

BVRA **newsheet**

from the Banstead Village Residents' Association

Vol: 28 No.2 - May 2011

Notice of Annual General Meeting

**The Executive Committee extends to all members of the Association
a warm invitation to the 64th Annual General Meeting to be held at:**

**THE CHURCH INSTITUTE, HIGH STREET, BANSTEAD,
on WEDNESDAY 25th May 2011, at 8.00 pm.**

AGENDA

- 1. Welcome by Chairman.**
- 2. Minutes of the 63rd Annual General Meeting will not be read,
but a summary will be distributed to members at the meeting.**
- 3. Presentation by Mr. J Peacock, chairman of the Banstead
Commons Conservators.**
- 4. Chairman's report.**
- 5. Presentation of accounts for the 14 months ended 31 March 2011
- printed on the back page of this NewsSheet.**
- 6. Election of Officers, Executive Committee and Auditor for the year
2011/2012.**
- 7. Welcome to our local councillors, followed by an Open Forum
debate of local issues.**
- 8. Any other business.**

Please bring this invitation with you to the meeting.

BANSTEAD VILLAGE RESIDENT'S ASSOCIATION

Chairman's Introduction

This is the NewsSheet issue prior to our AGM, which is at 8 pm in the Church Institute on Wednesday 25th May. We are hoping that more of you will attend than even at the AGM two years ago when the Longcroft Clinic made a presentation, and we had a record attendance. This year our speaker is John Peacock, Chairman of Banstead Commons Conservators, who can update us on the matter of the water company's proposed pipeline from Mogador to Burgh Heath. Since this could affect the A217 it is a major concern to all of our residents – do come to the meeting.

The current issues remain much as reported in February. The water pipeline saga continues as does the proposed introduction of on road parking charges and the proposal to close the Merland Rise swimming pool. Tony Blacoe, the chairman of the Federation of Residents Associations, is leading the resistance to the latter; we understand that he has been adopted as the Tory candidate for Preston ward in next month's local elections. While this may allow him to continue the fight from the inside, it will mean that, if he is successful, we will be looking for a new Chairman for the Federation, since it is a non-political association. BVRA wish to thank him for all his hard work for the Federation over the last three years.

Since our AGM is on 25th May, we will be able to tell you the outcomes of both the Surrey County Council meeting the previous day, at which the parking charges will be discussed, (see below) and the local elections on 5th May. You will thus have an opportunity to question councillors about the decision on the parking charges. So do come to the AGM.

The number of empty shops in the Village is still increasing. Let us hope that an upturn in the general economy will shortly put a stop to this trend. We need our independent shops, and it is they who pull in visitors from outside the village, as our petition on parking charges has shown. Anything we as residents can do to support the local shops will be valuable for the future health of the village.

The replacement of lamp posts in the High Street will happen shortly. The money has been found to install a finer style of lamp post which should improve the looks of the High Street. Will we get lights at Christmas again – this rather depends on finding the money for new strings of lights. We will report further in our October issue.

Roger Collins, Chairman

01737 358384

PARKING RESTRICTIONS

1 The confusion:

We reported the county's charging proposals for the High Street area in our last NewsSheet. A considerable amount of confusion was caused when, at the same time as the notices appeared in the High Street regarding on street parking charges, another series of Surrey CC notices were attached to lamp posts all around Banstead. On first reading they appeared to indicate that double yellow lines (DYL) would be imposed on the whole road. These notices in fact followed up a parking survey carried out well over a year ago but never implemented due to financial pressures. With 2 exceptions, the aim was to restrict parking within 10 metres of a series of road junctions, often replacing advisory white lines with statutory DYLs.

The 2 exceptions were in Holly Lane outside St

Anne's School where DYLs would be extended by over 40 metres, and in Sandersfield Road and Gardens where DYLs would be painted on the whole length of the South East side.

David Gradidge

01737 353981

2 The charging Proposals:

We have been putting considerable effort into resisting the introduction of parking charges.

A petition form was placed with most of the High Street shops – whom we thank for their excellent cooperation – and over a period of 3 weeks we collected 4,600 signatures from residents objecting to this proposal. On March 21st we joined several other RAs – Reigate, Horley, Bookham – together with some Councillors to deliver our letters of objections to the parking charges, at County Hall in Kingston. Between us we had by then collected well over 20,000

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signatures. Banstead Village RA also submitted the petition forms, although other RAs will be doing so later, by which time the number of signatures will have grown. Meanwhile, in response to the website set up by the Council for residents to record their views, Caroline Salmon has coordinated over 26,000 submissions. These parallel actions will ensure that the all their councillors will have an opportunity to discuss this matter before the final decision is taken by the cabinet on 24th May, and we shall be given the chance to speak at the meeting.

