

# BVRA news sheet

from the Banstead Village Residents' Association

Vol: 12 No. 3 September 1996

I hope you are all feeling refreshed after the summer vacation and are ready to face whatever the autumn and winter have in store for us.

Those of you who attended our Annual General Meeting in May witnessed a "new look" format. The main focus was on a debate of important local issues during which our Borough and County Councillors each presented a short review of matters within their particular sphere of influence. Members came armed with a broad range of questions for our Councillors and they clearly demonstrated a strong interest in local affairs and the desirability of democratic accountability.

The Committee will be carefully considering how best our members' interest can be sustained and striving to enhance the level of information provided about local affairs, a role which I hope our NewsSheet fulfils.

## Committee News

My appeal for new committee members received an excellent response. Four public-spirited members offered themselves for election to the new committee and I am delighted to welcome Mesdames Audrey Stamp (Sutton Lane) and Ann Whittle (Commonfield Road) and Messrs. Malcolm Smith (South Drive) and Dennis Woolmer (Wilmot Way) to the fold.

I am also pleased to report that Mrs. Hilary Powell has agreed to take over the duties as Hon. Editor of the NewsSheet. She will welcome any contributions, suggestions or complaints for publication in future issues of the NewsSheet.

At its first meeting on May 28th, the incoming committee (of 19 members) re-elected David Rudd as Vice-chairman and, in the absence of any volunteers, Peter McLaren agreed to continue as Chairman for one more year.

A full list of executive committee members, with their addresses and telephone numbers appears in this NewsSheet. You may wish to keep this for future reference.

## High Street Initiative

After a considerable period of time during which progress on the High Street Initiative has been in the doldrums (described in earlier editions of the NewsSheet), there is at last some positive progress to report. The finishing touches are now being put to the design for the new layout of the roundabout and pedestrian refuges at the High Street/Park Road

junction. The objectives of this scheme, details of which were on show at the Village Day on July 6th and are currently on display in the Help Shop in the Horseshoe, are as follows:

- to provide facilities to help pedestrians to cross the eastern end of the High Street and to cross Park Road and Sutton Lane;
- to provide a proper roundabout junction instead of the present unsatisfactory layout with a "blob of paint" in the middle of the road.

As part of this work, the War Memorial will be moved along the grass verge by about six metres. In due course it is intended to provide a landscaped setting for the Memorial in its new position. Also, the opportunity is being taken to clean the stonework of the Memorial.

Moving the Memorial will be the first part of the construction work. This is due to take place in August and September, with the highway alterations following along later in the year. The Council has given an assurance that the construction work will be programmed so that the Remembrance Day service in November does not take place in the middle of a building site!

Tony Ford

## Footways in the High Street

The recent laying of a "skim surfacing coat" over most of the footway on the south side of the High Street has given this part of the village a rather more uniform appearance and removed the prominent stripes along the footways caused by the utility companies digging to lay their cables and pipes. That is all very well, but what about the footways on the opposite side of the road, which are in a considerably worse state, with some large undulations, disintegrating tarmac and a whole hotchpotch of different surfaces?

The basic problem, we are told, is lack of money for footway maintenance throughout the whole of the Borough; indeed this is a problem in the whole of the County. The High Street Steering Group has, in its recently prepared Business Plan (a copy of which can be inspected in the Help Shop), identified this as one of the priority areas for action over the coming years. There are two hurdles to overcome, however:

- firstly, much of the footway on the north side of the High Street needs more than just patching, it requires reconstructing, which is expensive. The Group will have to fight hard to achieve the necessary finance;

- secondly, many of the properties on that side of the High Street own the first two or three metres of the footway in front of the shops. (This accounts for the haphazard arrangement of the surfacing with some areas of tarmac, some with flagstones, some with block paving). Legally it is the responsibility of the private landlord or perhaps in some instances the tenant of the shop, to keep the footway in good repair. The Steering Group will be endeavouring to liaise with these individuals and companies to try and achieve a better quality of footway surface with a more uniform appearance across the whole of the footway width.

