

# BVRA newsheet

from the Banstead Village Residents' Association

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## CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

Looking back at the February and May NewsSheets, there seems to have been little change in the issues that are affecting us in Banstead – planning, health services, village centre matters. There has, however, been a change of government which has potential to make real differences to our lives and I will focus on one or two 'political' issues, in the broadest sense and without comment - we are explicitly non-political.

First and foremost, planning for which the Core Strategy provides the overall framework. Reigate and Banstead Borough Council withdrew their Core Strategy following the Examination in Public held in January, and has now issued a set of proposed amendments which were the subject of public consultation in August. Apart from many minor changes to meet the Planning Inspector's criticisms at the January hearings, we see that a major difference in the final strategy to be adopted will derive from the Council's freedom under the new government's rules to determine its own level for its house building programme. The details are given in a separate section below.

Another major change being introduced by the new government is to the structure of the NHS. It's complicated and as yet not fully defined, but in essence the power of commissioning services from the secondary sector (the hospitals) by the GP practices will pass from the Primary Care Trusts to the GP practices, acting within consortia. This is also explained below.

As for the ever-changing aspects of our Banstead Village centre, current trends towards an increasing number of empty shops or 'temporary' charity shop premises unfortunately continues. It is difficult to see any lessening of this effect until the constrained economic conditions will have, eventually, worked through to a better economic climate. Meanwhile, the appearance of the High Street will change when the lamp posts are, in the near future, replaced by new ones – you can see what these will be in the surrounding roads where the work has already been completed. We would be interested to hear your views whether the new posts being installed by Surrey CC are an improvement. Do let us know.

I would also like to welcome our new committee member, John Conacher, and to extend an invitation to anyone else who is interested to speak to me.

That's all for now – it has been a relatively quiet year. I will take this (early) opportunity to wish you all a merry Christmas.

Roger Collins, Chairman

01737 358384

## BANSTEAD AND DISTRICT FEDERATION

The Banstead and District Federation of Residents' Associations held its quarterly meeting at Toyota on July 31<sup>st</sup> 2010. It had been decided at the previous meeting that no outside speaker would be invited in order to allow the committee to deal with its usual agenda in a calm and relaxed manner.

Among the topics discussed was the consultation on the Core Strategy. Reigate and Banstead Borough Council had withdrawn the Core Strategy after the Inspector had declared it unsound and the latest consultation was opened to seek responses to the changes RBBC had made to the original Core Strategy as a result of the Examination in Public. It was

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decided that the Planning Sub-Committee should respond to these changes on behalf of the Federation.

The other topic to be discussed was the new water pipeline which Sutton & East Surrey Water wishes to lay between Mogador and Burgh Heath, severely affecting the A217. As any one of the routes directly affects four of the Residents' Associations which are part of the Federation it was decided that S&ESW would be approached with a request for a presentation in order that these Associations, and the other Federation Residents' Associations, could be accurately informed as to route, timing and general disturbance to the area surrounding the A217.

John Jory, the new Chief Executive of RBBC, has been invited to be the guest speaker at the October Meeting.

Catalina Vassallo-Bonner (01737) 357882

### **PLANNING:**

#### **1. Core Strategy**

The original Core Strategy was issued by Reigate and Banstead Borough Council in a document entitled Planning for the Future in 2005, and was designed to cover a 25 year period to 2026. Following a long road culminating in an Examination in Public (the EIP) held in January 2010, which was described in our February NewsSheet, the Council withdrew its strategy. It has now issued proposed amendments which both take on board the issues raised at the EIP and will take advantage of changes to the planning framework already announced by the new government. The council will, for example, now be able to set its own targets for building new houses, instead of having a required number imposed on it by central government. The actual figures are still being determined but, in essence, the council can reduce the number of houses to be built each year from the original levels set in the South East Plan (imposed by central government) which in turn would allow it to avoid any incursions into the Green Belt. Since this was a major issue at the EIP, with heavy pressure from the development fraternity to look at building in parts of the Green Belt, it should help greatly to preserve the Green Belt – the Council will not need to review it within the period of the Core Strategy.

