

BVRA newsheet



FROM THE BANSTEAD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION – TAKING ACTION TO SUPPORT OUR VILLAGE

Vol. 37/ 1 - Winter 2021

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www.Banstead-BVRA.org

REMEMBRANCE SERVICE 2020 by Mike Sawyer, Banstead Royal British Legion (RBL)

Although the Parade had to be cancelled this year we held a short service, led by the Reverend Ian Whitley for the 5 Churches.

Despite the circumstances, we were able to lay over 20 wreaths with due ceremony. About 50 people turned up this year under the protection of four policemen, and social distancing was also properly observed. Anyone interested can see the ceremony at: <https://youtu.be/dmQ7NRdsyll>

We were astonished at the response from councillors, residents' associations, local individuals and organisations who, between them, put up around 700 of the large poppies on lampposts, in shops and in other displays. Astonishing and so many thanks to you all!

As a result of this "awareness" campaign (much of it along the A217), and the strong support given by Surrey RBL, we have high hopes that we will have been able to make a modest collection for the Poppy Appeal. We were very limited in the number of collection sites (and the duration as lock-down came after only a few days) so we know this year's appeal will result in only a small proportion of the usual amount.

Despite these difficulties, we had huge support from within the community north of the M25, and this picture reflects the positive approach taken by so many. Thank you to you all.

Next year will be a different story, though, so please watch out for news of the Royal British Legions' one hundredth anniversary events!



WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR by David Talbot

Welcome to our winter newsheet. The virus has affected all our lives and I suspect will continue to do so for some months to come although, at least, there seems to be hope for the vaccine.

I've tried to include a flavour of some of our village's key events such as the Royal British Legion remembrance day parade (see article on the front page), and the Christmas Community event (see article on the centre page), even though these were restricted due to the virus.

My thanks to everyone on the committee and all our contributors.

I hope that you all enjoyed the Christmas break, and I wish you all a, slightly belated, happy and prosperous New Year.

We aim to represent the whole village, but of course, it's much easier if you are a member. For more details please check out our website (www.banstead-bvra.org) and our newsheet - if you are not already a member of our organisation please join us (subscription just £3.00 per year). Our email address is on the front page and we would love to hear from you.



BURGLARY ADVICE by PC Katie Jarrett (Surrey Police)

Burglary prevention advice from your local Safer Neighbourhood Team led by Detective Sergeant Vinny Wagjiani, PC Neil Ware, PC Katie Jarrett and Police Community Support officers Chris Wright, Tom Smythe, Chloe Holland - Skinner and Chris Dell are the dedicated Officers looking after your neighbourhood.

In partnership we tackle a whole host of Neighbourhood Issues that supports our force commitments: - Protecting our communities, Pursuing offenders and Preventing crime.

Our collaborated problem-solving approach to minimise burglaries to your area is based on research our team has completed and the fact that it is an affluent area we have provided some useful pieces of prevention advice to support you in getting your homes safer.

Here's what we recommend you do before you go out:

- close and lock all your doors and windows, even if you're only going out for a few minutes
- double-lock any door
- make sure that any valuables are out of sight
- keep handbags away from the letterbox or cat flap and hide all keys including car keys, as a thief could hook keys or valuables through even a small opening
- never leave car documents or ID in obvious places such as kitchens or hallways
- in the evening, shut the curtains and leave lights on
- if you're out all day, then it's advisable to use a timer device to automatically turn lights and a radio on at night
- set your burglar alarm
- make sure the side gate is locked
- lock your shed or garage
- lock your bike inside a secure shed or garage, to a robust fitting bolted to the ground or wall, like a ground anchor

If you would like to contact the local Neighbourhood team regarding any other issues please use the following: www.surrey.police.uk or Facebook: Reigate and Banstead Beat (Surrey Police) or Twitter: @ReigateBeat

PLANNING MATTERS by **Catalina Vassallo-Bonner**

As a result of the Covid-19 crisis, the Planning Inspectorate has built up a backlog of appeals which are taking far longer than usual to resolve. One of these is the Wellesford Close appeal which has now been withdrawn by the developer. The reason for this happening was that the variation of the existing S106 agreement between the council, landowner and a potential buyer to build on the Wellesford Close site within a given time scale has expired. The land is now on the market.

