacceptable; indeed the proposal appears to be of greatest value to the landowners and to Sutton and Croydon rather than to Banstead.

We opposed both previous planning applications on a number of grounds. The most important of these was that this is an extremely narrow strip of Green Belt land that serves as a vital barrier to maintain the important separation of Banstead from London. This is one of the key functions of any Green Belt – the separation of communities and the prevention of ribbon development. We believe most strongly that this is crucial to the preservation of Banstead's unique character.

We had, and still have, other concerns, some related to appearance, the scale of hard surfacing, the size and appearance of the chapel and other buildings, and the general impact on the appearance and character of the (largely agricultural) area. In addition the scale of traffic generation was not revealed, nor the full scale of parking need or highway/access alterations, which could probably require changes to the width of Croydon lane, and be detrimental to its "countryside" appearance. The recently withdrawn application also indicated undefined future phases.

If these matters are to be satisfactorily addressed, we need more details. These would also have to address the reasons why the drainage and highway authorities recommended the refusal of the more recent application (which was then immediately withdrawn!), although it is hard to see how they could address our fundamental objection to the damage to the Green Belt.

Other matters that are relevant include the fact that this is a commercial venture likely to cost

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a million pounds or more (possibly much more), not a charitable one or one owned by the public at large. So the issue of cost of burial is not transparent. Significantly, the chapel would also be used for services associated with cremations (the actual cremation would be carried out elsewhere), so this would imply a greatly increased number of people using the facility - way beyond the theoretically limited 100 burial services a year.

The claim is that this will be for the benefit of Banstead. This may be true in small part, but Reigate and Banstead's need for further cemetery spaces (still a few years away) would be better served nearer to the centre of the Borough. It has not been demonstrated, and we suggest cannot be, that other more suitable sites nearer the heart of our Borough, could not be found within the time available before the present resources are full. The Croydon Lane location is far more significant to the needs of Croydon and Sutton, whose population together measure over half a million. The population of our Borough north of the M 25 is about 50,000 – so the balance of need is not ours. Nor is it now.

On the information so far available we are far from being persuaded that the very limited potential benefits outweigh the much more significant damage that would be caused to our neighbourhood; nor do we believe that it is the only possible site, nor that it meets the Borough's planning policies or government policy on protection of the Green Belt, notwithstanding the carefully selected quotes now published. We believe that the balance of argument is firmly against this proposal.

Other planning applications

Although we cannot take up cases on behalf of our members, we do study each application and comment to the council where appropriate. The survey shows an increase in members contacting the council on their local applications. We do not pretend to know each property better than the owner or neighbour, so would welcome any comments that you may wish to share with us (to: bansteadvillage.bvra@virginmedia.com) on applications that affect you. You may well identify issues that we have missed.

Mike Sawyer

INFRASTRUCTURE

Sandersfield Road & Gardens have been resurfaced. This happened as the October survey went out. Some footpaths have also had treatment. I know of Greenhayes Gardens, Sutton Lane north of the roundabout (but not the worst stretch) and Holly Lane for about 200 yds on both sides.

Surrey C C tell me that Avenue Road, Chalmers Road, Harbourfield Rd, and Grange Meadow are on the list. Odd about the last one as it has just been done. Surrey has also noted my request for The Oval, Courtlands Crescent, Fairlawn Grove and Wellesford Close to be nominated in the next round. They may have to add Woodmansterne Lane.

The survey threw up a report that there are no drop pavements for mobility scooters on Harbourfield Road and on inspection, Glenfield Road. The problems are almost all on the crossings where the service roads exit from behind the shops. Surrey C C have been advised. Also reported was the lack of lighting in the Library car park. On inspection I found only one working light out of 5.

There is zero action on any of the missing, damaged or duplicate road signs reported last time.

Finally there is the prominent 10m. mast that appeared one day on the corner of Sutton Lane and Winkworth Road.

Case study:

The survey threw up numerous comments from the long suffering residents of Holly Lane West. So I went to investigate. The list of woes is extensive, so apologies if I have missed one:-

1. Only one street lamp for some 250 yds, partly obscured by trees;
2. Leaves never swept - not alone there!
3. Tree barrier with Holly Lane getting taller and wider; potentially (if not actually) dangerous;
4. No footpath along whole length of road;
5. The pedestrian exit is along a narrow, leaf covered muddy path to Holly Lane Drive;
6. Road surface is rough uneven slabs of 1930s style concrete;
7. Sight lines at exits onto Holly Lane "testing".

