

BVRA newsheet

from the Banstead Village Residents' Association

Vol. 31 No. 3 - Autumn 2015

Introduction

This is traditionally written by our chairman, but not this time! At the AGM in May Roger Collins announced that he was stepping down after 10 years. We are extremely grateful for all his hard work and many achievements, and for the way in which he has conducted our business. We were pleased to be able to thank him and Sue at the meeting.

As was also indicated at the meeting, Richard Moody was elected to be chairman at our next Executive committee meeting in late May. Unfortunately, and to our great regret, he has recently resigned, as has Faith Moody. We are therefore operating with a slightly reduced Executive committee, with our two vice-chairmen stepping into the breach on a 'time-share' and temporary basis - more of which in a later item.

It seems, indeed it is, a long time since our AGM in May and much has changed, including the weather. Other changes have included the disbanding of the Police beat panel meetings; and the disbanding of the Banstead Town Centre management committee - although it is hoped that this will be succeeded by a wider meeting of local business representatives.

There has been no discernible progress in resolving the future of our local hospitals, or the replacement site for the Longcroft clinic although, as you will read later on, some internal and systems alterations at Longcroft have been welcomed.

Other events, past and forthcoming, include progress on the council's local planning policies, a couple of contentious planning applications and work we have contributed to on the Winkworth Road traffic issues – again, more on these (and other items) later in this newsheet.

And, of great significance to your committee, you will find our latest survey questionnaire inside. Your responses are highly significant as we use them to tell us the things that matter to you, to highlight those activities we need to concentrate on, and to track changes over the years.

Finally, our apologies to those of you who access our website. Unfortunately this is no longer active, but we intend to have a new site available shortly.

Mike Sawyer

Sally Hull

POLICE & CRIME UPDATE

Since the last report in this newsletter the Police Panel meetings have, unfortunately, been discontinued due to an apparent lack of support denoted by low attendance. However, the Banstead Safer Neighbourhood Team is happy to hear from you and keep in touch through a variety of methods; you can call 101 to report a crime or incident or to contact the Safer

Neighbourhood Team. As always, you should only call 999 in a genuine emergency requiring urgent police attendance (such as a crime or suspected crime in progress).

Operations and incidents

An operation was carried out in late August at Highdown Prison whereby officers accompanied by their canine counterparts, stopped all visitors going to the prison and searched them and their cars. This successful operation was to prevent visitors

BANSTEAD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

bringing in any illegal items to the residents of the prison.

Continuing with successes, a gang operating across the south of the country and targeting vulnerable and older people was recently arrested for stealing thousands of pounds of cash direct from their victim's accounts. They operated by pretending to be the police or a member of a banking company. If you are in doubt about anyone asking for money by post, phone or in person, talk to a neighbour or a family friend or one of the Safer Neighbourhood Team at Banstead. Remember that your bank will never ask for your pin number and the police will never ask for your bank account details.

Crime generally in the area tended to follow the usual trends largely relating to vehicle crime and thefts including quite a spate of shoplifting in the High Street during April and May. Once again, vans are still being targeted for theft of tools, so do make sure you take appropriate precautions. On a positive note, a number of roads continue to be patrolled, with tickets, words of advice, SMART PARK tickets, etc being issued to deter inconsiderate motoring.

The High Street saw a number of incidents of damage to shopfronts and some purse thefts. Mobile phones were also stolen on several occasions, so do make sure you keep these about your person and not within easy reach of being snatched and do not leave bags unattended even for a short time!

Anti-Social Behaviour - The Safer Neighbourhood Teams continue to work closely with the Joint Enforcement Team (JET) Officers as well as housing agencies. Working in partnership with JET to target problem areas, the police meet housing officers every month – and welcome your input on these problems areas. On a

separate point; early August saw a few incidents in Lady Neville Recreation Ground with anti-social behaviour involving young people who have been identified and dealt with in cooperation with their parents.

A successful drugs warrant was executed along Brighton Road, Banstead in August after reports from the public about smells and anti-social behaviour. Five warrants were also conducted in Tadworth in the preceding months with some very positive results and confiscation of a significant amount of drugs from a number of dealers.