Another appeal against the refusal to allow the building of 8 flats at 39 Garratts Lane was duly forwarded to the Inspectors. Before this was resolved, a further application for six flats was submitted, refused and sent to appeal. This second appeal was then cancelled as the Inspector has allowed the building of the eight flats.

The Priory demolition to rebuild as residential flats for independent living was supposed to have started some weeks ago. Whether or not the fact that McCarthy & Stone is looking at a possible sale of the business is a contributing factor to the delay I do not know.

You will be pleased to know that the proposed 5G phone mast proposed for Banstead High Street was refused by the council. The council stated “the proposed mast and cabinets would fail to comply

with the APPROPRIATE policy requirements. The 20.0m tall mast BEING grossly out of scale with the heights of surrounding buildings and trees. The cabinets are also much larger than a traditional or usual size of telecoms cabinet being 1.7m (max.) tall with a combined width of 3.2m approx., and the base of the mast would be 1.5m tall and 2.0m wide. Fundamentally, the middle of the High Street location is inappropriate for an installation of this nature. Visually, the grossly out of scale proportions, the utilitarian nature of the mast and cabinets and their incongruity with the traditional architecture of Banstead Village, and their location in the middle of the High Street, would amount to an eyesore. Far from enhancing the public realm the proposed development would result in an unacceptable degradation of a green, open space which serves to enhance the visual amenity.”

The government changes to planning law are now in force and planning is coming to grips with changes to the various ‘use classes’ which now give greater freedom of what to do with empty shops and offices.

We have the usual applications to look at and comment on. One very recent one referred to the conversion of a utility room into a ‘dirty kitchen’. It seems the latest in interiors involve two kitchens, one tucked away, a dirty kitchen where the work is done and one which is only for show.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION by **David Gradidge**

All seems quiet locally, not surprisingly as Local Government has many more pressing issues. However, further afield, Somerset, Cumbria and North Yorkshire have been given an initial go ahead. It is a costly business.



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BANSTEAD WILDLIFE FIELD - SENSORY BEDS by Brian Ransom

From scrub to cared for.. Following on from clearing all the weeds, brambles and unwanted grasses in



September, our small team of volunteers have now replanted all the sensory beds with new planting. We have tried to follow the original aim of the 'Sensory' theme by only using plants which are tactile, fragrant or architectural in some way and we hope that visitors to the beds agree with the planting choices. All the planting was funded by the BVRA plus some plant donations from the volunteers themselves.

Repair of the sensory bed woodwork still awaits a decision from the R&BBC Greenspaces management team, so that job will now slip into next year's work list along with renovation of the pathways. Hopefully Greenspaces team members will apply weed killer to the encroaching grass and the volunteers will then clear the debris. This will bring the path back to its full width so wheelchair and pushchair users once again have a safe access to the field.

Half of the wildlife field grass area has now been cut and the clippings removed by the Greenspaces team. This needs to be done on a two-year cycle so that the field remains as chalk downland and carries on providing us with the plant species and associated wildlife native to that. If it's not then we will lose those chalk downland plants and insects unique to that habitat such as cowslips and common rock rose and the Adonis Blue



butterfly. Given the present budget uncertainty, hopefully there will still be a Greenspaces team in 2021 who will be able to cut and collect the grass on the other half of the field next year. My thanks go to all those volunteers who responded so enthusiastically to my call for helpers, we have made a big difference in a short time to a neglected corner of Banstead and we shall carry on next year.

