

BVRA newsheet

from the Banstead Village Residents

MRS CATALINA BONNE
HAWLEY DRIVE
HAWLEY DRIVE

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Chairman's Introduction

The issues we face remain the same as described in our September NewsSheet: the NHS, the Core Strategy and local government developments. To deal first with the NHS as it is close to most residents' hearts, the situation seems to be worsening. In a nutshell, we are likely to be reduced to full A&E services only at Kingston, St George's and Mayday hospitals – none of them exactly close to our residents. You will find the details separately described below.

We have just revisited the Reigate & Banstead Borough Council's (R&BBC) rewritten Core Strategy, aimed at resolving the concerns raised by the Planning Inspector in regard to the last version. Both BVRA and the Banstead and District Federation of RA's have now submitted our objections and comments - see our concerns in the planning report below. The Core Strategy is badly needed as it provides the policy framework for all local planning and development decisions. We hope to put our concerns to the Planning Inspector at the Examination in Public due to be held in May.

Local government is perhaps the most important issue to address and certainly the most difficult, as it is to an extent in our own hands (with the NHS, we can but stand and wait for others to decide). We took the decision at our last Executive Committee meeting to investigate the possibility of establishing a Banstead Parish/Village Council in order to put the broad principles and operating parameters to the AGM in May.

With this intent we have set up a sub-committee to talk to local bodies and prepare a blueprint for consideration by residents, and of course by the local authority. We have also invited Trevor Leggo who is the Secretary of the Association for Sussex and Surrey Local Councils to speak at our AGM; he is most knowledgeable and can tell you the pros and cons of a Village Council as well as the rights and wrongs of setting one up. We will need assistance and anyone who would like to help should contact Mike Sawyer (details on the back of this NewsSheet).

Finally, I hope you liked the Christmas lights in the orchard and other trees, which we feel complement the new banners on the lampposts. There are unfortunately now no funds left for the future and we will have to find ways to finance these lights next year. Do let us know whether you think they are sufficiently important to the village for example to increase our subscription by £1 or so to cover future costs.

Roger Collins, Chairman

Tel: 01737 358384

LOCAL DEMOCRACY

Policing

The election took place in November for a Surrey Policing & Crimes Commissioner. The Conservative Party backed candidate was beaten into second place, just, by an independent – Kevin Hurley, who is a retired police inspector with a 'zero tolerance' policy. Time will tell whether this new central government policy will benefit our community and how the new Commissioner performs. He is accountable through the ballot box at the end of his

four year term of office and we will try to monitor progress. His deputy was recently confirmed as Jeff Harris. Current indications are that they intend to be more accessible and hold meetings that can be viewed on-line (see the web-site: <http://www.surrey-pcc.gov.uk>)

Banstead Village Council

In the last NewsSheet we said that the possibility of a Parish Council for this area is being tentatively explored and discussed, and we believe the way to respond to the Localism Act is

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to attempt set up a Banstead Village Council. Whilst this would be entirely separate and independent from BVRA, we may provide a suitable channel for communication, through the NewsSheet and other contacts.

This would mirror the role successfully played by BVRA during the preparation of the Village Plan in 2004/5 by the Town Centre Steering Group.

As indicated in my introduction above we aim to place a blueprint of how it would operate and how we might establish it before residents at the May AGM.

Although we sense that there is quite a lot of support for a new organisation with greater ability to secure improvements to the village area, quite independently from BVRA, we need volunteers to assist our sub-committee to discuss ideas and help take the proposal forward. In due course we will need candidates for the posts of Village Councillors.

Don't be shy, let us know if you are interested – talk to Mike Sawyer or Richard Heath.

Roger Collins

01737 358384

HOSPITAL UPDATE

When the last edition of the NewsSheet was published everything was in train for the merger of Epsom Hospital with Ashford St Peters on April 1 this year. Perhaps choosing All Fools Day as the date for the transfer was inauspicious, something was bound to go wrong and it has.

Financial due diligence commissioned by Ashford St Peter's Foundation Trust as part of the merger preparations found nearly three quarters of the overall debt of the Epsom St Helier Trust related to the Epsom site. The trust chief executive said it was not possible for it to show it could make the Epsom finances break even within five years, so Ashford St Peter's withdrew from the merger.

