

# BVRA newsheet

from the Banstead Village Residents' Association

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Volume 24 : No 1 - February 2008

## CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

Dear Residents

It's hard to believe that we are entering a new year – however, 2008 has a good ring and I hope we will have a trouble free village for the whole year. Although there will be another issue of this NewsSheet before the AGM in May it is not too early to let you know the date, which is Thursday 22 May at 8pm in the Church Institute. Put it in your diary and we hope to see you there – maybe this year we will avoid clashing with a major football match!

As ever, planning matters seem to dominate our lives. Although it has been a relatively quiet year with no large scale projects, there have been a few quite serious developments proposed by developers that have alarmed residents; I am glad to say that by and large these have been rejected by the council. Mike Sawyer's item on planning covers these in full. What is certain, however, is that there are several planning issues that will run and run. The first is housing, with pressure from the government and its largely unrepresentative bodies, such as the new South East Development Authority, likely to force local councils to build more houses than we were expecting under previous government proposals. This will put increasing pressure on the integrity of the green belt, which developers are anxious to see reviewed and weakened.

Another area of concern is the pressure to build new runways at Gatwick airport, as well as at Heathrow which is near enough to have an impact on our area if only from overflights. With the rising demand for waste disposal facilities and new electricity generation such developments, although the facilities may not occur within our immediate area, could seriously damage our wider environment. We need to be vigilant and active when such proposals fall within our remit. We will seek to co-ordinate our response with nearby RAs and in this regard may I draw your attention to the excellent article by Tattenham RA on the leisure facilities at Merland Rise.

Banstead continues to be a good place to live - we will aim to assist in keeping it so and we hope you all enjoy a happy and prosperous New Year.

Roger Collins

(01737) 358384

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## PLANNING

It was too good to continue - since the quiet summer we have had a few "interesting" applications, some of which involve planning appeals. The more significant were:

**27 Lyme Regis Road** - two outline planning applications were received, one for 5 houses, the other for 6 houses, on the site of this house and some back garden land. Not surprisingly, as it would have been bounded by 15 other gardens, a number of objectors made their views heard. A very effective local campaign was undertaken and secured 190 signatures in opposition. A web site was also set up and achieved 130

"hits". We also objected, and were pleased that the council refused both applications. The local campaign was so effectively run that we have obtained a copy of their "game plan" to help any other local group wanting guidance on how to go about it! The developers may, of course, appeal, but congratulations to all concerned so far.

**30 Sutton Lane** - an application was received to replace this nice bungalow, sited on quite a large corner plot, with 4 large 3-storey houses, all with access onto this busy road. We objected on a number of grounds, and were pleased when the application was withdrawn. Alas, this was only to be replaced with a very similar proposal. The

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main difference is that two of the houses would now take their access from Beechfield rather than directly from Sutton Lane. We have again objected, as have a number of neighbours, and we await the decision of the planning committee.

**Amberley** - in a previous NewsSheet we referred to the proposed new buildings (at the foot of Bolters Lane) intended as a care home, but located in land designated as Urban Open Land. The applicant has appealed against the council's decision to refuse planning permission, and a government planning inspector is due to hear the case. We have been told that although the appellant originally opted for a local hearing, they have now asked for it to be dealt with by exchange of letters. We are maintaining our support of the council's grounds for refusal, and await the outcome.

**Courtlands Farm** - the applicant has appealed against the council's decision to refuse planning permission, and a government planning inspector is due to hear the case. We have been told that this will be in the form of a formal planning inquiry at which the council's, the appellant's and any other points of view that have been submitted are discussed in front of the inspector. We intend to appear to support the grounds for refusal, and await the date for the hearing. In view of the amount of interest this application generated we have asked for the hearing to be held in Banstead to allow as many people as possible to attend. It would be helpful if those who would like to attend could let me know so that we can tell the council the size of room that will be needed.

