

BVRA newsheet

from the **Banstead Village Residents' Association**

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www.bansteadvillage.org.uk

Chairman's Introduction

The timing of this NewsSheet is always a tad awkward as it is too late to wish you a Happy Christmas, but I hope it went well for everyone. So we are in a brand new year and I wish you all a successful 2014.

We may even see, at last, a Core Strategy in place as the Examination in Public (EIP) should have put the last pieces of the jigsaw in place for Reigate & Banstead Borough Council to have their Core Strategy adopted. It is important as without it they can neither establish a Local Development Framework nor deal securely with planning issues. Mike Sawyer attended the EIP in early December and his article below will give you the current position.

The local NHS issues remain a rolling development with as yet no firm outcome. However it has recently been reported that, following the clear result of the survey of GP practices as to the importance of maintaining a full range of services at Epsom Hospital, it does seem that both A&E and Maternity services will continue at Epsom for the foreseeable future. This does not solve the financial problem for Epsom, and the BSBV review of south west London hospitals appears to be stalled with Epsom removed from their brief. As residents we shall still depend on St George's for the treatment of major trauma but Epsom will continue to provide rather more than 'urgent care' facilities closer to home than the four London hospitals.

In parallel with the unfolding story of the secondary care sector is the establishment of a Surrey Downs Referral Support Service (SDRSS), to replace the now defunct EDICS. The Longcroft Clinic has joined this new service and will monitor closely whether it meets patients' requirements in regard to ensuring access to the most appropriate sources for secondary treatment, whether in hospital or other practices with specialist facilities. This is all part of the government's initiative to route the commissioning of treatment through GP practices rather than a centralised Surrey bureaucracy. As part of the Surrey Downs Commissioning Group, which represents a good third of the Surrey population, we shall continue to press for improvements to our local Longcroft Clinic and you should aim to complete their questionnaire, which will be issued in January and available at the surgery. The completed survey will assist them to improve their services to us.

To close on a happy note, both the Christmas lights have been turned on again this year (although funding remains difficult) and two new trees have been planted to replace the dead ones at the Harbourfield Road/High Street junction. Waitrose has offered kindly to pay for the cost of these flowering cherries, which we hope to see flowering profusely in Spring – may it come quickly! (And yes, we have noticed that another cherry has fallen and are trying to get funds to replace it, as well!)

Roger Collins – (01737 358384)

Midge Reeves

We regret that we have to report the death of Midge Reeves early in December, after a short illness. Midge served for over 15 years on our Executive Committee and indeed only resigned from it in 2012. She also belonged to many other voluntary activities in Banstead and had so many friends in the village, as the moving funeral at Randalls Park showed – standing room only for many there. Her help as one of our Co-ordinators of Road Stewards will be sorely missed, as will her unfailingly sensible contributions to the Executive Committee. Our sympathies go to her husband Bob Reeves at this most difficult time.

Midge will be remembered.

AGM

A reminder to all our residents that our AGM will be held on Wednesday 28th May at 8 pm in the Church Institute. Our guest speaker is the Police & Crime Commissioner Kevin Hurley. He has now been in office for some time and will be able to brief us on progress with the direction that he intends to take policing strategy. I do hope we can get a good turnout to this important meeting.

Roger Collins – (01737 358384)

NEW FIRE STATION

For several years there have been rumours of a new fire station to be sited in Banstead.

A year ago we, together with half a dozen other interested people, participated in a Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) consultation about the reorganisation of Surrey Fire Service provision. This covered the whole county, but at a local (Reigate and Banstead) level it entails the re-location of fire engines. In part this was necessitated by the decision of neighbouring fire services to relocate the Horley station, which gave partial cover to the south and south east of our borough, and to rebuild the Purley station which gave partial support to the north-east of the borough.

Following this, a number of operational changes were decided on, including moving to single engine sites, with one engine to be relocated from Epsom to Burgh Heath. We supported this on the basis that our area, and the Chipstead and other neighbouring areas, would receive shorter travel times, both for the first appliance and - where necessary - a back-up appliance. The operational requirement was for a site with direct, or nearly direct, access to either the A 217 or A 240 - hence the Burgh Heath target area.

More recently, and with a minimum of publicity, SFRS launched a new, 6 week, consultation - this time solely on the location of the Burgh Heath (now Banstead High Street) site. Again, the only public consultation meeting was attended by a statistically insignificant turnout - about 10 members of the public.