David Gradidge

BANSTEAD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

LADY NEVILLE PLAYGROUND

We are delighted to report that we have just been informed by the Parks Department that the contract to renew the play surface has now been awarded and it is anticipated that the work will be completed by the end of March. Whilst this is being carried out the area will be closed off for 2 weeks – at this stage we cannot tell you exactly when this will be.

Many of you raised the issue of the play park in your response to the survey and it is wonderful news that the proposed improvement will coincide with the Village Clean Up Event (CFTQ).

Marion Hayns

POLICE & TRADING STANDARDS

Due to deployment changes in our local police team, the way we receive updates continues to change. However, there is a brief overview below and if you use social media you can follow the local team:

- Like on Facebook/Reigate Beat
- Follow on Twitter/@ReigateBeat

... where you will typically see details posted of local crime and scam alerts, missing vulnerable persons, successful police operations, witness appeals, etc.

Brief summary:

“As you may be aware, we are working with Winkworth Road residents on proposals to resolve mis-use of the service roads and the dangers it poses to residents; pedestrians and motorists alike. Therefore, we were pleased to know that police activity in late of 2015 included an operation stopping and checking everyone using the slip roads. Police were looking for drivers using the service roads as a short cut and the operation resulted in 33 drivers being stopped in a matter of only a few hours. Whilst aiming to discourage dangerous ‘rat-running’, the operation had several other positive outcomes including a person ‘wanted’ on warrant and a driver using false number plates.

As some of you may have noticed, Hartley’s off licence in Banstead High Street was ram-raided on Monday 23rd November. This crime took place at 4.00am using a stolen Porsche and alcohol was stolen. We are awaiting an update on the investigation.

We also now intend to include some Trading Standards updates to help you avoid known

scams, frauds and other risks. We hope you find this useful. If you like to receive regular email information direct from Trading Standards, please email trading.standards@surreycc.gov.uk or telephone 01372 371700

Follow on Twitter/@Bucks_SurreyTS

Website: www.surreycc.gov.uk/business-and-consumers/trading-standards

Courier Fraud in Surrey

Courier fraud is a repeat problem across Surrey primarily targeting vulnerable people within the community and consists of a telephone call being made by someone pretending to be from the police or bank, asking the victim for personal details such as card details or for them to withdraw cash, then a courier being sent to collect either cash or card from the victim.

How to protect yourself, or someone you know from courier fraud

- *Don’t give personal details, bank cards, or money to someone you don’t know.*
- *If you’re asked to call someone back, hang up and wait 5 minutes before calling back or use a mobile phone.*
- *Stickers from the Trading Standards fraud sticker pack can be put on telephones, cheque books and computers as a reminder not to give out details. You can request one from Citizens Advice consumer helpline on 03454 04 05 06.*

Multiple fraud victims from winter holiday bookings on fake websites

Action Fraud has received multiple reports from people who have been defrauded after paying for winter holiday accommodation on RightSki.com and ChaletHunter.com. According to the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) RightSki.com and ChaletHunter.com were set up by fraudsters using fake details and false information.

The NFIB is proactively taking steps to suspend the websites and virtual phone numbers used by these fraudsters and are warning consumers that they may continue this activity and use alternative websites. Fraudsters can easily set up new pages with different names very quickly.

Many more details can be found on: www.actionfraud.police.uk, or by speaking to the specialist fraud advisers on 0300 123 2040

Sally Hull

BANSTEAD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

BANSTEAD BUSINESS GUILD (BBG)

The Banstead Business Guild was recently set up with the assistance of Reigate and Banstead Borough Council and your local Councillors, with the aim of bringing local businesses together to make Banstead an even better place to live and work. We have a growing membership of businesses in the High Street and business people who live in the area.

We meet on a regular basis, 9 times a year with 2 main aims:

- 1 - To network with other local businesses
- 2 - To see how we can enhance footfall to our High Street.

Some of the topics which are current are

How can we improve the existing events we run?

What other events do we want to run?

What street improvements do we want to see?

How can we promote the High Street and local businesses?

Can we improve on our street furniture?

Can we make our festive lights better?

As a group we will have a stronger voice when going to the Council. We already have access to some funds, and we are considering how they can be used to benefit Banstead.

The annual membership is £50 which will be spent entirely on benefiting the High Street.

