

# BVRA newsheet

from the Banstead Village Residents' Association

Vol:16 No. 2 April 2000

## Notice of Annual General Meeting

The Executive Committee extends to all members of the Association a warm invitation to the 53rd Annual General Meeting to be held at:

**THE CIVIC CENTRE, HORSESHOE, BANSTEAD  
on THURSDAY, 11th MAY 2000 at 8.00pm**

### AGENDA

1. Presentation by the Chief Executive of the Epsom and St. Helier NHS Trust, Dr. Nigel Sewell, on the provision and delivery of hospital health care services to the people of Banstead.
2. Minutes of 52nd Annual General Meeting held on 12th May 1999 will not be read, but a summary will be distributed to members in the hall.
3. Chairman's report -1999/2000
4. Presentation of audited accounts for the year ended 31st January 2000 included in this News Sheet.
5. Election of Officers and Executive Committee for the year 2000/2001
6. Open Forum debate of local issues with our Councillors.
7. Any other business.

Please bring this invitation with you to the meeting

We hope you will join us for an evening of lively and interesting debate.

April 2000

John Nicolson,  
Hon. Secretary

45, Wilmot Way, Banstead  
Tel:- (01737) 353038

### Annual General Meeting

As you will see from the front page our A.G.M. will again be held in the CIVIC CENTRE, this time on a Thursday. At the time of going to press we believe our new civic amenity will have already been opened for business, some three months late.

With the current national debate focusing on the National Health Service, we thought it would be appropriate to invite as our guest speaker the Chief Executive of the Epsom and St. Helier N.H.S. Trust, Dr. Nigel Sewell. He will be speaking to us about the delivery of health care in our area. I am sure there are many issues you would like to raise with him during question time - waiting lists, funding of treatment, mixed gender wards and possible future centralisation of services. Please bring your questions with you and join in the debate.

### Committee News

During the year we have said farewell to Colin Griffiths, a long-serving member of the Committee, who has served the whole community so well, and Surinder Mathur. We thank them both for their enthusiastic contribution and wish them well. We have welcomed two new members, Philip Morran and John Quick, who have been co-opted on to the committee, bringing our number up to fifteen.

As a result we still have one or two vacancies for committee members to be filled at the A.G.M. Amongst our membership I am sure there are public-spirited people looking for an opportunity to contribute by serving their community in local affairs. The Association is a non-political, independent organisation dedicated to the protection of our amenities and environment.

You can be sure of a warm welcome and that your views will be valued. Interested? Please call me, Peter McLaren, on 01737- 357463 if you would like more information about our activities.

### Membership

Like topsy, the influence of your Association continues to grow apace! Our certified membership increased to 2,001 households, or by 3.4%, in the Millennium - a magnificent achievement. I am sure you will wish me to thank our Road Stewards who deliver your NewsSheet and collect annual subscriptions, for their efforts on your behalf.

Unfortunately, a number of Road Stewards have retired last year and we are seeking members to look after Chipstead Road and Diceland Road. Can you help in this essential task? Please ring me on 357463.

Peter McLaren

### Local Democracy

We are told the Government is anxious to involve communities in the local decision making process, as exemplified by elected Mayors and the introduction of 'Community Boards'.

You can perhaps understand our scepticism when we read of the Borough Council's decision to introduce swingeing charges for their planning services. ~~Weekly lists of planning applications, hitherto provided free of charge to residents' associations, are now to cost us £74 per annum. That is not all;~~ I would urge our members to carefully consider David Rudd's article which follows

Chairman

### Planning Applications - We have a crisis

We looked at 130 planning applications for the Village last year. Most were innocuous as far as we were concerned, but we objected to 15 (12%). One was withdrawn, five were amended in a manner which removed our objections and three were refused. Five were granted and one is still outstanding as we go to press.

Of course we cannot tell for sure how much our representations affected those amendments, withdrawals and refusals. Some would probably have happened if we had done nothing, but we have strong grounds for believing that often our arguments swung the balance. Where we were overruled, it seemed to us that the applicable Local Plans Policies had not been fully complied with, but their wording tends to be "flexible" to the point of ambiguity. There is no appeal against an application being granted.

*Unfortunately the Council is now effectively bringing an abrupt end to this orderly process by imposing a charge of £10.00 per application for copies of applications or parts of applications at the Help Shop in the Horseshoe.* I commonly dispose of a substantial number of applications (as far as we are concerned) by a cursory inspection, but our planning sub-group of 5 or 6 members of our executive committee pore over some 100 or so applications every year to decide whether or not we should comment on any. They could not all attend at the Help Shop for that purpose when it is open. To function effectively we need copies of those plans and *they would now cost us in the order of £1,000 a year.*

Our annual income is about £2,000 so that additional expenditure would cripple us financially. We may ~~therefore~~ have to raise our subscription soon in any case but we should have to double it to £2.00 to cover those charges and our other rising costs. We judge that most members would tolerate £2.00 to cover reasonable costs, such as appear in our treasurer's annual reports, but not, we feel, to contribute £1,000 a year to boosting the Council's failing revenue (which currently runs at £12 million).