**St Anne's school** - a start has been made on the construction works for the new classrooms, and the old "temporary" building that should have been demolished several years ago has now gone. Unfortunately a double-decker portacabin and a further new temporary classroom have also appeared on site. The former is, apparently, "permitted development" over which the council has little or no control; the latter is the subject of a retrospective planning application! It is unfortunate that the recent road works at the Garratts Lane roundabout caused so much disruption, but this did underline the need for the

council to enforce the travel plan conditions imposed on the school to reduce local traffic/parking aggravation.

Unfortunately the highways authority says "not our problem - talk to the planning authority"; and guess what - the planning authority says "we don't have anyone in post to do this, the highway authority used to". Great. We continue to press the council to unlock this ridiculous situation.

**Lady Neville pavilion** - planning permission has been granted for a modest extension to the present small building and its conversion into a small cafe/function room linked to the play area (which is also due for an upgrade shortly). We support the proposal (and the proposed upgrade of the play areas), but are aware that it needs to attract a suitable operator to be viable.

### **Preston Re-Generation Plan**

We are indebted to the Tattenham R A for their permission to copy this item from their winter Newsheet:

*"Surrey County Council, Reigate & Banstead Borough Council and Raven Housing Trust have finally agreed a Statement of Intent to progress the physical and social regeneration of the Preston area. Key to the project is the re-investment of part of the proceeds from the disposal of the former de Burgh School playing field site.*

*The joint project aims to improve the quality of life for people living in Preston. The total investment is £26.5 million, split as follows: Surrey - £6.5 million, Reigate & Banstead - £10 million (of which £7.5 million is already committed to the redevelopment of the Leisure Centre/Swimming Pool) and Rave - £10 million.*

*The 2005 Masterplan provides details of the proposals, which include:*

*a mixed-use community centre linked to a leisure centre, including youth centre facilities;*

*about 250 new houses on the de Burgh site, for private ownership, part ownership, affordable renting and including key worker housing. The housing is intended to be based on 'new exemplar sustainable standards' for which additional government grants are anticipated;*

*some limited new housing elsewhere in Preston and improvements to the existing social housing stock (the former Sutton and Merton*

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*Council owned housing are now all transferred to Raven, overcoming the practical difficulties of operating with three social landlords);*

*environmental enhancements, including improvements in the streetscene and public areas. This will mean additional parking bays and action to tackle traffic flow problems, landscaping, and modifications to open spaces to make them more attractive, safer and encourage use;*

*improved pedestrian access and cycleways (including a route over Burgh Heath to Asda, with a crossing at the anticipated new traffic lights - but no road over the heath itself).*

*The agreement has now finally ruled out the 'backstop' alternative possibility of building the new Leisure Centre as a 'joint use' facility with the Beacon School in Picquets Way.*

*In accordance with planning policy, 25% of new homes will be affordable. An allocations policy will give reasonable priority for first lettings and sales of the new affordable housing to local people. In particular, efforts will be made to assist overcrowded families and those with children without access to a garden. To encourage a more balanced community overall, Raven will make some existing rented housing elsewhere in Preston available for shared ownership."*

### **Canons Farm**

We are indebted also to the Burgh Heath RA for an item in their November Newsletter reminding us all of the need to be vigilant for early signs of the likely moves to prepare the way for proposals to redevelop this land following its sale by Legal & General. Please let me know if you see any signs of further tree surveys, or other "interesting" activity in this area.

Mike Sawyer (01737) 355454

### **INFRASTRUCTURE**

As I write this (Jan 15th) rain is hammering on the windows and a near gale is bending the trees. Flood warnings are multiplying by the hour and those who live near the River Severn are saying "not again". What's more the forecast gets worse. I then think that our local problems seem rather insignificant and nothing to other

areas of the UK. But are they? Are they not part of the same problem? Is it not the fact that, with rare exceptions, authorities nationwide have been squeezed of money year upon year with the result that wherever you look things are slowly falling apart for the most part but in some places with dramatic results. What is worse, a repair, if done promptly, might cost £1000, but left to infect surrounding areas rapidly escalates to £10000 - rather like putting off a visit to the dentist.