TREES by Cliff Glanfield

Following the grinding out of a number of stumps in 2020, we have been testing Surrey County Council's revised tree-planting policy. It is slightly less bureaucratic and (in theory) quicker than the previous policy, which meant you have to make an application a year in advance and only use the council's contractors.

We have run a trial by making an application to plant five trees near to some of the stumps that we ground out. We have only been successful in obtaining permission from the highways team for three of these and await final permission and licence from the arboriculturalist team. As we go to press, we do not yet know whether we will be able to plant in early December 2020, or wait until autumn 2021.

The reason two of the trees were refused permission relates to the proximity of water pipes. We have only just been made aware that utility companies have actual or implied easements up to 3m from the utility pipework in the ground. Effectively this means if SCC permit planting within 3m and the tree damages the water main, the water company could claim damages from SCC. This has apparently happened in a few cases, so SCC tend to err on the safe side. If there are existing trees within 3m of the utility pipework they can stay, but if they die or become dangerous, replanting will not be permitted.

Unfortunately, given that utility pipework often runs down one or other side of most urban streets and usually in the verge if there is one, this policy will mean gradual loss of trees from our grass verges in our towns and villages, as they cannot be replaced if there are utilities near. We will be challenging this policy and exploring whether there are any shallow rooted species that may be permitted.

CHRISTMAS EVENT by Nadean Moses (Councillor and event organiser) and Ed Humphries

Banstead Sparkles - Thursday 28 November 2019 saw thousands of people flock to Banstead High Street for the annual Banstead Christmas Community Event between 5pm - 8pm.



This year it's been very different. Concerns have centred on how to achieve social distancing at the event. So much effort is put into the event helped by businesses groups and charities so it's of great sadness to have had to cancel this year's



Christmas community event. I would like to thank the committee for their support in making this very difficult decision. The local businesses support the Christmas event first set up by the Banstead Business Guild, four years ago. Last year was my first big event so with a big thank you to Michelle Cass and Sarah Winyard and all those who helped to make it a big success.

We have so many fantastic shops & family run businesses. I am sure this Christmas and New Year you will find some amazing gifts up and down the high street, so please support them by shopping local. Also please check their social media and websites if shopping on-line, and even sign up for their newsletters to find out more. It's been a tough year for all, let's hope the 2021 Banstead Christmas event will see the return of the popular entertainment by Woodmanstern Primary School Choir, Show Choir, Cada Star, West End Stage Stars, Banjos plus many



more, that will help Banstead sparkle one again. We are pleased that the Christmas lights have been added to this year from local funding and a grant from Reigate & Banstead Borough Council. And again its great to see the tree at



the top of the high Street from The Rotary Club,

A big thank you for your hard work. Banstead Christmas community event 2021 is going to sparkle again.

If you are a local business or resident that would like to get involved in helping with the Banstead Christmas community event, or others events for next year, please get in touch - our email is info@bansteadbusinessguild.co.uk. Event organiser Nadeanmoses2018@gmail.com

WINKWORTH WOODLAND COMMUNITY PROJECT by Brian Ransom

Our work has carried on since the first lockdown was lifted only to be curtailed again with the second national lockdown. Only seasonal work was tackled with clearing the wildflower debris and fallen boughs after the high winds we had in September and October, plus of course the ever necessary litter picking!

So it's big thanks to Matthew, as he has frequently supplied wood chippings to other voluntary groups around the village such as BVIB and Lambert Road allotments for their various projects. Well done Matt.

BANSTEAD RAILWAY STATION by Gerald Bridge (co-opted retired member)

It was the intention for a meeting to be held between the parties in mid-autumn 2020 at which relevant matters including time tabling to do with the embankment would be discussed. Due to the pandemic, this meeting was delayed. At the beginning of December 2020 this meeting took place. Network Rail are finalising the design and temporary works arrangements with their contractor and have rescheduled the projected work to start in March 2021. Meanwhile, they are and will continue to monitor the condition of the embankment during the winter and until the works are initiated.