We fear many of you would object and a substantial proportion would resign.

Our needs are modest, averaging around two A4 sheets per application, that is 200 a year. The commercial rate for copying at Golding or News 'N' Cards in the High Street is 5p a sheet and they have to pay business rates. We could manage the 10p rate at the library (which does not pay business rates) but *the Council are effectively demanding one hundred times the commercial rate. We think that's outrageous.*

We had a few days warning and asked two of our local councillors to explain what was happening. They told us that residents' associations would not be charged if we took the copies ourselves - which is what we have been doing for years. But when the new Help Shop opened on 3 April the staff insisted (apologetically) that they must charge the full rate and that they should have been charging us £5 per application for several years. They had posted a notice to that effect and showed us the minutes of the committee which authorised the charges last November.

The Council have intimated from time to time over the years that, although we are often a thorn in their side, on balance they welcome our activities. But these charges are sending the opposite signal - that the present Council seem to want to inhibit what we do.

So if you want us to keep going, we suggest you ask your candidates at the forthcoming local election whether they will support the abolition of these charges.

One of the applications amended as above was to demolish the unoccupied offices to the right of the listed Castle House in Park Road and put up a block of 28 two-bedroom and three-bedroom flats with a semi-underground car park. After discussion with the Tracery Residents Association (TRA), we supported their objections and the number was reduced to 23. With the support of Cllr. Dr. Lynn Hack, we then asked the applicant's architect to provide a pedestrian access to the site in the corner nearest the shops and to reduce the number of flats to 21, while retaining 40 car parking spaces to conform with the Local Plan.

The applicant was willing to do both, but the latest Government policy (see our article on the Local Plan) limits the parking spaces to a maximum of 1.5 per new dwelling. After further discussion with the TRA we both think the best we can now hope for is for the new residents (some of whom will of course have two cars) and their visitors to use the existing spaces provided for the still-occupied offices on the left of the listed building out of office hours. Otherwise we fear the Tracery may become congested with parked cars.

This year we have looked at 21 applications so far and four more await our attention as we go to press.

As things stand now they will be the last applications we can afford to consider seriously on behalf of our members to try and preserve, and if possible enhance, our amenities and quality of life in our Village.

David Rudd

### High Street Topics

Although the main focus of our work on the High Street is currently on the CCTV scheme, a number of minor items are also underway. The tight turn out of Buff Avenue into the High Street has now been made easier with a change to the kerblin, something that many BVRA members have been calling for. Work is also going on to tidy up the grassed areas at 'The Timbers' by constructing granite edgings. We assume that the Council will ensure that the grass edges are kept suitably trimmed so that the new granite setts do not get grown over!

Further work is planned to be carried out shortly to replace the drainage channel near the Church Institute and Victoria Chemist which is regularly broken and/or blocked. It is hoped that this will remedy the large puddle that quickly accumulates there during times of rain.

### Sainsbury's

It's all gone very quiet, hasn't it! It is clear that Peel Investments, the owner of the site of the former Waitrose store where our new Sainsbury's is to be built, are finding it slow going. There is no move yet of Dillons and the Post Office to different premises in the High Street, and whilst Peel will be making productive use of this time to prepare their design drawings for the new building, this delay is a source of frustration to all. The current indications are that the move and the subsequent start on demolition of the old building will not occur until the autumn. And despite all assurances that have been given that the Post Office will retain a presence in the High Street, there must be a risk that they and Dillons will be forced out of their present home before a new High Street location for them is found. Watch this space!

Tony Ford

### CCTV for Banstead High Street

As you may have read in the press, The Home Office have made a grant of £48,000 towards the installation of Closed Circuit Television cameras in the High Street. Reigate and Banstead Borough Council have also committed £85,000. The total needed, however, is £157,000 for the proposed system of eight cameras, monitored by Surrey Police, covering the whole street, Public Car Parks, the Lady Neville Recreation ground and the public buildings in the Horseshoe. It is now up to us all, High Street traders and residents, to find the balance of the money to get the system we need to guard against vandalism,

crime and, perhaps above all, to reduce the fear of crime in our village. Cheques payable to 'Banstead Cameras' together with a self addressed envelope (so that a receipt can be sent to you) in an envelope marked 'Banstead Cameras' should be handed in to either the Police Station, Maxine Wool Shop or the Help Shop in the Horseshoe.

Chris Penfold

### **The Local Plan**

The Borough Local Plan, adopted in 1994 after a four-month public enquiry, is up for revision. We commented on the Consultation Draft over a year ago (see our April 1999 News Sheet) but with no effect. So we have recently repeated those comments, with a few more, on the Deposit Draft, pending the Public Enquiry. It is a long, tortuous business.