Tony Ford

### **Banstead Gardens**

Long-standing readers may recall that we have been fighting for many years to prevent this piece of land from being developed for yet more houses. It lies on the west side of Bolters Lane, north of Basing Road with an area of more than one and a half acres.

At the public enquiry into the Borough Local Plan in 1993, the DoE inspector refused our request for it to be designated as a Public Open Space rather than as Urban Open Land, which is more susceptible to development. He judged that granting our request "would materially affect the interests of the County Council", who owned the land and, he thought, might still wish to exchange the site "to improve the distribution of open space in the locality."

That sounded ominous, as we suspected that the County Council wanted to sell the site for development. However, although the Borough did not support our request then, our local councillors were on our side. The Borough has now acquired the site and is turning it into a community wild life area, open to the public for quiet recreation. There will be a meadow, trees, a butterfly garden (with shrubs to attract them), an excavated pond plus a marsh, a path and some seats. The excavation and construction work should be well on the way to completion by the time this NewsSheet reaches you.

Several local schools have expressed an interest in managing Banstead Gardens (as the site will still be called) as an educational facility. There is to be a steering group, on which we shall be represented.

We are coming up to our golden anniversary and we have applied for a small grant to celebrate the event by planting some trees in the Gardens during National Tree Week later this year. We shall be looking for volunteers for the planting. If you would like to help, please phone me on 356427.

David Rudd

### **Lady Neville Pavilion**

It is coming up for 12 months since the pavilion at the Lady Neville Recreation Ground in Avenue Road was burnt down. It looks a sorry sight with its sheet metal and scaffolding hat, boards on the windows and broken paving around it. Hopefully that should soon change.

It has, we understand, taken a long time to sort out the insurance situation, but finally funds are available

to reconstruct the pavilion. The replacement building will be similar to the previous one, and will be located on the same foundations. However, the opportunity is being taken to improve the layout and appearance of the building and to provide some good quality public toilet facilities. The Association has made representations to the Recreation Dept. of the Borough about the design and we are pleased to see that our suggestions have been incorporated. In addition, in order to improve the security of the pavilion, additional lighting and a general "opening up" of the area at the back of the site are being considered.

Current indications are that the reconstruction work will commence in October and take about 3 months to complete.

Tony Ford

### **Post Box in Court Road/Avenue Road**

Royal Mail have decided to close the post box in the wall at the junction of Court and Avenue Roads, and to replace it by two others. One is in Court Road at the junction with the west end of Courtlands Crescent, and the other in the High Street outside Barclays Bank.

It seems this is happening partly in response to pleas from some residents who are missing the box at the old Post Office, but also because there has been at times some very dangerous parking by Royal Mail drivers when emptying the box at the present site. Although this practice was eventually stopped, as a result of protests from BVRA and others, Royal Mail consider the new position in Court Road will be much safer.

In further correspondence with them we asked if the new box in the High Street could have a wide opening, equal to that at the old Post Office, but it seems this will not be possible. We also pointed out that the attractive Edwardian box in the wall would be missed, as a legacy of Banstead as an old village, and mooted the idea of its being moved to the new site in Court Road. Despite some sympathy with this idea, they say it is not practicable. However there are "a number of options being considered" as to its future.

All in all the new boxes should make posting letters easier for most people affected.

Shirley Conacher

### **Council House, Brighton Road**

Plans for centralisation of Borough Council administration in Reigate are proceeding at a pace and it is reported that the ambitious scheme for developing the Town Hall is to cost council tax payers approximately £6,000,000.

We hear that the Council House, along with two other council sites, is being put up for sale with completion of purchase expected early in 1997. It is thought that two-thirds of the cost of the Town Hall development will be met from these property sales. It is also understood that current budgets for services provided are being reviewed to help pay for the cost of this development.

No decision has yet been made about the nature and siting of the Council facility to be provided in

feared that, if the application had been granted, more than half the waste would have been imported from London.

- 2 The Royal Horticultural Society is opposing an application for a similar plant in Green Belt land just over the road from its Gardens at Wisley. The proportion of imports might be even larger. We understand that the R.H.S. has submitted a petition against the plant with 27,000 signatures.
- 3 A meeting of the whole Surrey County Council on July 23rd objected to all the five remaining potential sites for these plants across the county. So they are to be taken out of the Deposit Draft of the Surrey Waste Local Plan, which (in spite of the word 'local') will apply to the whole county and which is to be examined at a public enquiry in November.