Moreover, the revised Strategy will cover only a fifteen year period, from 2011 to the same end date of 2026. This is more practical. We have contributed to a consultation process which ended at the start of September and are more comfortable with the 'new' strategy. The down side is that the required process to establish, review and ratify the new Core Strategy will take until at least 2011 – it is in fact likely to be issued formally in early 2012. Meanwhile, the planning framework within which we will have to operate, in terms of reviewing and assessing planning applications, will be a little uncertain. But it is progress, if slow, and we would congratulate the council's planning team on their efforts in difficult circumstances.

Roger Collins

(01737) 358384

#### **2. Local matters**

A second application (the first was refused) has been made to demolish The Olive Tree PH (formerly The Wheatsheaf) and extend Romans car sales premises. We have objected to the proposal as being out of keeping with the neighbourhood and its adverse effect on the neighbouring residential properties.

Mike Sawyer

(01737) 355454

#### **NHS COMMISSIONING**

This is an awkward moment to describe the government's proposed changes to the NHS structure, since many aspects are not yet fully formulated. The proposal is to replace the Primary Care Trusts and we believe that this process has already begun. The control of commissioning services for patients from the secondary sector, hospitals and so on, will lie with the GP practices themselves. However, every GP practice will be required to join a Consortium of practices, and the precise way in which these consortia will be formed and operate has yet to be agreed. As ever the level and source of funding will probably be the main issue and we simply do not yet know exactly how this will operate. While it seems to us that these changes may well have a real effect on our daily lives, unfortunately we cannot brief you properly on what is happening – you will have to watch this space.

Roger Collins

(01737) 358384

## **BANSTEAD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION**

### **ST HELIER HOSPITAL**

March 2010: The Treasury gave the final go-ahead to the redevelopment of St Helier Hospital at a cost of £219 million. The plan being to replace large parts of the existing hospital with new purpose-built wards and renovate the remaining areas. Looking at the map of the site it is easy to see that work will include the demolition of Ferguson House and the new building will involve the existing car park.

Plans include the retention of the 24 hour A&E department as well as the intensive care unit and specialist departments all housed in a new state-of-the-art building. There will be 346 beds with more than 40% being in single rooms to increase privacy and to reduce infections. £40 million will be spent on upgrading the remainder of the site, providing a new decked car park, purpose-built outpatient facilities and a new central pharmacy. Sutton Council has granted outline planning permission. Four local care centres are also to be built at the Nelson in Wimbledon, the Wilson in Mitcham, the Shotfield in Wallington and at St Helier itself.

Any redevelopment of Epsom Hospital is totally separate from all this.

May 2010: The Treasury bank account is empty and the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer are demanding that all government departments make savings of up to 25% in order to try to reduce the vast amount of debt, though the health budget is supposed to be left intact. As a result of this St Helier needs to save £30 million, roughly 10% of its annual budget, or else the redevelopment of the hospital may not go ahead. A Trust spokesman said that the savings could be made from changing the way operating theatres work and reducing spending on bank and agency staff, procurement and management costs. He added that there were no planned redundancies. St Helier hopes to make a £2.8 million surplus this financial year.

It was also recently reported that the Trust's chief executive has resigned.

We are now in a 'wait and see' situation. Given that we, as a nation, will know the results of the government spending review next month there is not too long to wait to see whether or not the planned redevelopment of St Helier will start next year or not.

Catalina Vassallo-Bonner (01737) 357882

### **POLICE MATTERS**

—Surrey Police have been running a consultation process about the closure of Police Stations in the area, which is linked to a need to live within reduced budgets. It is certain that the Banstead Police station site will be closed and, presumably, sold once an alternative centre of operations for local police officers has been determined. A public meeting was held in the Church Institute on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> August (which was, unfortunately, the evening of our monthly Executive Committee meeting); but at least our committee members were able to attend the police meeting, which was primarily to hear residents' views on the police proposals.