NHS London said the parties involved had been unable to develop a financially viable plan for the future of Epsom Hospital as part of the merged trust and would be working with its NHS partners to examine alternative options for the future of both Epsom and St Helier.

The repercussions of the announcement, which came on October 25 2012, led to the break-up of and disbanding of the Transaction Board which had

been trying to find partners for both St Helier and Epsom, and with that the decision by NHS London to include Epsom Hospital in its Better Services Better Value (BSBV) review of the hospitals in SW London. While Epsom was thought to be merging with St Peter's there was no reason to include it in the review. Now that it is still linked to St Helier for the foreseeable future it is part of NHS London and therefore subject to this review.

The Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP for Epsom is fighting hard to find a viable solution for the hospital, its staff and patients. Apart from reconvening the Epsom Hospital Campaign Group he has written to Ruth Carnall, the Chief Executive of NHS London to express his concerns on behalf of his constituents. He has also stated to her that the figures given as a result of the financial due diligence are based on out of date information and that the Epsom deficit is not as high as that stated. He has also highlighted the fact that the BSBV review which has just started is being driven by NHS doctors' groups in five SW London boroughs and the Mid Surrey Group of GP practices, which has all the GP practices in Epsom as part of its membership. It is these groups that will vote on the proposals put forward by the BSBV review in March and then go to public consultation. No thought has been given to other GP practices north of the M25, such as the Longcroft, which belong to a different group.

At the same time our MP Crispin Blunt has called for a review of the situation which is not 'poisoned by party politics around particular buildings'. He is naturally very concerned as to how the current situation will affect his constituents living north of the M25.

To exacerbate the situation there is now a strong likelihood that St Helier could lose its A&E and possibly even its acute services which would make it, like Epsom, a hospital dealing only with elective surgery. Jeremy Hunt, Secretary of State for health, is to be commended for saying that he will evaluate everything and not make any hasty decisions but how far any decision will be his or NHS London's remains to be seen.

Roger Collins has written to Crispin Blunt on behalf of BVRA to express concern over the

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situation and we are seeking, both as a residents' association and as members of the Federation, to be able to attend some of the meetings which are due to be held in the near future.

Catalina Vassallo-Bonner

01737 357882

PLANNING

Core Strategy (CS)

We have recently submitted our responses to the last stage of consultation on amendments to the latest draft - this is the policy document for the period 2012 to 2027 for the local development framework (LDF) that replaces the old Borough Plan and South East Plan (SEP). We find ourselves in the unhappy position of having to object to new policies effectively imposed on the council by the Planning Inspectorate.

The CS was due to be completed and effective by now, but this re-consultation was made necessary when the Planning Inspector made it clear at last year's preliminary hearing that the document did not meet the government's new and emerging policies in a number of areas. The least significant of these were capable of being dealt with by minor amendments, clarifications, or further evidence gathering.

The most concerning issues for our area relate to housing provision and the implications of this on our already creaking infrastructure, and on Green Belt (GB) policy. The Council had maintained that it could meet the housing provision targets within the built up areas; the Inspector was of the view that this was not robust enough and failed to cover the possibility that some anticipated sites might not come forward as programmed. Under the old planning regime this might be regrettable; the new regime imposes mandatory targets for development, based on the numbers stipulated in the SEP. Although the SEP is being abolished its replacement has not yet been finalised; it is fair to assume, however, that it will not reduce these targets.

The Council therefore reversed its previous rejection of any possibility of development within the GB and identified a couple of areas around Reigate and Redhill for possible review, if necessary, in the later years of the plan. Although

this change is intended as a "backstop", it is not surprising that we and many others are gravely concerned at this erosion of the policy that protects our area from unacceptable developments. The GB in the northern part of the borough is already very narrow. It is a concern that developers may advocate this change of policy as reason for extending the review to other GB boundaries.

We have, therefore, objected to the SEP targets being carried into the new CS. We believe that our borough has already carried more than its fair share of new housing (several times more in the last few years than any other Surrey borough) without adequate infrastructure improvements. To continue this high level of growth as a target that must be met, without the certainty that the sites identified will be brought forward by developers within the planned period, flies in the face of logic. To use this as a reason for developing GB land is unacceptable.

We have also argued that the policy statements on both GB and Urban Open Land (UOL) need strengthening. We have also argued that the proposed development targets in the Banstead Village central area are unachievable, both for more housing and more retail space - possibly one but not both could be accommodated.