Perhaps this was unsurprising as the venue was Ewell village, not Banstead, even though the issue for discussion was solely the suitability of a site in

Banstead High Street (widely reported to be the Police Station, currently up for sale)!

No information was available about other potential sites or the reasons for the delay in identifying a new site, let alone the disregard of the previous A217/A240 accessibility requirement.

There is apparent urgency in the need to find a suitable site, but all the reasons for urgency - the impending closure of the Purley and Horley stations - have been known for the last two years or so.

While we would not wish to stand in the way of a vital project we have expressed our dismay at the location chosen - for a number of reasons, including the proper planning of the area. Most importantly, however, we think this use sits most unhappily in a congested High Street and would have an adverse impact on the community, in particular on the 200 or so people living there. Additionally, although traffic congestion can be a minor difficulty at the "business end" of an emergency call-out, it does not make sense to encounter it every time at the beginning of a trip, especially when you consider the narrow and congested two-way roads leading from the High Street (Garratts Lane, Bolters Lane, Sutton Lane, Winkworth Road....).

Unfortunately, the lack of publicity and short timescale means that very few of those directly affected have been given the opportunity to comment on this proposal, although some of you may have seen the on-line form.

So where are we? We and other RAs have made some constructive suggestions as to more suitable locations, but if, as we are told, the need for a solution is so pressing, we may be given no alternative than a less than ideal temporary siting, possibly even at the Police Station (if arrangements can be made).

SFRS seem happy that they have consulted and intend to take a decision shortly - the consultation ends on January 27th.

This is less than ideal and we have asked for a Banstead public consultation meeting. We will continue to press for a more satisfactory outcome.

Mike Sawyer (01737) 355454

NHS

1. The Longcroft Clinic

The plans of the Longcroft Clinic have changed a little. Instead of shoehorning in three additional consulting rooms, which would have been small and not too private, the Clinic will utilise the space released by moving their records into the outbuilding at the back of the main clinic, by reorganising the waiting room and reception area into a more efficient layout. With the settling in of the new computer and on-line booking system for appointments this should greatly improve the efficient handling of patients' needs, within the constraints of the less than perfect building. There are also plans to create a new, tailor-made facility at a new location in Banstead, but this will of necessity be a much longer term initiative. Finally, there is the impending establishment of the Surrey Downs Referral Support Service mentioned in the chairman's Introduction above. These developments were all reported to the Patient Participation Group which met in December and is increasingly providing a channel of communication for patients to the surgery.

2. The Longcroft Clinic Lectures

The first of these lectures was held on 16 December 2013 at the United Reformed Church in Woodmansterne Lane, Banstead.

Dr Gallagher, who is a renal specialist at St George's Hospital, Tooting, spoke on managing high blood pressure. The lecture lasted half an hour and was extremely informative. Dr Gallagher was very easy to listen to and did not confuse the audience with complex medical terminology. During the lecture he explained the differences between systolic and diastolic and exactly how the system worked, which was not only very interesting, but made some very pertinent points which I am sure gave many in the audience information of which they were not currently aware. Examples of how to manage diet were given - and the importance of exercise.

Following the lecture questions from the audience were encouraged. The importance of reducing salt in food, looking at labels to see the content of fat

and sugar, both of which can be high in products bought from supermarkets, were discussed.

The Longcroft Clinic would like to know if patients have any other areas in which further lectures would be helpful. The lectures are open to anyone who would like to attend, not only patients at the surgery.

3. BSBV update

Hopefully this is the last report concerning the Better Services Better Value (BSBV) project in relation to Epsom Hospital.

Some of you will have been aware of the almost herculean efforts made by Chris Grayling, MP for Epsom, ever since it was announced that Epsom would be joining St Helier as part of the BSBV scheme the GPs in South West London had initiated, with the backing of St George's, Croydon University, Kingston and St Helier Hospitals. Before Epsom came into the equation, caused by the collapse of the proposed merger between Epsom and St Peter's Chertsey, the BSBV board had more or less decided which hospitals should have full A&E and trauma services, which should have full maternity and which hospitals should have nurse led maternity and walk in emergency clinics. Adding Epsom to the equation, which was totally London biased, still meant that the weight of decision would be in London's favour and Epsom would have been an afterthought.