Although unpopular with those present, there is no going back on the closure of Banstead Police Station and we believe also of Epsom. So the main issue became, where to locate our local police officers in future. The feel of the meeting was strongly in favour of 'somewhere in the High Street with maximum visibility.' This, however, could well be impractical as it is unlikely that the police could reduce costs sufficiently by taking a shop in the High Street; and although perhaps a possible temporary solution, it is unlikely to be viable in the long term. Chief Superintendent Gavin Stephens, who managed an effective and well attended meeting, made it clear that their aim is to reduce running costs in order to release funds for maintaining the numbers and activity of police officers.

Councillor Angela Fraser, DL, was present and explained that it may be possible for Surrey CC and other interested parties to find the capital funds for rebuilding their Horseshoe premises to contain a new library, a new 'Longcroft Clinic' for the GPs, a police 'station' and other key services. There remains a problem with providing the revenue income for operating such a development, which is being investigated. While the Horseshoe location was not popular with residents at the meeting, nor indeed with your Executive Committee, in practical terms it may prove to be the only solution able to stand up to a rigorous economic evaluation.

Roger Collins

(01737) 358384

### **LADY NEVILLE RECREATION GROUND**

Opinions of the redesigned playground are divided. The café and the play area for the

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youngest children appear to be a success, as do the kick-about and basket-ball areas.

However the age group roughly 8-13 has not been catered for at all, and a petition seeking to address this omission is shortly to be considered by the council.

This has also been recognised by our local councillors, who have already undertaken to find out what has happened to some of the equipment, popular with that age group, which was removed.

Shirley Conacher (01737) 351210

### **INFRASTRUCTURE**

#### **General:**

With all the talk of cuts, one wonders how much less will be spent locally. Of course Surrey CC has been telling us for years there is no money. The Surrey CC contractor who will take over from Carillion next Spring will no doubt have even less to spend but maybe he will be more efficient. One thing is certain - all the green road signs will only get greener

#### **Lighting columns**

Most, if not all of the residential roads now have smart new lamps, leaving work on the main roads to complete the job. (Have any roads been missed?). As I write (Sept 10<sup>th</sup>) work has started on Sutton Lane and no doubt the other main roads will follow. We are not sure exactly what will happen in the High Street and hope that the "Christmas Lights" can be salvaged for reuse on the new columns.

Note that private roads are not part of this exercise and I have no idea about the public foot paths.

#### **State of the roads (and pavements)**

Credit needs to be given where credit is due. Having been told on numerous occasions by Surrey CC that there was no money to repair The Horseshoe, a good part is now up to standard. Recently, Longcroft Avenue has also been top dressed and some weeks ago Winkworth Road was also treated.

I am told the High Street is scheduled for resurfacing, but this will be a much more expensive job given the numerous dips and depressions. The worst part is outside Superdrug at the bus stop.

The prospects for any of the minor roads

and especially culs-de-sac remain grim. Expect only dangerous pot holes to be repaired for years to come.

Pavements are also suffering from neglect. In Oakley Gardens it is so green that it should be added to the Council's mowing rota. Please let me know of any dangerous pavements.

#### **Drainage**

The dry weather up to the end of July and the absence of any torrential rain has lulled one into thinking the problems have gone away. (Even Lake Victoria dried up).

Far from it. I suspect that gully cleaning and any serious work to attend to those gullies that don't work at all will suffer from any cuts to come.

Gullies will get cleaned out once a year irrespective of need. Those on side roads could in most cases go more than a year without problems, but it is obvious that on most of the tree-lined main roads even three times a year is insufficient.