My apologies for this lengthy description of the process that had been taking place, but it serves to underline how unpopular the proposed policy is with residents, reflected in the work that several RAs have been doing. Our particular thanks go to Colette Barber in Reigate and to Caroline Salmon for coordinating the efforts of several RAs. At least the Council will know, if they decide to push ahead with this policy regardless of public opinion, that very few of their voters and even fewer of the shop owners support what they are doing. Moreover, many of their own councillors are against it.

The process of collecting signatures has provided some interesting data. We find that with the exception of a few shops that serve mainly the local population – newsagents and chemists, for example – almost half the signatures are from customers who live outside the village. This underlines how important the parking facilities are since we believe that charges for parking will deter people from outside the village from shopping here. Moreover, since the Council is citing the need to improve 'churn' (turnover of spaces in the real world) as one of their main arguments for introducing meters, we are carrying out a survey of how many cars park in the High Street for longer than the permitted hour. Early indications are that very few do so, confirming our belief that the churn issue is a spurious argument.

The indications are that the Council think that providing a first half hour's free parking will make this policy acceptable. We have asked our Reigate & Banstead councillor, Dr Lynne Hack who is also a Surrey County Councillor, (for Redhill) to make it clear to the cabinet that nothing short of withdrawing the proposal will do

since it would be all too easy for the council to withdraw the free half-hour at a later date, citing their financial need, once the policy is in place. The arguments against the proposal, which we summarised in the last NewsSheet, are overwhelming – but will the Council listen? Oh, well, it is an election year and you can all ask the candidates where they stand on this issue before voting takes place on 5th May.

Roger Collins

017373 358384

3 Our Petition:

As mentioned above we raised and circulated our own local petition. Petition forms were collected from 46 outlets in the High Street. We would like to thank all of these for their great help. In addition, we would also like to thank Longcroft Clinic, the 5 Churches Open Door, the Day Centre and lastly but by no means least the Lady Neville Café. Overall some 4600 signatures were collected (some forms came back after presenting the Petition), however there is more than a suspicion that some of you out there signed more than once (or even twice).

Having nothing better to do, I have analysed over 2000 names and this is showing up a great deal of most useful information to aid our cause. It shows how reliant the more specialised shops are on custom coming into Banstead from the surrounding area. That area is surprisingly large. You would expect to draw in many from Tadworth, Kingswood, Epsom Downs and Chipstead. What is interesting is very significant numbers from Sutton, Cheam, Wallington, Carshalton and Purley. In addition a full 5% come from further afield. The most distant is a lady from Low Lorton – you won't know where it is – it's a village between Kendal and Cockermouth!

David Gradidge

01737 353981

NHS

1 Local issues.

The government's difficulties with their plans to restructure the NHS are very much in the news. At the local level the intention is for the Mid-Surrey Commissioning Group of GP practices, which includes the Longcroft Clinic, to form the consortium of GPs required by the government proposals. In total some 13 practices have set up this group, with a Chief Executive, and they will in

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due course replace the Surrey Primary Care Trust as the commissioning body for patients in this area. That is if the government's policy goes ahead as intended, but the Health and Social Care Bill is currently under review following widespread criticisms. It is thus difficult to predict what will be the final outcome and how it will affect us the patients/clients.

In the meantime, the Longcroft Clinic is setting up a website which should be available by the time you read this - www.thelongcroftclinic.co.uk and in due course this will provide an alternative to the telephone as a means of contacting the Clinic, including for making appointments and reordering prescriptions. They are also creating extra facilities on the existing site. We shall soon see improvements to our current primary health provision.

Roger Collins

01737 358384

VILLAGE CENTRE MANAGEMENT

The main issue currently affecting the management of our Village centre is the Lady Neville playground equipment. To recall, the Council failed to install any equipment suitable for older children when they refurbished the café and the playground; so we have a lovely café and play area for 3 to 6 year olds, but nothing for 7 to 12 year old children. The Council has accepted that it needs to be improved and has estimates for the additional equipment of around £30,000. They can, however, only fund half of this and are looking for the community to raise the remaining £15,000 – a tall order. Anna Golding and Clare Derrane have stepped into the breach and secured donations from local councillors, BVRA, and a sponsored walk.