We had originally believed that this government was committed to preserving GB, but this belief has been eroded by a number of obfuscations by ministers.

Our MP Crispin Blunt managed to raise this issue in a recent parliamentary debate, but despite pressing the junior minister quite forcefully to seek an assurance that GB policy should override housing policy, it became clear that no such assurance would be made.

We had believed, and continue to maintain, that the Localism Act passes decision taking down to the local community. Nevertheless, the Planning Inspectorate is being allowed to pursue policy-led targets that neither the council nor its communities desire.

This whole issue is far from academic. The National Planning Policy Framework now contains

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a presumption in favour of development. This means that if a development proposal is submitted the council must approve it unless it is contrary to up to date planning policies.

Until the CS is confirmed and incorporated into the LDF there is a risk that refusals by the council will be overturned on appeal by the Planning Inspectorate. Not a happy situation! I am reminded of the old taxi driver joke - "where do you want to get to? Well I wouldn't start from here!"

Other planning issues

We have had a number of **government consultations** and comments recently on issues like removing the need for planning permission for some changes of use, relaxing the rules on permitted development for such things as home extensions, and simplifying the rules on the advice planning authorities obtain. Although some simplification can be welcomed, some of these proposals seem part of a worrying trend against localism. Strange how so many of these contentious matters come out quietly around Christmas!

Preston Leisure centre

A detailed planning application has just been submitted for the replacement swimming pool etc at **Preston Leisure Centre** (formerly known as Banstead leisure centre) together with an outline application for 130 new homes (which will help fund the new centre) and open space improvements, all to be sited on part of the Preston recreation area. Details can be seen on the council's web-site.

Mike Sawyer

01737 355454

SURREY FIRE SERVICE (SFS)

Since the 1974 local government re-organisation West Sussex County Council (WSCC) have shared the use of their Horley based fire engine with SFS. WSCC recently decided to relocate this engine to Crawley for operational reasons, to take effect this April. Since this engine has been serving both West Sussex and part of Reigate and Banstead, the SFS has had to review its operations in Reigate and Banstead and in Epsom and Ewell.

At a recent consultation meeting it was explained that there are 2 engines based at Epsom and 2 more at Reigate. The service had looked at

response times following the loss of the WSCC engine, and proposed a re-organisation based at four single-engine locations - Epsom, Reigate and two new locations at Horley and Burgh Heath. This plan is intended to improve some response times, especially in the Banstead/Woodmansterne areas, although parts of Epsom and Ewell would get a slightly reduced first response time. Without this, however, response times to some areas would be well below satisfactory target times.

In the short term, from this April, one of the Reigate engines will operate out of the old WSCC Horley station until a new location is found in the Horley area this summer. A site for the new Burgh Heath station has yet to be identified, but is likely to have direct access to the A217 or A240. The plan is for it to be ready for next summer. We were told that, despite cuts being made to the service overall, finance for these changes has been made available.

We have given our support to this approach, but await the details of new stations; the unions have yet to agree. Details can be found at the SFS part of the SCC web-site at surreycc.gov.uk

Mike Sawyer

01737 355454

INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATE

Flooding

Yes, we have had endless days of rain up to the end of December and it has caused problems for many. Thankfully, any flooding has been nothing like as bad as has happened elsewhere.

At the corner of Garratts Lane and Bolters Lane it is not just the road but the pavements that are all but impassable causing pedestrians to make hazardous detours. Drainage here has been a problem on and off for years and Surrey C C seems to have no long term solution.

On Sutton Lane across the Downs flooding across the whole width of the road has been a regular occurrence and getting worse, and none more so than on Christmas Day morning when 100yds or so of flooded road had to be negotiated. Wave action from traffic has eroded the banks and is leaving mud on the road. The cause is long term neglect of all the gullies from as

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far as Croydon Lane.

Another persistent problem is the section of Woodmansterne Lane adjacent to Longcroft Clinic. This is more than just a nuisance as anyone who has tried to park there will know.

There are no doubt other problems – on the A217 roundabout going into Sutton and the bottom of Bolters Lane etc.

Road resurfacing

The strange case of Wilmot Way. In the last news letter, I asked if anyone knew of an incident on this road that could be put down to it being too slippery. I did get one response from a resident who had queried Surrey C C only to be told that resurfacing was due to the Olympics! On pursuing the matter he got the explanation above.