#### **White lines**

All white lines get repainted from time to time. Those on bends obviously wear out far quicker than others. I have pointed out to Surrey CC on numerous occasions that on the stretch of Sutton Lane from the High St to the Croydon Lane roundabout, lines have all but disappeared. They have done other parts of Sutton Lane and more recently Winkworth Road but never this bit. Lines have gone from the High St and especially outside Waitrose, and you would be hard pressed to see any in Park Rd.

A few weeks ago all the stop lines etc on the side roads were repainted. Some were no doubt in poor condition but there is no sense of attending to the priorities.

David Gradidge (01737) 353981

#### **BUS SHELTER - Sutton Lane**

The saga of the missing bus shelter at the top of Sutton Lane goes on. It seems that RBBC have an agreement with Surrey CC and J C Decaux for the supply of a limited number of "advertising" and "non-advertising" shelters. The emphasis is on limited - and it appears that this site does not come near the top of the

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priority list.

All this is beside the point as we would prefer to have a traditional wooden shelter offering much more protection. I have pointed out to RBBC that there is a redundant shelter on the Brighton Road and BVRA could help with the cost of refurbishment  
David Gradidge (01737) 353981

### **WATER REBATE**

This is a repeat of a notice from 3 years ago. If your rainwater goes straight to a soak-away as opposed to a surface water sewer, you can get a rebate. In general, if you are on the chalk, there is a better chance. The rebate is up to £20 a year. Phone Thames Water on 0845 9200888. They will not back date it and any rebate will come via Sutton and East Surrey Water and be itemised on your bill thereafter.  
David Gradidge (01737) 353981

### **ROAD STEWARDS**

Just a gentle reminder, that if you can get the subs in by the end of October, I would be most grateful. Don't leave it to January when the weather is not on your side.  
David Gradidge (01737) 353981

### **BANSTEAD DOWNS**

Banstead Downs is a wonderful place for butterflies and wild flowers. The best places are concentrated between Sutton Lane and the railway. Volunteers have been helping to maintain parts of the area by organising winter working parties for the past 20 years and new recruits are very welcome. The job entails cutting scrub, (tools provided) raking and gathering up and then having a bonfire. Work at your own pace and wear good footwear. Gloves are provided. We start at 10 am and stop at 1pm, but if you are keen bring something to eat and carry on in the afternoon. The meeting place is by the notice board adjacent to the CLOSED car park at the

Banstead end of Sutton Lane. This is beside the bridle path. Park in the local roads and walk the 100 or so yards down Sutton Lane. Dates are Sunday October 31<sup>st</sup>, November 14<sup>th</sup>/28<sup>th</sup>.  
David Gradidge (01737) 353981

### **THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION**

One of the major goals for The Royal British Legion in Surrey was to hit the One Million mark with the Poppy Collection in 2009/2010.

The current total collected is £1,025,000 and the Banstead & District Branch contributed an amazing total of £30,619.62p - a large increase on last year.

The Banstead & District Branch is one of the largest Branches in Surrey not connected to a Club. We have monthly Pub Lunches, coach outings to Theatre and places of interest and two meetings each year with a speaker.

This year we shall be looking for many more helpers to collect for the Poppy Appeal. At the new Waitrose store we need to have a collector at both the front and car park entrances, all day for a full week. We also collect at ASDA with two collectors, from 9 am to 9 pm for 14 days.

If you are interested in collecting for us, or interested in joining the Branch (you no longer have to have served in HM Forces), please contact Tweeny & John on 01737 355513 or e-mail: [bansteadpoppyappeal@ntlworld.com](mailto:bansteadpoppyappeal@ntlworld.com)

We really do need more help and look forward to hearing from you.

—We had a successful showing at the Banstead Countryside Fair on 12th September and look forward to other opportunities to talk about the Branch or the Poppy Appeal.

This year the Remembrance Service and parade in Banstead will be held on Sunday November 14<sup>th</sup>.

John Tween  
Cecily Tween

Branch Chairman  
Poppy Appeal Organiser