So far they are promised around £9,000 - exceptional in view of the short time. A further fund raising event, a FunDay in the Lady Neville playground, is being held on 21st May from 2 to 4 pm. Activities that will be at the 'party in the playground' include bouncy castle, childrens' entertainer, raffle, beat the goalie, lucky dips etc. They are grateful for the help already received and ask for further support in any way you can and can be contacted on 07807734887 at www.ladyneville@hotmail.com.

This still leaves some way to go and we would urge residents to support their efforts. Although

our committee felt some resentment at contributing funds to what we believe should be a Council project, we decided this initiative deserves our support.

There is also the everlasting saga of the Christmas lights. The lamp posts in the High Street will be replaced and work begins in the summer. Councillor Hack has succeeded in securing funding for the more elegant style of lamp post, and has agreement from the contractor Skanska to transfer our electrical equipment which runs the lights into the new posts. We will however need new light strings as these are mainly old and some are unserviceable. We await estimates of the cost of new lights which we fear will exceed the remaining money we still have in the *Let There Be Light Millenium* account. Let us hope we do not have another village fund-raising need immediately after the Lady Neville has been sorted.

Roger Collins

01737 358384

PLANNING

Banstead county school, the Horseshoe.

You may be aware that the school has plans for a much needed major extension. We understand that these proposals are well advanced and that Surrey county council, as they own the school, are able to decide the planning application themselves - albeit after consulting Reigate and Banstead council. The consultation will therefore give very limited opportunity for any possible objections, but we hope to be consulted in due course.

The only local issue of interest since the last NewsSheet was the grant of approval for the demolition of the **Olive Tree PH** on the A217, to which we had objected. This was followed by speedy demolition - and then an application to use the forecourt for 2 years as a used car lot. This is of some concern, both visually and for the security of the neighbouring residential properties where the rear fences have been somewhat exposed.

Mike Sawyer

01737 355454

PIPELINE

The saga of the pipeline continues. When it was first proposed Sutton & East Surrey Water wanted to run it from Mogador to Burgh Heath

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across Banstead Heath. We were told it was necessary to supply more water to Sutton as their local bore holes could not produce enough water in prolonged spells of dry weather. The Banstead Commons Conservators, backed by local residents refused to accept this route as S&ESW wanted to lay a 50mm pipeline and keep a 20m strip of heath clear in case access was needed in the future. The resulting damage to the ecology of the heathland would be serious and take many years to restore itself. On February 25th this year S&ESW decided to abandon the heath scheme as it would have meant a public enquiry, the Secretary of State for the Environment would have to decide where the pipeline went and having lost 2010 they wanted to get the work underway as soon as possible.

It would now appear that the route will probably run from Mogador Lane, where there is a water main into which to connect the new pipe, across the fields behind the *Sportsman* and join the A217 somewhere between Lower Kingswood and the Chipstead roundabout. At this point it will proceed up the A217 to Tadworth roundabout where it will detour via Bonsor Drive and Waterhouse Lane to come back to the A217 and continue to Burgh Heath, where again there is a suitable water main to link into. The preferred route along the A217 is the outside lane of the southbound carriageway.

Please be aware that the final route has not been chosen. A Screening Opinion request has to be made to Reigate & Banstead Borough Council to identify any environmental issues and consequent requirements. Surrey Highways has to approve any route that involves a public road so more negotiations are needed before the final decision can be made as to where this pipeline will run and how long it will take.

Catalina Vassallo-Bonner 01737 357882

ROAD REPAIRS

Surrey CC has a new contractor as from April 1st May - Gurney. Let's hope the standard of repairs will improve.

I was somewhat surprised to find out that Great Ellshams had been resurfaced. Residents will know this road has been patched up many times over the years but was by no means the

worst road locally. My surprise was because culs-de-sac were a very low priority and this road did not seem to be on a list.

The reason given has some logic. If the road can resurfaced relatively cheaply it may get done ahead of roads like the High Street which would need expensive preparatory work.

I was also surprised to learn that Wilmot Way could be resurfaced having lost its "skid resistance". Comments please from those who live there.

There seems to be some prospect that Bolters Lane could be resurfaced between and including the Garratts Lane and High St roundabouts. Holly Lane is also a possibility as Surrey CC is getting fed up paying out on insurance claims.

In correspondence, I have asked that Yewlands Close and the High St end of Buff Avenue also be placed on the urgent list.

David Gradidge

01737 353981

COUNCIL TAX - THE REALITY

Both Surrey C C and R & B said that they had kept Council Tax at last year's levels. Fair enough, but in reality the government didn't give them much of a choice.