The original Consultation Draft of this plan listed eleven potential sites (eight in the Green Belt) for up to three such plants across the county. The respective county councillors had objected to them all individually, but the Council apparently felt obliged to give some indication of where these enormous plants, which the planners insisted were necessary, might go, so they included them all. In the words of the subsequent Deposit Draft, they "aroused opposition owing to the anxieties from their perceived environmental impact and pollution." That led to the deletion of six of them. Now, after all, the Council say they "are under no obligation to nominate [any] site for an incinerator", although their planners apparently still think that two or three will be required.

- 4 Two other last-minute amendments to the Deposit Draft are that it now plans to deal with "waste" (not just "waste arising in Surrey") in "an environmentally acceptable manner" and that "Surrey's future ability to handle the ever-increasing volumes of waste, *including waste from outside the county*, is in doubt." In other words the planners are now admitting what they previously denied - that they *do* have to plan for the disposal of imported waste, most of which comes from London, but unfortunately they don't know how to set about it.

So the problem of waste imports into our beautiful county from London and elsewhere is far from solved, but the planners have at last taken the important first step of dropping their previous wordy evasions and admitting publicly that it exists. That is what we have been urging them to do for four years.

David Rudd

### Recycling Trial Scheme

The Waste Management Section of Reigate and Banstead Borough Council has introduced a trial scheme to collect waste paper and metal cans from householders in selected roads throughout the borough. Bundles of paper and boxes or bags of washed aluminium cans are being collected at the

same time as the normal weekly refuse collection. The trial scheme only covers waste paper and cans. Glass, plastic, textiles and other recyclable materials are not being collected but can be taken to local recycling centres. The current trial is running for six months. If successful the operation may be adopted borough-wide.

The Council is very keen to reduce the amount of household waste going to landfill sites. It fears that if the quantity of waste currently going to landfill is not reduced, all sites within the borough will be full within ten years. Although not part of this recycling trial, householders generally are being encouraged to compost more of their kitchen and garden waste and so reduce the amount of waste going to landfill.

Hilary Powell

### Pavement Parking Outside Dillons

There have been numerous complaints from residents about vehicles parked on the pavement outside Dillons at the west end of the High Street. The practice, which often includes obstruction of the 'pimpled' paving (some slabs of which have now been broken) provided to help poorly sighted people to find the crossing, seems to have started last year when the Post Office opened in Dillons and a post box was installed there.

The main 'offenders' would seem to be Royal Mail and Parcel Force vans, but ordinary members of the public are also at fault.

I have been in communication with the Police, Royal Mail and Parcel Force to try to eliminate the problem. Management of both Royal Mail and Parcel Force have stressed to their drivers that they should not park on the pavement. Unhappily, it seems it will take some time before all their drivers follow the instructions. Both organisations are "Statutory Bodies" who are not obliged to follow Parking Regulations, but the Police will encourage them to do so. Other members of the Public are, however, obliged to follow the Regulations.

If you see such parking, by whatever vehicles, please make a note of the Registration Number and contact either the Traffic Warden on duty in the Village or Banstead Police Station (who will contact the Warden).

### The Oldest Tree in Reigate & Banstead?

The Borough's Environmental Forum is promoting a competition to identify the oldest tree in the Borough. While this competition is aimed primarily at schools and young people generally, there is no reason why anyone who enjoys our countryside and our neighbourhood should not put in an entry. An entry form, obtainable from the Help Shop, will tell you how to determine the age of your candidate tree (without cutting it down!). The first prize, a four-year old sapling, will be awarded in National Tree Week at the end of November.

### Business Watch

Many of us know PC Terry Thomas who is responsible for coordinating the Neighbourhood Watch schemes in the area. Terry has also spent

time since the beginning of the year implementing a "Business Watch" scheme in Banstead High Street. This involves individual shops holding a pager with which they can alert the police to deal with shoplifters, etc..