My enquiries led to the revelation that there are two bodies involved in deciding which roads need attention in the county. One is the Local Committee made up of Surrey C C and R & B councillors. We are familiar with this and see the minutes of meetings. The other is based in Guildford and is known as the "Asset Planning Group". They base their plans on reports from inspectors in order to assess resurfacing needs and seem to work independently from the Local Committee. It is they who triggered the work on Wilmot Way. What was then even odder was that they also resurfaced Garden Close – a good thing - and also the whole length of Lambert Road. Now Lambert Road has never been on any list of mine as needing attention - there are many others in a much poorer state. Surrey - short of money?

Other Comments

The end of the year prompted me to review all the observations (complaints if you like) made to Surrey C C and which are still outstanding.

- a) Top of the list is the lack of white lines on Sutton Lane between the High St and Croydon Lane. I have been requesting action for at least 5 years.
- b) Redundant metalwork in the High St and surrounding roads. The signs went about 3 years ago, but the posts remain.
- c) Tree stumps. Surrey cut down the dead trees but leave stumps of anything up to 2ft as in the High St. If you look out for them, they are all

over the village.

- d) Double Yellow Lines. Most of the planned lines were painted over a year ago, but some remain outstanding as in Sandersfield Road and Gardens. I'm not sure what the residents think about this.
- e) New lamp posts. I have an email stating that those in Croydon Lane, Holly Lane, and Woodmansterne Lane were scheduled for late 2012. Well nothing happened – perhaps weather delays.
- f) Edge erosion in Holly Lane. This is getting more extensive, but I am told the whole road will be resurfaced in 2013/14 (having been deferred from 2012) and the edges will be tackled.
- g) Chevron sign warning of a sharp bend on Sutton Lane - it just disappeared.

If you have any long standing issues with Surrey C C, please let me know.

David Gradidge

01737 353981

BANSTEAD POLICE STATION

You may have seen that the new police commissioner has halted the sale of several local police stations, including Banstead. This does not, however, seem to be a change of policy, merely a pause to review whether the programmed sales provide "best value".

Mike Sawyer

01737 355454

POLICE INFORMATION

Police officers

Our new 'station sergeant' is Karen Coyne and we have two PCSOs to make up for Jackie: Laura Woods and Laura Green. Leah Mort is still our Neighbourhood Specialist Officer. I wonder how much time they spend during the working week commuting to our part of the world.

Their addresses and appropriate phone numbers: Surrey Police, P.O. Box 101, Guildford, Surrey GU1 9PE

PS 2850 Karen Coyne - tel 01483 637553

PC 4603 Leah Mort - tel 01483 637467

PCSO 14850 Laura Woods - tel 01483 633140

PCSO 15009 Laura Green - tel 01483 638225

Catalina Vassallo-Bonner

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BANSTEAD VILLAGE RESIDENT'S ASSOCIATION

Security

From time to time we are given reminders about commonsense ways to protect ourselves and our property. This is very relevant as there have been a number of break-ins, both to dwellings and vehicles, so here they are again:

Home security

- Open windows! Many houses with open windows are allowing easy access to the property.
- Keys are being left in locks! If an offender gains access to a property by way of smashing a side window or reaching through an open window next to the back door the offender has immediate access by unlocking the door.
- Insecure porch doors! Outer Porch doors are not being locked. This allows an offender easy access to the inner front door of the property allowing them to conduct their business without raising awareness from passers by.
- Side gates unlocked! Most importantly, lock your side gates to your properties. This is the current method of entry being used for the most recent burglaries in our area. The offenders have simply opened the side gate, gained access to the rear of the property and either smashed a rear window or used an open window to gain entry.

ANY suspicious activity should be reported to Surrey Police on 101 or 999 in an emergency.

When leaving your vehicle:

- Always ensure your vehicle is locked and secured - even when leaving it for just a few minutes.
- Don't leave anything on display inside your vehicle. Even items such as cigarettes and loose change can encourage a break-in.
- Remove the stereo or stereo fascia if possible.
- Remove satellite navigation devices if possible, including the support cradle. Wipe away any suction pad marks left on the dash board or the windscreen.
- Leave your glove box open to show it is empty.

Parking:

- Keep your vehicle parked in the garage if

possible and lock both the vehicle and garage.