Looking at the components of the overall bill, Surrey Police account for about 13% of the total. They have also frozen their part but kept it low key. Interestingly they have actually received an increase in the various grants of about £0.9m. They are also budgeting to increase the number of police officers by 128 and overall staff by 152. This seems to have been achieved by a cull of senior officers and the proposal to close a serious number of "expensive and little used police stations". This will no doubt include Banstead – it is already closed to you and me.

Surrey C C have again rejigged the sheet they send with the council tax bill. Having excluded schools the last few years, it is now included so making it rather difficult to see what is happening. So although "Other Government Revenue Grants" have reduced by £35.1m, something called "Government formula grant" has increased by £19.8m. Overall they are £11.1m down after taking into account Business Rates – I said it was complicated in the last issue! This decrease represents about just over 1% of the total grant

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and as they said they had seen all this coming they have not been hit too hard.

It appears to be a bit tougher with R & B council. They quote a cut of 25% over the next 2 years. However the 2010/11 figure was £6.9m, falling to £5.1m. in 2011/12. This is actually the whole of the 25% required over 4 years by the government in one hit – all very strange.

They quote full time equivalent staff at 466 on Feb 1st - just 10 lower than last year so there would appear to be significant reductions yet to come.

Now another curious feature of the figures they publish. This is the statement of investments. This was a steady figure of £28m for some years upto 2007/08. It has progressed to £40.4m in 2008/09, £50.3m in 2009/10 and £62.2m in 2010/11. Forgetting for the moment the £15.5m tied up in bankrupt Icelandic banks, where has all this money come from? – sale of assets?

David Gradidge

01737 353981

POLICE MATTERS

In February the Chief Constable announced that Police in Reigate and Banstead Borough are on the move "to protect frontline numbers" and neighbourhood teams at Horley and Banstead are to have new local bases. The programme is said to be designed to prevent cuts to frontline officers, with a target of recruiting an additional 200 police constables with almost 100 added in the last year and plans for 100 more by 2012.

To meet this target and reduce the budget deficit, a series of change programmes have been taking place within the force including cuts to the number of senior leaders and non-operational staff as well as a review of all police buildings.

The review found that many of Surrey's smaller police stations are old, expensive to maintain and little used by members of the public. A survey conducted by the Surrey Police Authority early last year was also reported to have found that less than a quarter of respondents believed keeping local stations was more important than maintaining frontline officer numbers - not the feeling we received at our last AGM!

Proposals to find alternative bases for

neighbourhood teams within local communities and share buildings with partner organisations have now been presented to the Surrey Police Authority and are being implemented to reduce the budget deficit and invest in more police constables on the streets.

Since that was written, Banstead Police Station has closed to the public, with the exception of the neighbourhood team's use of the back rooms. Front counter services will now only be available at Dorking Police Station 8am-10pm daily. Police will also continue to use local bases in Merstham and at The Belfry Shopping Centre in Redhill.

Reigate and Banstead Neighbourhood Inspector Charlotte Rimmer said: *"finding alternative sites for teams at Banstead and Horley means we keep a base for those officers in the local community and gain more police constables for the whole borough. This is not about removing officers from the streets as the teams working from Banstead and Horley will continue to patrol the same communities they do now. The whole borough is also benefiting from the investment of six constables, a sergeant and a detective constable making up a Neighbourhood Support Team. There will also be additions to force-wide resources like the cross border crime team we can call on. It is important local people are clear these changes do not affect emergency response teams, which are separate from neighbourhood teams. They remain on patrol 24-hours-a-day and continue to operate as normal.*

We will be updating people on the changes at our regular panel meetings and displaying information at stations across the county but you can also keep up to date with information by visiting the Surrey Police website at www.surrey.police.uk or calling us on 0845 125 2222".

Through the Neighbourhood Watch network we have been advised of a number of recent cases of burglary, theft from (and of) cars and even the discovery of a cannabis factory right in the village centre. The message is clear - keep your doors, windows and cars locked and valuables out of sight where possible. Many thefts take place from unsecured dwellings/cars. Also,

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how can thieves steal the lead and copper off four of our churches without being seen or heard? The police ask for any information about suspicious (or potentially suspicious) behaviour so that they can check it out at the time. Don't be shy, contact them if in doubt.

And finally, your next opportunity to voice your concerns will be at the Police Panel Meeting for Banstead and Nork on Friday 15th July 2011 at 7.30pm Banstead Institute, The Orchard, All Saints Church, High Street Banstead.