And to prove the point that every crime matters; a young man was recently served with a £90 fine for swearing in Lambert Road.

Burglary

It is difficult to tell whether 'summer' is over or about to undergo a resurgence. If the warmer weather does return please be mindful of those criminals who are always looking for an opportunity for an easy way in, and out, through open windows and doors. The last warm spell also saw an increase in shed breaks which is a seasonal crime like burglary so please ensure your garage or shed has a good lock(s). Consider CCTV or sensor lighting. Is your side or back gate to your garden actually doing its job?

For any period of time away from home, do consider the following:

- Timer switches on lights throughout the home and perhaps on the TV to suggest that you're at home.
- Leave the radio playing, check all your doors and windows remain locked even if just "popping out".
- If you have an alarm, switch it on, even if just out for a short period.
- Can you ask a neighbour to assist with any of these tasks?
 - o Remove your post at the door, don't let door knockers know you're out!

BANSTEAD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

- o Move your car on and off the drive or simply turn it around
- o Take your dustbins in or out but don't leave them out.

If you need free crime reduction advice please contact the Banstead Team or Mark Howells (Crime Reduction Officer) via 101.

Sally Hull

PLANNING

Policy: following the first consultation by Reigate and Banstead council on their draft Development Management Policies (DMPs - the parts of the Plan that fill out the details of the approved Core Strategy) we now expect their preferred options to be published for further consultation in November. Although this process, determined by central government, has been very long-winded (and there is yet more to come before it is finalised) we are more fortunate than our adjoining boroughs in that our Core Strategy is approved and these DMPs are gaining importance in the planning decision process, including at appeals. We await the new consultation with eager anticipation – especially with regard to the detailed submissions we have already made.

3 Croydon Lane: The licensing application was refused and does not appear to have been appealed. The planning application for retention of the marquee and the running of events for 3 years received 83 comments, and was also refused. As the large Marquee has stood for well over a year without permission (and it appears that events are still being held) the Council served an enforcement notice requiring reinstatement to a condition and use that complies with its Green Belt status. An appeal against this has been lodged with the Planning Inspectorate

to whom any further comments or objections should be made (in triplicate!) by 8th October.

Land adj 16 Croydon Lane: As many will by now be aware the proposal to create a new cemetery has re-emerged in, apparently, more modest form. However, much information is missing from this application that is critical in order to establish the true scale of the proposal. It is our view that the whole development is out of keeping with, and damaging to, the Green Belt; that the case to justify any cemetery (let alone in this location) has not been made; and that it should be refused. The last application received over 700 objections; the present one had prompted over 500 objections at the time of writing.

Legal & General The recent press announcement that L & G intend to leave their Kingswood site has significant implications for both employment (loss of about 1,700 jobs) and/or for the green belt. We will be watching the news as it develops.
Mike Sawyer

SURVEY

Enclosed is the 2015 survey mentioned in the opening comments. We last conducted a survey in 2006 and received a great response with 740 replies and nearly 2000 written comments.

For continuity reasons, the first 6 questions are identical to last time. Then follows a new question on public transport. At the end there is space to add any further comments on topics not covered elsewhere.

Please spend a little time filling in the boxes and return the form in the envelope provided - this is of great importance to us in reflecting your priorities in our work.

David Gradidge

BANSTEAD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

WINKWORTH ROAD - ACCESS ROADS

BVRA has been working with residents of Winkworth Road for some months now to create a joint proposal for safety measures on the access roads running alongside the main Winkworth Road. The misuse of these access roads has long been a source of concern. As many of you will know, traffic often takes advantage of the access roads to avoid queues on the main Winkworth Road particularly during peak times. Such action is dangerous in itself quite aside from the excess speed applied by some drivers in this 30 mph area. In addition, many drivers fail to observe where the access road crosses side roads such as Salisbury Road and Commonfield Road which could lead to a very serious accident.

A very comprehensive traffic survey and report coordinated by Brian Ransom of Winkworth Road has been incorporated in a joint initiative with BVRA. As a result, we are currently working with a Highways Engineer to formulate a realistic, financially viable solution to put to Surrey County Council. If you have a direct interest in this topic or would like more information please contact me directly.