Enough of doom and gloom. Yesterday I followed a R & B road sweeper going North down Sutton Lane. There was little in the way of leaves to remove. Some time later, I found it right down at Belmont coming back and wondered what it had found to do on a road mostly bordered by earth banks. It was easy work with no corners or parked cars to negotiate, but what a waste of resources. This brings me on to -

### **Leaf Clearance**

The impression I get backed up by evidence is of a haphazard operation where the line of least resistance is taken. Some roads get a good service, but they tend to be those without trees! Others are either cleared reluctantly or never.

At the end of November, R & B were emailed with a list of roads in need of immediate attention. As of Jan 15th, Colcokes Rd, the East section of Pound Rd/Thornfield, Wellesford Close and Chipstead Rd had been attended to although if you look at the East section of Chipstead Rd you would have your doubts - but you should have seen it before. However Basing Rd, Beechfield, Buff Ave, De Burgh Park, Gt Ellshams and Courtlands Cres remain untouched with the leaf litter now reduced to a soggy mulch. Some of these roads have parking problems but this is no bar to cleaning the other side of the road, and with a bit of planning all the road can be done. To my certain knowledge Courtlands Crescent has never been cleaned. Of course, this mulch eventually finds its way into the gullies which brings me on to -

### **Road Gullies and Drains**

Nothing has changed - that is Surrey C C have done absolutely nothing in the last 4 months to attend to the multiple problems.

If you come across a tall figure with a strained

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expression using a 6ft bamboo to probe drains, that will be me. I fully expect that sooner rather than later I will be pursued by my men in white suits and taken away never to be seen again!

Last September, at great risk to life and limb, I produced a record of all the gullies in Sutton Lane, Winkworth Rd, Bolters Lane and the High St noting down their apparent state of efficiency. There are 120 in total with a fair proportion, in the words of a late Home Secretary, not fit for purpose. One interesting observation in Bolters Lane was that there is no drain between No 7 (well South of the roundabout) and opposite Kingsley Avenue, a distance of 500yds.

A spot check in the last day or so revealed a situation of rapid decline and especially so in Bolters Lane with the afore mentioned leaf litter as a major cause.

In Sutton Lane, between the war memorial and Croydon Lane there are 2 gullies adjacent to the Well House side totally blocked and no doubt so for many years. Further down closer to the entrance to Flint Close are 2 more. The first is now totally blocked (it was cleared in 2007) whilst the next one a few yards down can now only cope with a light shower. So water flows down the North side of Flint Close where the first 2 drains are in no shape at all producing gas when prodded! Water then carries on down Flint Close where historically it has flooded the first garden in Winkworth Rd. Surrey's solution? - to dig another drain!

In Garratts Lane, and here I am pleased to say Surrey C C are not directly to blame, there is an unusual situation. Outside the 3rd house in there is a pair of gullies opposite each other. Today, after moderate rain, they could be seen discharging water which then sinks at the roundabout, wells up outside Gt Ellshams then flows down Holly Lane etc etc

This discharge is, I am told, partly from an underground spring originating some way back in the Garrard Rd area.

Many of the gullies observed are partially blocked between 1ft and 3ft down. This is above the level where water discharges into the soakaway sump. Once these sumps get silted up there is the start of major problems as the only cure is an expensive and very dirty job of digging

out the chambers.

Much of the debris which finds its way into the drainage system results from crumbling roads which brings me on to -

### **Roads**

Surrey C C were provided with a list of roads in need of attention. Some work has indeed been done but as usual they never finish the job. Patching is the order of the day but on a hit and miss basis and often, it must be stressed, to no great standard.