- When away from home, or if you don't have a garage, always try to park in a well lit, open location.
- If possible, park in police approved car parks displaying the "PARK MARK" logo.
- Visit www.parkmark.co.uk for more information.

If you wish to further discuss this matter, or any other concerns or issues with your Safer Neighbourhood Team dial 101 and ask to speak to your local officers.

Mike Sawyer

01737 355454

ROAD STEWARDS

At the time of writing, over 67 % of subscriptions have been received. No doubt by the end of the month the figure will be up to 90%.

If any road steward has a problem, please let me know.

I am looking to recruit road stewards for The Oval (20 members), and Follyfield Road (11 members). Please let me know if you are interested.

David Gradidge

01737 353981

NHS BLOOD SERVICE

People in Banstead are being urged not to let the short month of February stop them giving blood.

With only 28 days in the calendar this month, NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) is appealing to new and existing donors in the area to make a date to donate in plenty of time.

Blood stocks can often come under pressure during the winter as adverse weather conditions and seasonal illnesses prevent regular donors from keeping their appointments, making it doubly important for people to give blood if able to do so.

Donated blood is vital for a wide variety of life-saving procedures in local hospitals. Patients undergoing major surgery and emergency treatment often require blood transfusions, but perhaps less well-known is the fact that blood is essential to the treatment for many different types of cancer and blood disorders.

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NHSBT's lead donor relations manager for the Banstead area, John Canning, said: "As there are only 28 days in February, there's always the chance that people may intend to give blood this month but leave it too late to make an appointment.

"As a result, we'd urge both existing and new donors to help save lives by booking into one of their local sessions as soon as they can. This can be done quickly and easily by going to www.blood.co.uk or calling 0300 123 23 23."

Anyone aged between 17-65, weighing more than 50 kg (7 stone 12lbs) and in general good health could potentially start saving lives by becoming a blood donor. There is no upper age limit for donors who have donated in the last two years.

For more information, to book an appointment or to find a local blood donor session please call **0300 123 23 23** or visit www.blood.co.uk
Alpana Patel, NHS Blood and Transplant

AGE CONCERN BANSTEAD (ACB) Update.

Our local branch of Age Concern has been working to improve the lives of elderly Banstead residents for over 60 years. The charity is based at the Banstead Day Centre in the Horseshoe. In September 2012 the trustees and members of ACB voted to prevent a takeover by the much larger Age UK and a new group of trustees were elected to ensure that ACB remains local and focuses on practical measures to improve the lot of our elderly residents.

We are relaunching the charity this month and have produced a range of leaflets which advertise the services that we provide and are intending on extending. We are also keen to attract more volunteers to help to deliver these services.

We have already increased the opening hours of the office by using a combination of paid and voluntary staff.

We currently offer a range of services which include:

- A. Signposting of information
- B. The Chave Croft Lunch Club
- C. Volunteer drivers to take clients to the doctors or other health appointments

D. An adapted minibus which is used to take the elderly on various trips

E. A visiting and befriending service.

If you, or anyone that you know, would benefit from these services we would love to hear from you. Our office telephone number is 01737 352156 and we are open from 10.00 till 3.00pm Monday – Thursday. We also have a website: www.ageconcernbanstead.org.uk and all of our leaflets and posters may be downloaded from there. Likewise if you feel you could donate an hour or two of your time each week to help us in some way please contact us.

Nick Pulsford, Chair ACB

01737 321156

BUS PASSES

New Bus Passes and the renewal of Bus Passes are now being handled by Banstead Library. You need two pieces of identification, one with your date of birth on it (passport/driving licence) and one to show your current address (utility bill/bank statement). The library staff will insert your information directly into the computer and will also take your identifying mug shot. A Bus Pass will eventually arrive by post.

Mike Sawyer

01737 355454

BANSTEAD RECORDED MUSIC SOCIETY

We meet 1st and 3rd Thursdays at Banstead Library - 7.45pm till 10pm and new members are welcome.

Programme details can be found at www.thefrms.co.uk/affprogs/bansteadrms.htm or by phoning our programme secretary:

Sheila Wicks

020 8657 8600

BVRA AGM

This meeting could be an exceptionally important one for the Village if there is sufficient support for the concept of a Village Council for Banstead. It cannot happen without strong local support, so please come along and hear all about the pros and cons from our expert speaker. And please spread the word to anyone interested!

Please put Wednesday 22nd May in your diaries now and spread the word!