Watch this space for further developments.

Sally Hull

HEALTH ROUND-UP

The situation at St Helier and Epsom hospitals has not changed materially since the general election of last May. At that time it was agreed that both sites would continue to provide a full range of services for the foreseeable future. Consideration is, however, now being given to a new hospital to be built in Sutton, taking most but not all of the services currently carried out by both

Epsom and St Helier. It is unclear where the funding would come from as the Secretary of State has indicated it is unlikely to be from the government; it is therefore unclear whether this is a realistic and achievable proposal or just another way of wasting time and public money.

The two hospitals were given the second lowest possible risk rating by the health watchdog, the Quality Care Commission (CQC), in May 2015. This national scheme measures hospitals against 150 indicators. To compile the rating CQC analysts measured the hospitals against a wide range of factors including death rates, serious errors and patient surveys using a method known as 'intelligence monitoring'. From this data all hospital trusts in the country are given a risk rating, with a risk band of one (measuring that the hospital may be at risk of providing poor care) to six (being the best risk rating). Epsom St Helier hospitals were given the second best rating – five.

The Longcroft Clinic has finally finished its upgrade. The waiting room is re-aligned, new seating has been provided and the automatic check-in has become second nature. The two new consulting rooms have eased the cramped conditions for the staff. There is no further news of a new surgery. Only one thing is missing from the waiting area, a clock.

Finally, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has provisionally cleared the proposed merger between Ashford and St Peter's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Royal Surrey County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. The CMA have concluded that the proposed merger will not give rise to a substantial lessening of competition. The earliest start date for the proposed new organisation would be summer next year.

Catalina Vassallo-Bonner

BANSTEAD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

LOCAL PRISONS

H M Inspectorate of Prisons published their report on High Down prison in June. They made an unannounced inspection from January 12th to 23rd. (All inspections are now unannounced). The last inspection was in August 2011. The report runs to 122 pages so here is my extract:

There were 1090 prisoners on Jan 19th (but some of the stats show a higher figure). The Certified Normal Accommodation is 999 and the Operational Capacity is 1163. I don't know the definition of these terms.

Over 21 years 1034, 18 to 21 years 95. Un-sentenced 325 of which 241 were on remand.

British national 952, Foreign national 174. Sentence term (ie excludes un-sentenced) less than 1 year 130, 1 to 4 – 298, 4 to 10 – 234, 10+ years 139.

The over-riding problem reported by the inspection team was staff shortage, often made worse by a high level of absenteeism. Although it "was being addressed" it meant that prison staff had to be made up with help from other prisons. This staff shortage had a major effect on prison operations. Good education and workshop facilities were under-utilised, unemployed prisoners had to spend 22 hours in their cells, association and exercise were severely restricted. The list goes on. There were many good points and the hard working staff were praised for their efforts.

There followed 86 recommendations for improvements covering all aspects of prison life. This compares with 53 made in 2011 (of which the report noted that 39 had not been addressed in the intervening years).

At the end of the report was a copy of a 16 page questionnaire which prisoners could fill in. This daunting document ran to 111 questions and it is to their credit that there

were 196 answers. There then followed a 25 page analysis of those answers.....!

This brings me on to Downview. You may remember that this women's prison was closed in early 2014. At the time the story was that it would revert to some sort of male prison. There were even rumours of it becoming an Open Prison. I phoned Surrey Mirror to see if they may have the latest information. They then contacted the Home Office who stated that "there were no current plans to open the prison". Given the staff shortages next door this is hardly surprising.

David Gradidge

INFRASTRUCTURE

At the time of writing (Sept 5th), Glenfield Rd is being resurfaced. The top surface has been removed so this is a fairly major job. I expect Sandersfield Rd & Gardens will follow.

Woodmansterne Rd has been top dressed – again. This appears to be a better job than last time, but I have my doubts as do others. It remains a bumpy ride.

My main concern is the fact that Surrey C seems incapable of repairing or replacing any damaged signs on any reasonable time scale.