Should you wish to find out more please contact either me, **Eddy Humphreys by email EddyHumphreys@hotmail.co.uk**, or **Jon at Snuggs**

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

The lights were up again this year although we have some problems, for example with those on the trees in the Church Orchard. They are 15 years' old and need replacing – but the cost is going to be significant. The lights in the other trees – by the Library and outside the Victoria chemist/Tesco parade – seem to be holding up. We have not had the funds to begin a programme of replacing strings of lights this year but we hope, with the help of Councillor Eddy Humphreys' Banstead Business Guild initiative, to devise a practical programme for replacements, starting later this year. We have already received a donation of £500 from one of the Guild members, but need to find more ways of raising money. Meanwhile the 'banners' on the

lampposts looked good, and are managed by the BBG and arranged by Councillor Humphreys and Snuggs the jewellers with funding from other Banstead High Street businesses.

Roger Collins

SUTTON & EAST SURREY WATER (S&ESW)

For several years S&ESW has invited junior schools to send pupils to tour the reservoir and treatment works at Bough Beech, near Edenbridge in Kent.

Last year a decision was made to extend the invitation, firstly to stake holders (Residents' Associations, local and parish councils and other interested parties) and secondly to members of the public. So on Friday October 22nd 2015 a number of stakeholders gathered at Bough Beech, armed with wellies all ready to 'do the tour'. This started with a steep climb to the top of the reservoir which supplies 15% of the total water consumed by customers of S&ESW. The other 85% comes from groundwater resources. The local geology is clay which is the perfect base for a reservoir. During the winter months S&SEW is licensed to abstract up to 273 million litres per day (Ml/d) from the Eden topped up by natural rainfall. Should the reservoir become too full then water goes into an overflow pipe and is returned to the river.

The reservoir is home to both angling and sailing clubs and provides a safe haven for migratory birds. The tour takes about two hours and follows the water as it is channelled through outside tanks into inside tanks and comprises clarifiers, rapid gravity filters, granular activated carbon, adsorption, trihalomethane stripping, ultraviolet (UV) and chlorination disinfection all of which is very technical but guarantees that the water that comes out of the tap is absolutely safe to drink. The whole process takes about four hours from start to finish.

It was a most interesting two hours, the guides were excellent and with the dry and mild weather it was a most enjoyable experience.

SESW are repeating the open days in May this year. The public day will be on Saturday May 14th. Look out for a poster on the noticeboard opposite the library and prepare to enjoy a pleasant experience

Catalina Vassallo-Bonner

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CAR PARK CHARGES

Quite by chance we read in the local paper that the Council proposes to increase its charges again in February. This time last year many people were caught out by the relatively un-announced increase (you would need a magnifying glass to read details of the proposals for the High Street car park). Whilst it is not surprising that charges rise over time, we have questioned both the justification for another above inflation price hike and the way we are "consulted" each year.

The proposed increases are: +10p for the first 20 minutes (up to 50p); +20p for each other period (eg 1 hour goes up to £1.30). While these are not huge sums they are well above inflation - and may well be in force when you read this! Our concern is (with so much pressure on the viability of our High Street) about the impact on visitors, and on parking in the surrounding roads.

If we get a response we will let you know.

Mike Sawyer

LOCAL GROUPS

Poppy Appeal

Our thanks must go to Allan Parsons (our local Poppy Appeal organiser), his gang of helpers, and most particularly the generosity of the Banstead people. The appeal raised an amazing sum of just over £35,000, a substantial increase on last year, out of a total of around £1.1 m. for the whole of Surrey.

Ron Phillips, Banstead RBL

Support for the Elderly – Age Concern Banstead

Age Concern Banstead is your local charity helping to support the elderly in their own homes. It is a very active organisation offering a range of services via its network of volunteers. It welcomes the opportunity to identify local elderly people that they can help support, particularly during these winter months.

They would like to hear from you if you know of any elderly person who is perhaps;

- stuck at home or
- lonely or
- vulnerable or
- bored or
- depressed or
- who would benefit from a visitor to chat to and have cup of tea with

Please call the **Age Concern Banstead office on**

01737 352156 if you know someone you think could benefit from its help.

Banstead Community Hall

The Community Hall is located in Park Road, Banstead. It has a large Hall with a stage, a kitchen, two meeting rooms and two dressing rooms, together licensed for up to 250 people. The main hall can seat around 200 people and the smaller rooms are suitable for meetings of 5 to 30 people. It has car parking for over 100 cars.