This is where Chris Grayling came into his own. As the only MP of the four MPs whose constituencies covers the area of the Surrey Downs Clinical Commissioning Group (SDCCG), Epsom Hospital is totally in his constituency. Public meetings were held and he was in constant communication with the SDCCG lobbying on behalf of his constituents and Epsom Hospital. He encouraged people to attend a SDCCG board meeting when a vote was supposed to be taken as to whether SDCCG would opt in or out of BSBV only to find the vote was deferred.

During the Parliamentary summer recess he and the other three local MPs Crispin Blunt (Reigate), Dominic Raab (Esher & Walton) and Sir Paul Beresford (Mole Valley) organised a secret ballot among the GPs of the SDCCG to find their views on

the removal of A&E, Maternity and Children's services from Epsom. This was followed by a second ballot among the GPs, facilitated by the four MPs. Sir Paul's constituency proved the overseeing and scrutiny of the votes, and the overwhelming result was a decision by the SDCCG to withdraw from BSBV.

This has raised an interesting situation. Epsom and St Helier remain a Trust with one foot in London and the other in Surrey. The SDCCG under its chairwoman, Dr Claire Fuller, is focussing on driving up clinical standards at Epsom through more integrated care, community services and monitoring at primary care level. The aim, where possible, is to keep people out of hospital. For patients who would have had a long journey to reach one of the BSBV hospitals for treatment, being able to attend clinics at Epsom is important. Being able to ask to receive treatment at Epsom is important. It means money goes into the hospital from the SDCCG on behalf of its patients. This should help Epsom become more viable than before.

4. Sutton hospital update

As we all know Sutton Hospital is a part of the Epsom St Helier Trust. Its main function is to provide outpatient clinics, thus lightening the load of the other two main hospitals in the Trust.

Just before Christmas the Trust Board and Sutton Clinical Commissioning Group agreed to transfer some of the Sutton clinics to either Epsom or St Helier. In doing this it is envisaged that the majority of patients would have no further to travel than they do already. By moving clinics to Epsom and St Helier a number of patients will have all their appointments in one place instead of across more than one site. The facilities at Epsom and St Helier have been upgraded and in the long term there should be savings for the Trust.

Those clinics on the move are: Urology (treatment of urinary tract conditions) and some eye clinics will transfer to Epsom and the eye unit hub, casualty and general outpatient clinics will transfer to St Helier.

Blood tests, Pain management and Chronic Fatigue clinics will remain at Sutton.

It is planned that the moves will happen in the six month period from February to August 2014.

Catalina Vassallo-Bonner (01737) 357882

PLANNING

1. Policy

Following the Examination In Public last month the Inspector's report is expected at the end of January.

We are hopeful that this will be a positive acceptance of the various policies the council has submitted, and hope there will be no unexpected problems, although we are still strongly critical of one local issue - that of the scale of development the council is committing itself to achieving in the Banstead Village centre. I have reported on this before - suffice it to say we see no sense in setting a target of "at least" 2,500 sq metres of additional shopping with no upper limit, or even sufficient justification for that level! We argued this point again in December, but can only await the Inspector's decision.

2. Local matters

The next stages, following the (hopefully) adopted Core Strategy, will be to contribute to the borough's review of Green Belt boundaries and Urban Open Land. We will be submitting our views shortly, with an emphasis on retaining and enhancing our green separation between communities. A further study is underway to see if we are to recommend the creation of Residential Areas of Special Character (RASCs) in the village area. RASCs are lower in the hierarchy of status than conservation areas, but can go some way to influencing the nature and scale of development once (if) adopted by the council.

3. Planning Applications:

If you wish to see the weekly list of planning applications, decisions and appeals, you can do so at: <http://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/>

By following the "planning search" link you can also even comment on-line on individual applications that may affect you. For more details of how to do this see my brief guide on our web site at <http://www.bansteadbvra.org.uk/>

Mike Sawyer (01737) 355454

INFRASTRUCTURE

We have received numerous comments and complaints about the persistent flooding in and around the village. No one could fail to have been inconvenienced over the last few weeks.

Pot holes have also multiplied at an alarming rate and this is a direct consequence of the persistent rain and freezing conditions.

For the record, we received over twice the average rainfall in December and much of that fell in the second half of the month with the worst event on December 23rd/24th. It was the wettest December since 1959. December 2012 was very wet as well.

I will deal with just 2 of the major problem areas now.