With regard to the GTR/Southern Railway Passenger Benefit Fund, from which Banstead was allocated £30,000 to provide tangible benefits for passengers, due to the pandemic the original programme got delayed. However, it is, in early December pleasing to report some works are in progress, some are on order and quotations for the other works are being reviewed. The indications are that all the works included in the submission made by the BVRA will be carried out.

RAISING MONEY FOR BANSTEAD VILLAGE IN BLOOM By Kerry Garner (BViB)

To try and raise some much-needed funds, Banstead Village in Bloom has produced a pack of 10 blank greetings cards with envelopes. They show various images of flowers grown in the High Street and are great for sending notes of thanks and writing to friends. The packs are handmade, cost £7 and can be purchased from Edibles Café.

Please help support us by buying a pack. Donations can also be made by online banking – Account Number 33448730, Sort Code 091029. Thank you for your support.



QUIZ NIGHT organised by Banstead Rotary Club by Jane Illingworth (Rotary)

On Tuesday 8th September 2020, over two dozen enthusiastic quizzers gathered on Zoom, for a special online Quiz Night organised by Banstead Rotary Club in aid of the Epsom & Ewell Foodbank.

After five challenging rounds of ten questions each, on subjects ranging from 'General Knowledge' and 'Current Affairs' to 'Park & Ride' and 'Name The Year', together with two special 'Picture' and 'Music' rounds, 'Fifty Shades of Grey Matter', emerged triumphant out of the 14 teams taking part, with a very impressive score of 61.5 points out of a possible 70, rather soundly beating 'The Flamingos' and 'Rouse House' into second and third place, with 49.5 and 46.5 points respectively. 'Mulfful' picked up the booby prize for coming last, albeit with a still very respectable score of 23 points. Altogether, a total of almost £300 was raised for Epsom & Ewell Foodbank, to help support their vital work, especially during the current Coronavirus pandemic.

For further information about Epsom & Ewell Foodbank, please visit www.epsomewell.foodbank.org.uk. For further information about Banstead Rotary Club, please visit www.bansteadrotary.com.

For further information, please contact Simon Edmands on simon.edmands@markallengroup.com.



ROAD STEWARDS by **David Gradidge**

Most of the vacancies have been filled, but I am still looking for one in Barnfield / Flint Close.

I know there are problems collecting subscriptions. Some road stewards and using envelopes and asking residents to pop the cash back through the letterbox. But is cash going out of style?

LADY NEVILLE CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND by **Marion Hayns (BViB)**

Having achieved our Gold RHS award last year we turned our attention to our last and greatest challenge – the upgrade and refurbishment of the Lady Neville Recreation Ground including the children's play area. We were emboldened in this by the fact that for the last 3 years the state of the park has been heavily criticised by the RHS judges who commented on the lack of investment and poor maintenance in particular. We know that many of you agree with us citing the recent improvements which have been carried out in many other parks in the Borough.



Encouraged by the Leader of the Council Mark Brunt to whom we voiced our complaints, we sought the support of the local schools in the first instance and as a result a young couple, Paul and Cate Searle to whom we are all hugely indebted, came forward to spearhead the campaign. Cate has spent hours garnering the views of both young and the not so young users and visitors to the park. Together with her husband she has produced a comprehensive PowerPoint Presentation outlining the suggestions for improvements to both the general layout of the park area to address safety issues, the provision of new equipment, the addition of more seating (a widely held concern), improvements to the soft landscaping to open up the vista and for the relocation and addition of more pathways to soften the whole ambience.

Councillor Brunt has asked Nadean Moses, our newest and enthusiastic local councillor to lead on these proposals and at the time of writing we are hopeful that discussions will soon commence between she and the committee in charge of Reigate & Banstead Parks and Green Spaces with a view to works beginning next year. In the meantime, for those interested, a copy of these suggestions together with ideas for the new layout can be viewed at Pistachios in the Park during opening hours.

USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

BVRA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

David Talbot - Chairman

David Gradidge – Treasurer, Transport and Infrastructure

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Martin Matt - Secretary (interim)

Catalina Vassallo-Bonner – Planning

Cliff Glanfield - Data Records Manager

Barbara Birch, Ben Martin, Brian Ransom, Melanie Ramsay and Richard Heath.

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INFRASTRUCTURE - THE HIGH STREET by David Gradidge

Searching the papers from the Surrey CC/Reigate & Banstead Local Committee held by Zoom in 2nd November, there is a proposal, hidden away under parking review, proposing an "assisted crossing" outside Tesco. The other part of this review has the 2 taxi ranks being converted into a "loading bay". The subsequent debate then said that the proposals would have to go to a "statutory consultation".

Chatting to our Committee we decided that this proposal is ill thought out. The only thing we agree on is the abolition of the taxi ranks. Yes – you do see taxis, but they are shopping.

1. We do not know what an assisted crossing is. There is a controlled crossing close by outside Waitrose.
2. What is the loading bay for? Waitrose unload on their premises and Tesco does just outside on the double yellow lines – not ideal but they have no alternative. Delivery trucks do park on the taxi rank awaiting a space. and they then inhibit visibility when exiting Waitrose
3. So we will be objecting to this proposal very soon. Despite numerous enquiries, as of 14th December, we still have no idea what type of crossing is proposed.

There is a need for another crossing outside the Church Institute or Victoria Chemist. There is also a need for more disabled spaces - we lost two when the fire engine arrived.

THAT SINKING FEELING by Cllr Peter Harp Residents' Association councillor, Nork Ward

From an original article written for the previous edition..

You cannot have failed to notice the disruption to the A217 as, yet again, the road has collapsed at Burgh Heath outside St. Mary's Church. If we were in London it would be reasonable to assume the cause might be a broken sewer or water main but in Banstead that is relatively unlikely. On our geology, road collapses are much more likely to be due to natural sinkholes or dolines. From about Banstead High Street southwards (uphill) the Chalk has cover deposits of mainly Clay-with-flints, but sometimes Thanet Sand or Headley Heath Beds. The Clay-with-flints is the clay and flints derived from erosion of the Wealden Dome (before the Weald formed) together with various gravels and sands of maritime, estuarine and fluvial origin and some clay within the eroded Chalk itself, so incredibly complicated that the Clay-with-flints here has been described as a mélange of deposits varying yard to yard with interdigitating braided deposits of clays, sands and gravels.

Anyway, the crucial point is that these covering deposits are acidic (which is why we have rhododendrons on the south of the High Street but not the north), and as rainwater leaches through them it becomes even more acid until it meets the underlying alkaline Chalk, which it then dissolves. The process continues and the clay repeatedly collapses so, often, these features can have filled with clay from soil creep yet the Chalk profile underneath might be of a huge clay-filled funnel. In Lower Kingswood I directed a team from the University of Oxford and we geophysically surveyed an area - essentially flat at ground-level, but revealing these hidden dolines filled with clay as being up to 16m deep. On another occasion, this time for Surrey County Council, I led a team surveying all of Banstead and Walton Heaths and we recorded many dolines (these ones are visible features often mistaken as bomb craters). Those on Walton Heath were incorporated into the layout of the golf course and are usually about 15m diameter and 2m deep; many of those on Banstead Heath were filled when it was ploughed.

In recent weeks, because of the dry summer followed by heavy rain, several sinkholes opened up around Banstead, such as one outside the library. The dissolved Chalk is transported away underground very rapidly through small, natural fissures or "pipes". From an engineering standpoint it's difficult to know what to do, these features are sometimes hundreds of thousands of years old and will just carry on getting bigger, although installing drains to direct water away from, rather than into, these features will obviously slow the rate of solution of the Chalk.

FUTURE EVENTS: Please see our website (address on front cover) for details.