Much of the capacity is taken up with regular weekly groups covering such activities as:

Mondays: Line Dancing and Badminton (winter only);

Tuesdays: Ladies fitness, Dancing Classes for children (Eclipse) and Yoga;

Wednesdays: Badminton in the evening and, on a once per month basis, NADFAS, Banstead Flower Club and U3A Line Dancing;

Thursdays: Children's Playgroup, Dancing classes for children (Banstead Academy of Performing Arts);

Fridays: Bridge;

Sundays: The Christadelphian Church.

Additionally there are regular classes run by the WEA and the U3A on a variety of subjects and, in the winter, there are three sessions of indoor bowls spread throughout the week.

At the weekend the Hall is available for hire. Some of these events are private but many are very much open to the public such as Banstead Horticultural Society shows, Banstead Arts Festival Society events, Banstead History Society lectures, a Charity Christmas Card fair in early October, the Banstead Art Group show in October and the Banstead and Nork Operatic Society shows in November to name a few.

Why not get involved? Contact details and times for these activities are posted in the Hall foyer.

Anyone wishing to book the Hall should contact **Joanne Smith on 01737 360568** or josmithbca@hotmail.co.uk

Alternatively you could become a member of the Banstead Community Association, which runs the hall. Membership is £2 per annum per household and members receive a newsletter ten times per year showing the events at the hall. It is available by email. Initial contact is through **Michael Cartwright on 01737 350660** or mcartwright@waitrose.com.

BANSTEAD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Banstead Recorded Music Society

Over the first three months in the New Year the programmes will include music by brass bands and more classical offerings by Russian composers. The dates and programmes will be:

4th February: A Romp around Europe by Geoff Stevens

3rd March: The Russians are Coming by Malcolm Ash

17th March: Margaret Entertains by Margaret Stevens

7th April: Birds, Bees & Butterflies by John Deaville

21st April: William Sterndale Bennett by Barry Sterndale Bennett

Why not come along and enjoy the music chosen by some very experienced presenters of recorded music programmes. We meet in the Banstead Library (enter by the back door) from 7.45 pm to 10 pm with a short coffee break. A small charge of £3 will be made to cover rental costs.

Roger Collins

COUNCILLOR SURGERIES

Did you know that you can meet with your local councillor at one of the regular surgeries held on the last Saturday of each month? More details, dates/times can be found at the library in the Horseshoe where the surgeries are held.

Sally Hull

BVRA ITEMS

Auditor

Special thanks go to Christopher Jenkins, our Auditor for the last 10 years, who has now retired - so there is a vacancy. It is not an onerous job and carries no remuneration! If you would like to volunteer, please give me a phone call.

David Gradidge

Road Stewards

At the time of writing, 62% of the subscriptions have been collected and returned. This is about normal, but as you well know it can now get a trifle difficult door to door. I have two vacancies at the moment; one for the west part of Lambert Rd, one for Yewlands Close.

Vacancies occur all the time so if you are in volunteering frame of mind please contact me. Please let me know if for any reason you cannot deliver your newsheets within a couple of weeks. This will be especially important with the May issue where the schedule will be quite tight ahead of the AGM.

David Gradidge

AGM

Our councillors and your committee will again be on hand to answer your questions, this year on Tuesday 24th May.

Mike Sawyer

BANSTEAD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Executive Committee, Officers and Members:

2015 – 2016

Chairman: vacant

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Vice Chairman: Ms S. Hull, 34 Salisbury Road, SM7 2DR (01737) 370050

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Mr Eddy Humphreys, 20 The Oval, SM7 2RA 07841 160711

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Mr Ken Gulati, Quetta, 25 Colcokes Avenue, SM7 2EJ (01737) 352627

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Banstead Community Association: Mr & Mrs Conacher

Banstead Wildlife Field: Mr Gradidge

CPRE: Mr Collins

Police Liaison: Mrs C. Vassallo-Bonner Ms Hull

Village Notice Board: Mr & Mrs Conacher

Planning Study Group:

Messrs Sawyer, Ford, Hayns, Ms Hull, Mrs Vassallo-Bonner

Village Council Steering Group:

Messrs Heath, Ford, Sawyer, Ms Hull

Observers of Borough & County Committees:

Mr Collins

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