The Council intended to limit the revisions to only six of the 132 'general' policies in the Plan (not counting Horley, which is a special case) and to disallow representations on the other 126. However the whole operation has now been effectively thrown back into the melting pot by a new policy document (PPG 3), published in March by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions at Westminster. Local authorities must revise their plans to comply and they may have to make compulsory land purchases to secure 'coherent approach'.

There is to be a vast increase in the number of new dwellings which Surrey must allow (see our January NewsSheet), but we still do not know the numbers required in our borough. The new document requires local authorities to avoid developments with more than 400 square yards of land per dwelling and allow an average of no more than three car parking spaces between two dwellings.

Members will judge for themselves how much those new policies threaten our amenities and quality of life, which we try constantly to protect and enhance. But we see no value in pestering our councillors about something which is forced on them from above.

David Rudd

### **Police Matters**

On April 1st, Surrey Police took on the responsibility of covering our area from the Metropolitan Police who have been doing the job since the days of Robert Peel! Inevitably, Surrey bring with them some changes. The Police Consultative Committee on which I have represented BVRA, is to be replaced by a Police Community Partnership Group (PCPG) and new Neighbourhood Police Community Partnership Groups (NPCPG) are to be initiated. When you telephone 999 for the Police in future you will be answered from Guildford rather than Scotland Yard. Other detailed changes are likely in the coming months.

In one important area, there is no change: PC Mike Ward, who has been our local Beat Officer for the past year, remains. He has been seconded to Surrey police and will provide valuable local knowledge to Surrey.

### **Let There Be Light!**

The Committee set up last year to illuminate the High Street for the Millennium held its first AGM on 27 March. It is intending to extend the lighting scheme as funds permit.

Chris Penfold

### **Banstead Village Fair**

Would you please note in your diary this year the Village Fair will be held on Saturday, July 8th, in the Orchard. Do come along and support local organisations and groups in their fund-raising efforts (including BVRA) and join in the fun!

### **Library Roundabout**

I hope you enjoyed the display of award-winning narcissi which the Association purchased and planted to celebrate the Millennium. Our readers will know that the variety, appropriately named 'Banstead Village' was nurtured by one of our residents - John Goddard - whom we thank for his horticultural expertise.

### **Bygone Banstead**

An interesting evening is promised when the Banstead History Research Group presents an illustrated talk on Banstead in bygone days, on Wednesday May 3rd at 8.00pm in the Community Centre, Park Road. Tickets, priced £4 (including tea or coffee), are available from The Ibis Bookshop, Banstead Music Shop or Banstead Library.

**BANSTEAD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION  
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST JANUARY 2000**

	1999/2000	1998/1999
INCOME	£	£
Subscriptions Received	2053.00	1963.50
Interest from Bank (Net)	4.63	37.18
Interest from TSB/Halifax (Net)	<u>29.70</u>	<u>30.65</u>
	<u>2087.33</u>	<u>2031.33</u>
EXPENDITURE		
Production of NewsSheets	1017.50	697.00
Subscriptions Paid	5.00	5.00
Printing & Stationery	181.60	354.20
Postage & Telephone	90.04	65.84
Hire of Rooms	191.10	195.00
Annual General Meeting Expenses	475.22	494.91
Sundry Expenses	98.25	31.03
Excess of Income over Expenditure	<u>28.62</u>	<u>188.35</u>
	<u>2087.33</u>	<u>2031.33</u>

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST JANUARY 2000

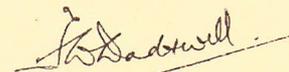
	31.1.2000	31.1.1999
	£	£
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash at Bank - Treasurer's Account	2149.99	2130.07
On Deposit with Halifax Plc	1029.70	1000.00
Sundry Debtor(s)	<u>-</u>	<u>21.00</u>
	<u>3179.69</u>	<u>3151.07</u>
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Excess of Assets over Liabilities	3179.69	3151.07
Represented by:-		
General Fund -		
Credit Balance Brought Forward	2748.79	2560.44
Add - Surplus Income for the Year	<u>28.62</u>	<u>188.35</u>
	2777.41	2748.79
Fund for Preservation of Banstead Amenities -		
Credit Balance Brought Forward	402.28	402.28
	<u>3179.69</u>	<u>3151.07</u>

I have audited the above balance sheet dated 31st January 2000 and attached Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended on that date and they are in accordance with the Books and Vouchers submitted to me and in my opinion reflect a true and fair statement of the affairs of the Association.

P. McLaren  
Hon. Treasurer  
61 Commonfield Road  
Banstead



F.W. Dadswell F.C.A.  
Hon. Auditor  
5 Greenhayes Gardens  
Banstead



15 February 2000