Chevron signs on the corner of Grange Gardens and Sutton Lane disappeared 3 years ago. They were stolen not hit. The road direction sign on Croydon Lane approaching the roundabout slipped down the support posts many months ago. It is now illegible.

On Sutton Lane going North from the War Memorial there are new posts to support a replacement direction sign. They were installed perhaps a year ago, but the old sign remains. There are similar situations where new posts or signs have been

BANSTEAD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

installed but the adjacent old ones remain. Take a look at the War Memorial roundabout and on the approaches to the A217 on Diceland and Ferndown Roads where duplicate posts create a nonsense.

David Gradidge

LADY NEVILLE PLAY PARK

As users to this potentially lovely children's park in the centre of the village are no doubt all too keenly aware there is very little to add to this update we are afraid!

After some delay, quotes for the intended remedial work were being sought from play companies as at the beginning of July. However we have now been informed that European laws that came into place on April 1st require that local authorities must obtain a minimum of 3 quotes for any proposed works deemed to be in excess of £5,000. The new play surface is considered to be too small a job to interest the 9 companies that have been invited to offer a tender and so only one has offered a quote at the time of writing this article. We shall keep up the pressure on the Parks Department since the surface has all but broken up now.

Marion Hayns

BVRA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Following the retirement of one, and resignation of our subsequent, chairman Sally Hull and I will stand in on a temporary basis. We would, however, like to invite more of our members to get involved with what your committee does - and we take this opportunity of welcoming Gerald Bridge, who has recently joined us.

I must again stress that the results of the enclosed survey will guide our priorities. We would welcome more willing participants to help on the committee, or to assist with specific occasional tasks. This need not be

arduous, so if you are willing to help us in our efforts to protect our members' interests please give Sally, myself or one of our other committee members a ring.

We don't bite and would be very happy to hear from you!

Mike Sawyer

ROAD STEWARDS

It is the time of year I make my usual plea to road stewards to collect the subs and not leave until the darker evenings overtake us. Please let me know if you have a problem collecting.

There are now a number of vacancies so I am looking for volunteers for the following roads:

Lambert Road – West half – 22 members

Shrubland Road & Court – 17 members

Sandersfield Road & Gardens – 33 members

Follyfield - 22 members

If you would like to volunteer or know anyone who might be interested please let me know.

David Gradidge

LOCAL EVENTS

Banstead Arts Festival Society

Winter concert series at Banstead community hall:

Why consider travelling up to London when you can hear world class musicians literally on our doorstep?

In addition to the 2 week Festival in May, surely one of the jewels in Banstead's crown, the Banstead Arts Festival Society put on 4 concerts during the winter months at the Community Hall in Park Road. Admission to each is only £12 or free to school pupils. Full details can be found on the website www.bansteadarts.co.uk or pick up a free autumn/winter programme guide to be found at the Library or the Community Hall.

Marion Hayns

BANSTEAD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Banstead Recorded Music Society

Over the next three months through to Christmas (Yes!) the programmes will include music by Rachmaninoff and by soldiers writing during WW1. The dates and programmes will be:

1st October: *Rachmaninoff* by Roy Egan
OBE

15th October: *Marching Theme* by John
Evans

5th November: *I'll String Along with You*
by Tom Shiels

19th November: *Soldier Composers of
WW1* by Barbara Broughton

3rd December: *An Arctic Dream* by
Richard Howard

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

U3A

Our next meeting is on Thursday 26th November at St Mark's Church Hall, Great Tattenhams from 2.30 pm to 4.30 pm. The title is *Walking with Lions in Zimbabwe*. This talk is given by Rachel Greening who spent some time as a volunteer in the Victoria Falls National Park. As usual it is open to both members and non-members; members pay £1 and non-members £2 which will include a cup of tea or coffee and a biscuit.

U3A are also holding an Open House at Banstead Community Hall on Wednesday 16th September at 2.30 pm – no charge for entry. This event will demonstrate some of our group activities and provide an opportunity to put your questions to the Chairman and other committee members who will be present. You will also get a cup of tea or coffee and a biscuit.

Even if you do not see this notice in time to attend, U3A are keen to attract new members and you can contact one of our **committee members on 01737 554927, 020 8642 1718, or 01737 812646.**