Mike Sawyer **01737 355454**

FEDERATION OF RA'S

The Annual General Meeting of the Banstead & District Federation of Residents' Associations took place on January 28th 2011 at Toyota. The guest speaker was Mr John Jory, Chief Executive of Reigate & Banstead Borough Council. Mr Jory explained that he had spent 30 years in local government as a planner and civil engineer coming to Reigate and Banstead from Mid Sussex in 2010, where he had spent 6 years as the Chief Executive. Before starting his presentation for the meeting he reminded his listeners that there would be no increase in RBBC's council tax for the second year in succession and that both members and public wanted services retained. As John Jory realised the committee members had already seen his proposed presentation he chose instead to encourage a question and answer session covering the concerns of the members.

Mr Jory went on to say that the council was trying to put out more information about what is happening. He is a firm believer in open government and would like the functions of the Help Shop to be expanded and added there was more communication between the Leader of the Council and her councillors. He would like to see this expanded to County Councillors and to residents. As a direct result of Mr Jory's visit he will be holding regular meetings (3-monthly) with a small group of Federation representatives.

The officers elected for the coming year are Mr Tony Blacoe, Chairman, Mrs Trish Canham,

Deputy Chairman, Mr George Hinton, Treasurer, and Mrs Catalina Vassallo-Bonner, Secretary.

Catalina Vassallo-Bonner **01737 357882**

U3A PUBLIC MEETINGS:

1. May 11th at 7.30 p.m. at Banstead Community Hall, Park Road - in association with the Banstead Festival Arts Society - a piano recital by John Hursey, who trained as a concert pianist at the Royal College of Music. His recital "THE KINGS AND PRINCES OF THE KEYBOARD" has works by Chopin, Beethoven, Liszt, Gershwin, Fats Waller and others. Each piece has an introductory explanation, focussing on the music. Tickets are £10.00 each (which includes refreshment), from local members (01737- 812646, -554927, -354841, 0208- 642 1396, -394 2829), the Ibis Bookshop or at the door. Parking is free.

2. July 20th OPEN MEETING at 2.15 to 4.30 p.m. at Banstead Community Hall a talk by Paul Cleever "Honey Bees and their importance in the environment" - non-members welcome. Tea/coffee and biscuits available after the talk. Admission £1. Free parking. Further information from local members (01737- 812646, -554927, 0208 642 1396).

Donald Waugh

ROAD STEWARDS

I am always on the lookout for volunteers to be a road steward. Briefly the job is to deliver NewsSheets 3 times a year and to collect the annual subscription of £2 a household.

There are vacancies as follows:

Barnfield and Flint Close;

Commonfield Rd part - this could be split in 2 as it covers over 48 houses.

I would also like to recruit a roving steward who could step in when vacancies occur at short notice.

David Gradidge

01737 353981

DIARY DATES

Banstead May Queen - Saturday May 7th;

Banstead Village Day - Saturday July 9th;

Countryside Day - Sunday September 11th.

Mike Sawyer

01737 355454

BANSTEAD VILLAGE RESIDENT'S ASSOCIATION

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE 14 MONTHS ENDED 31ST MARCH 2011

	2010/2011	2009/2010
	£	£
INCOME		
Subscriptions & Donations	3871	3946
Sundry Income	0	0
Interest received	2	2
	<u>3873</u>	<u>3948</u>
EXPENDITURE		
Production of News Sheets	1472	1597
Subscriptions	92	25
Printing, postage & stationery	177	157
Hire of rooms	286	272
Planning Application - Notice Board	170	0
Sundry expenses	55	99
Petition re NHS	211	0
Donation to Lady Neville Fund	500	0
Excess of Income over Expenditure	<u>1121</u>	<u>1587</u>
	3873	3948

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST MARCH 2011

	31/03/2011	31/01/2010
	£	£
NET ASSETS		
Treasurer's account - Lloyds TSB	6612	4749
Deposit account - Lloyds TSB	3900	3900
Debtors net of Creditors -	94	648
	<u>10418</u>	<u>9297</u>
REPRESENTED BY		
General Fund as at 1st February 2010	6797	5210
Add Surplus for the period	1121	1587
	<u>7918</u>	<u>6797</u>
Notice Board Fund	2500	2500
	<u>10418</u>	<u>9297</u>

J D G Gradidge
 16 The Maples
 Banstead
 Hon Treasurer
 April 19th 2011