One job which has been done is the repair to the numerous joints between sections of Winkworth Rd. The worst bumps have gone to the great relief of residents but how long will it last? One annoying feature of the jobs Carillion do on behalf of Surrey C C is to put up notices and signs and never remove them. The Library roundabout and Colcokes Rd are two locations where the job was done months ago. One success was the removal of heaps of debris in Oakley Gardens following patching. In all these cases making yourself a nuisance pays off - eventually. See the BVRA web site for making on-line complaints to Surrey.

### **Conclusion**

Sorry to go moaning on like this but I could add the broken lamp posts that never get removed, the roads signs covered with a green slime, street furniture serving no purpose, sign posts pointing to anywhere but the intended direction, yellow and white lines that never get repainted, collapsing man-hole covers and then of course there is The Horseshoe!

Message - make yourself a pest to those we pay the bills to, and then keep on at them and, if you are inclined, write to the papers and your MP.

**David Gradidge**

(01737) 353981

### **POLICE**

The next Neighbourhood Beat meeting is on Thursday 27th March at 7.30 pm and as always will be held at the Banstead Junior school in the Horseshoe. For a meeting that is open to all to meet and discuss local policing matters, it is disappointing that so few make the effort to attend.

**Mike Sawyer**

(01737) 355454

## **BANSTEAD VILLAGE RESIDENT'S ASSOCIATION**

### **SHEEP GRAZING ON BANSTEAD DOWNS**

We have many beautiful areas of unspoilt countryside within easy reach of Banstead. One which most people speed past on their way down Sutton Lane without a second glance is Banstead Downs.

I have been involved in conservation work on the Downs for many years, principally in the area between the railway and Sutton Lane. Back in 1987 it became obvious to me that although the spread of scrub could be controlled by working parties, improving the quality of the remaining areas of open grassland needed a new approach. These open areas are host to a great variety of chalkland flowers which in turn are food plants to many species of butterflies including some that are increasingly rare like the Small Blue. I should stress here that "improving" means lowering the fertility - the reverse of what you want to do in your garden.

Grazing animals were the only practical solution and back in 1987 that meant sheep. Many at the time warned of vandalism and worse, but I am happy to say that the doom mongers proved wrong. Obviously the sheep needed to be fenced in and I had to find animals that could cope with the potentially harsh conditions. Another requirement was a band of volunteers to act as shepherds. The sheep came from a deer farmer in How Lane, Chipstead - they were Soays, a small, semi-wild, athletic, goat like breed who, I should add, were very intelligent and ideally suited to the task of eating grass and young scrub. The problem was they were very difficult to catch and humans were no match for their ability to outwit and outflank them - but that is another story. Volunteer shepherds came from all walks of life. I liked to tell people they ranged from joggers to jumbo jet pilots because that was a fact!

Initially there were 3 paddocks in the centre of the Downs in the area cultivated during the war. Over time the paddocks were enlarged and a 4th one created to the North closer to Belmont. The 4 areas are now grazed in rotation using Herdwick Sheep provided by the Old Surrey Downs Project. Vandalism has been restricted to

minor damage to the outer electric fence and if anything has got less with time. The only real problems occurred during the foot and mouth restrictions in 2000.

What has been achieved? To me the most obvious change has been the reduction in the height of the grasses. Early on the sheep disappeared behind tall grasses, but now the grass is much thinner and shorter and in turn the wild flowers that thrive in short grass are spreading. Look out for large areas of Kidney Vetch in June, and for Dropwort - a particularly graceful plant. More recently Greater Yellow Rattle, although locally quite common but very rare nationally, was brought in via the tyres of Land Rovers and is now spreading rapidly.

This is the 20th year of the project and the sheep (12) can be easily seen adjacent to Sutton Lane. Please go and see them - they will be there until the end of March - access is by 2 kissing gates.

If you would like to get more involved or to come along to regular working parties, please give me a phone and I will be only too happy to fill you in on the details.