Sutton Lane

At its worst, the dip in Sutton Lane halfway across the Downs has been flooded bank to bank for more than 70yds. Some cars turn back not willing to risk it, whilst others going north have to wait for traffic coming the other way. Water is only dispersed by larger vehicles splashing it over the banks on either side thereby making it incredibly hazardous for the many pedestrians who use the footpath. There are no flood warning signs making it even more dangerous - especially at night.

As a long term resident, I can safely say that it is the worst I have known it in 40 years – even worse than last year.

Drainage on this section of Sutton Lane is by a series of gullies that lead to ditches. The gullies silt up very quickly, that is if they are even cleared out in the first place, and the ditches have not been attended to for many years, hence the water collects at the lowest point.

The solution is therefore quite clear and not that expensive given the potentially dangerous situation. Clean out the gullies and dig out the ditches.

Surrey C C is well aware of the problem but nothing has been done.

Garratts Lane

Most people will be well aware of the very long standing flooding at the junction with Bolters Lane. Bad for motorists, but much worse for pedestrians.

This is not just a simple problem of gullies blocked

by leaves. Many who have driven through the flood in recent days will have seen water fountaining from a manhole cover and also the up-welling from a gully close to Colcokes Road. An underground stream originating from the area of the historic Garratts Hall is well known. Old photographs clearly show ponds in the grounds of the Hall.

The inability of the drainage system to cope is not confined to the junction. Excess water finds its way down Holly Lane, upwelling in various places, and then causes edge erosion and flooding further down.

Surrey C C has offered various explanations which BVRA find very difficult to accept.

It is understood that any solution is now in the hands of a “specialist team” but as they have a county wide remit the timing on any technical solution could take months.

In the meantime BVRA proposes to petition the Reigate & Banstead local committee (a joint meeting of R&B and Surrey Councillors) in early March. We will press for an INDEPENDENT survey of the area. There is a precedent for this as the local Epsom & Ewell committee commissioned a survey from W S Atkins regarding persistent flooding on Tattenham Corner Road close to the grandstands by the racecourse. Initial reports suggest that the solution there could be “prohibitively expensive” (ie £150,000 +) to solve a drainage problem that seems to be on a much smaller scale than ours.

Don't expect a quick solution. It will be very expensive but it needs to be done.

David Gradidge (01737) 353981

POLICE UPDATE

Last autumn saw the arrival in Banstead of Sgt Jason Woods, who has transferred from Mole Valley, and PC Carmen Lambert Singer. They both came to the November Committee meeting in order to introduce themselves.

We have a list of the more nefarious activities that happen in Banstead sent to the committee every month, which is helpful and which we try and share with you at every NewsSheet. Between September and November (inclusive) there were a handful of burglaries and some damage to parked cars. There

was some shoplifting the High Street and one shop was targeted by the driver of a 4x4 that reversed up to the entrance to the shop and tried to remove the shutters from the front of the shop. The attempt to then rob the store was foiled as the burglar alarm was set off. Catalytic converters were stolen from two cars and the police urge everyone to register the number of the catalytic converter of their car with them.

A new Shop Watch system is being trialled in the High Street and the police team for Banstead is prepared to spend time looking at CCTV photos to identify the villains.

There is currently no further news about the sale of the Police Station. The local team aim to move into the Horseshoe, but there is no date as yet.

Finally, a woman driver was followed into Waitrose car park by another car and after she had parked the driver of the car following her told her she had a puncture. She got out of her car to see for herself and her handbag was stolen.

Catalina Vassallo-Bonner (01737) 357882

PARKING CHARGES

The charges in the central car park, Banstead High Street, are set to increase by 5 or 10p (in common with those in other borough car parks), partly because newly installed machines do not accept the new 5p coins.

The new tariffs, which will see charges rounded up to the nearest 10p, are due to be introduced at the end of January. Details are on the council's website which says that parking charges will now rise by 5p or 10p to between 40p for 20 minutes and £4.60 for 10 hours.

Mike Sawyer (01737) 355454

LOCAL GROUPS

Banstead Area U3A

We understand that the Banstead area University of the Third Age is keen both to get new members and to publicise its programme of open meetings. We shall put a list of meetings on our website and the dates of the next three lectures open to non-members are given below.

These are held in the Community Hall, Park Road SM7 3AJ, except for the February lecture which will be held at St Mark's Church Hall, Great Tattenhams KT18 5RD; meetings start promptly at 2.30 pm.