While not all shops have joined the scheme yet (some members of large National chains have to get authority from Head Office), there have already been some successful arrests. In at least one case a shop assistant in a non-participating shop was able to contact its next door neighbour who was participating and a miscreant was arrested.

Chris Penfold

### **Potholes etc.**

Since April last year I have been reporting monthly on behalf of the BVRA to the Borough Council any defects to roads and footpaths within the Village coming to my knowledge. The information has been obtained mainly from Committee members at our monthly meetings of the Executive Committee. Individual members are welcome to contact me direct about defects requiring action - it would be helpful if notification could be in writing, giving exact location (e.g. outside no. 149 Winkworth Road, rather than just Winkworth Road) and your name and telephone number in case of query.

The emphasis is on relatively minor defects (e.g. potholes) rather than major deficiencies in the road system. If there is a problem, experience shows that the more fuss that is made the better the chance of getting remedial action. Therefore you may wish also to contact our Ward Councillors and the Council direct. If there is a question of choice (e.g. whether you prefer tarmac or flagstones), it may be best to canvass support from other nearby residents and get them to sign a joint letter or petition. Some road questions are dealt with at County rather than Borough level but it is probably wise to raise matters at Borough level first. There is also the complication that some roads and pavements have not been adopted by the Council (examples are The Horseshoe, which is a County Council unadopted road and the shop side of the northern pavements of the High Street, which are private).

If you would like me to include specific defects in my monthly list please send details to me at 8 Mellow Close, Banstead, Surrey SM7 3QR. In case of urgency you can telephone me on 01737-352687. Of course, I cannot guarantee action but I have found that normally the necessary remedial works are carried out although sometimes there is more delay than one would like. To achieve maximum impact I do take a view myself as to whether or not a defect is bad enough to report. If there is a real danger I am confident the matter will be put right. I have so far always received written responses, even on the few occasions where the Council declined to take action.

Richard Bowes

### **999 Lifesaver**

The Borough of Reigate and Banstead is offering training in basic lifesaving skills.

Two-hour courses with St. John Ambulance trainers

will provide those attending with the confidence and knowledge to be able to cope with someone suffering from a heart attack or excessive bleeding.

Leaflets are available at the Banstead Help Shop giving further details and provide a slip on which those interested in taking part can record their names, indicating the number of places required, The courses will be conducted at Legal and General offices in Kingswood.

### **Library Parking**

The two dedicated parking spaces for the disabled outside the Library are often occupied by vehicles not displaying the appropriate badge. Please show consideration for the disabled, in spite of the limited space available for users of the Library.

### **Banstead Fair**

Many thanks to all of you who supported the Village Fair on July 6th in spite of the appalling weather. The B.V.R.A. Balloon stall raised £32.40p which was donated to Banstead Place. We understand this donation will be put towards the purchase of special chairs for the students' recreation area.

### **It Pays to Persevere**

Our road steward in South Drive reports that the Borough Council had decided to replace paving slabs with tarmac on grounds of cost and safety.

Not accepting this decision, our member canvassed all the residents in the road about their wishes. An overwhelming majority of householders preferred the existing paving stones to be retained to which the Council has now agreed.

The moral of this story is don't give up - the power of persuasion sometimes works! Full marks to the Highways Department for changing its mind.

### **Message for Road Stewards**

Just a brief reminder that membership subscriptions for the year ending January 31st 1997 should be collected and sent to the Treasurer by November 30th 1996, if possible.

### **Stop Press**

HMP High Down

Members drew our attention to a report in a local paper that HMP High Down was being upgraded to accommodate maximum security Category 'A' prisoners. In the light of the concern expressed and the assurances given in 1988 by the Home Office about the type of inmates to be housed there, the Chairman wrote to the Director General of the Prison Service, Mr. Richard Tilt, seeking clarification of its future intentions.

In his reply, the Director General states: "Given the function of the prison to hold unconvicted prisoners from the courts which High Down serves (these make up about a quarter of the prison population at High Down) there has been a requirement to hold unconvicted category 'A' prisoners for the period for which they have been remanded in custody by those courts. That number has seldom exceeded 10. On conviction they have been transferred to a secure