**David Gradidge**

(01737) 353981

### **THE 3 R'S IN SURREY**

Surrey County Council has launched a campaign under this heading to draw attention to the need for more care when throwing our rubbish away. The message is that recycling on its own is not enough - we all need to act now to reduce the amount of waste we produce. The theme is Reduce - Reuse - Recycle.

At [www.surreywaste.info](http://www.surreywaste.info) they have published a survey of residents that reveals insufficient awareness of the need to reduce our everyday waste, or reuse everyday products. Apparently we in Surrey each year produce the equivalent of half a ton of rubbish for every adult and child, which is the average person's body weight every seven weeks!

More information from the Borough News, Surrey Matters, and the Helpshop.

**Mike Sawyer**

(01737) 355454

## **BANSTEAD VILLAGE RESIDENT'S ASSOCIATION**

### **BVRA WEB SITE**

Please visit our web site ([www.bvrabanstead.org.uk](http://www.bvrabanstead.org.uk)). The details on contents were in the last NewsSheet.

Since then we have added the results of the 2006 survey and a copy of the last news sheet.

The photo gallery has been extended, and additions made to useful local organisations. We await dates for some of the 2008 events and will post these in due course. See also the latest updates on the more significant planning applications.

**David Gradidge** (01737) 353981

### **FEET FIRST**

A new high quality toenail-cutting and basic footcare service called 'Feet First' has just been started by a partnership of Age Concern Banstead, Age Concern Surrey and Banstead Centre. It is located in the Libby Room at Banstead Centre and is provided by trained footcare staff to meet appropriate clinical quality standards. The service is for older people who do not qualify for treatment by the NHS.

"Feet First" is not free: each appointment will cost £13. On their first visit clients will also need to buy a nail-cutting kit for another £13 which they will retain and bring for all subsequent appointments. This is a personal kit to help avoid the spread of infections.

The service is available on Tuesdays only and appointments should be made in advance by telephoning Gladys on 01737 361383 at any time on any day. Gladys will look forward to hearing from new clients, but if the answer-phone is on please leave your name and phone number so that she can ring back.

### **NEWS FROM U3A, BANSTEAD**

1. Open meeting April 16th at Banstead Community Hall, 2.30 to 4.30 - non-members welcome. There will be a talk by David Cullum "a voyage down the Thames", and this will be followed by light refreshments. Entry + onsite parking FREE.

2. A new Drawing group has been started. Contact **Peter Andrews** (01737) 371926

3. A new reading/discussion Group - Topical Non-fiction has been started.

Contact **Cynthia Milligan** (01737) 812646

4. A Shakespeare for enjoyment Group has been started.

Contact **Mike Shaw** (01737) 812710

5. MAY 7<sup>th</sup>, 7.30 p.m. at BANSTEAD COMMUNITY HALL a two part programme of CLASSICAL INDIAN MUSIC & DANCE with a refreshment interval, also audience participation. Admission, incl refreshments £8. This event is being sponsored by BANSTEAD U3A as part of BANSTEAD FESTIVAL.

### **ROADS STEWARDS AND MEMBERSHIP**

At the time of writing subscriptions continue to roll in and with a bit of effort membership may well get past the 2100 barrier. I am pleased to say that although there have been retirements during the year, willing replacements have taken their place with little fuss. The only vacancy at the moment is for the East section of Lambert Road - any volunteers? For the coming year I would like to target Diceland Road. This is one of the few larger roads where we are hardly represented. Of the newer properties, Holmewood House on the Brighton Road is another on the list - but only for someone who is resident.

**David Gradidge** (01737) 353981

### **AND FINALLY....**

As Roger Collins mentioned in his introduction, our AGM is on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> May, and our speaker will be from the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England. Our Green Belt is coming under increasing pressure for development both directly from developers and indirectly from the various changes to the planning safeguards now being proposed by the government. This is a very important issue and we urge you to come if you can!

**Mike Sawyer** (01737) 355454