Thursday 27th February: Peter Thompson - You, the Jury: Peter Thompson's experiences at the Bar during 27 years as a barrister and solicitor - tickets £2 for non-members

Wednesday 5th March: Laurie Cooke - Lasting Power of Attorney and Later Life Care Planning: managing financial and future care needs - tickets £2 for non-members

Wednesday 7th May: Margaret Watson - Harp concert: this is part of the Banstead Arts Festival and Margaret Watson will both demonstrate her several harps and give a performance with audience participation - tickets at £12 per person.

Members of U3A can get more information from their Winter 2013 Newsletter or contact Gill Ross by email: gandjross@talktalk.net

Banstead Recorded Music Society

Another Banstead Arts Festival event will be held on Thursday May 15th at the United Reform Church. As with all Banstead Recorded Music Society evenings, which are held (usually in Banstead Library) on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays in the month (except in August), there will be a programme of recorded music presented by a local resident. On May 15th, we will begin at 8.00 prompt and run until 10 pm, with a short interval for refreshments; the presenter will be Derek Iley of Epsom RMS who will talk on Myths in Music : how composers have dealt with myths of the Near East, Greece, Rome and Northern Europe. Derek presents an excellent music programme and the URC is a friendly venue with good acoustics. Tickets will cost £5 each from the Ibis bookshop, or at the door on the day.

Banstead Community Hall

The Hall is located in Park Road, Banstead. It has a large Hall and two meeting rooms, together licensed for up to 250 people. Much of the capacity is taken up with regular weekly groups covering such activities as Line Dancing, Badminton, Yoga, Dancing Classes for children, Indoor Bowls, Fitness classes, a

young children's Playgroup, WEA and U3A classes and Bridge. Less regular events include the Banstead Horticultural Society shows, the Art Group show, The Arts Festival Society events, NADFAS lectures and many others. Why not get involved? Contact details for these activities are posted in the Hall foyer. Anyone wishing to book the Hall should contact Joanne Smith on 01737 360568 or josmithbca@hotmail.co.uk

Banstead History Centre

The Imperial War Museum has asked us (Banstead History Centre) to check/record the war memorials and monuments for WW1. If anyone has any information about relatives covering the old Banstead UDC would they please contact banstead.history@ntlworld.com or come into the History Centre which is in a dedicated area of Banstead Library. Volunteer Stewards will be on hand the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month, 2.30 - 4.30 pm and Saturday mornings from 10.00 am - 12 noon.

The area covered is Banstead, Burgh Heath, Chipstead, Kingswood, Nork, Tadworth, Walton on the Hill, Woodmansterne. Any help with background of relatives would be much appreciated.

Audrey Carty (01737) 351747

AND FINALLY....

From the Archives

I have a copy of the notice of the AGM of the Banstead Village Ratepayers Association from 1955.

The first surprise to note is that the meeting was scheduled for 8.45pm following an "At Home" arranged for 8.15pm. It was at the Institute, so no change there.

The Secretary, Miss Irving, held Committee meetings at 39 Wilmot Way.

The Chairman, Mr H P Doran, noted the following in his report:

Under Development, the new estates at The Grange, the Woolpack area flats, and the Library site were noted and that "General development in this ward is nearly complete and we do not experience the problems that arise in the outer wards". Green

Belt encroachment was a concern as was the caravan site development at Lower Kingswood.

Under Planning Control, it was noted that the Committee considered the Council (Banstead U D C) did not exercise sufficient supervision of private premises being used for business purposes.

Increased costs at the Council offices (then in Brighton Road) were severely criticised. Sending out sealed envelopes at 2 1/2d each rather than unsealed ones at 1 1/2d was a waste of rate payer's money. Also criticised was the employment of a high salary "technical assistant" in place of two general clerks as the Committee had been unable to establish his exact duties.

Finally there was a major complaint that the Council did not allow the attendance of the Public at Finance or General Purposes Committee meetings. It was easier to find out what was being discussed at Westminster.

Membership was 750 and the annual sub 2s 6d (£2.50p in today's money).

David Gradidge (01737) 353981

ROAD STEWARDS

This is the time of year when I make a plea for all outstanding subscriptions to be returned to me by the end of February if at all possible.

If any road steward has a problem, please let me know.

There are always a few vacancies for road stewards to carry on the valuable work of distributing newsletters and collecting subscriptions.

Currently they are for:-

Beechfield,
Kingsley Avenue,
Lipsham Close.

If you or anyone you know would like to help, then please contact me. My email is dgradidge@waitrose.com

David Gradidge (01737) 353981