

BVRA news sheet

from the Banstead Village Residents' Association

Vol: 13 No. 2 April 1997

Notice of Annual General Meeting

The Executive Committee extends to all members of the Association a warm invitation to the Annual General Meeting to celebrate our 50th Anniversary, to be held at:

**The Church Institute, High Street, Banstead
on Wednesday, 7th May, 1997**

AGENDA

1. 7.30 p.m. in the Orchard Room. Members will be greeted by the Executive Committee, when wine and soft drinks will be served.
2. 8.00 p.m. in the Institute Hall. A talk by Mr. Tom Crowley, Director of Community Services Department, Borough of Reigate and Banstead, on "Care in the Community", followed by questions from the floor.
3. Minutes from the 49th Annual General Meeting held on May 8th 1996 will not be read, but a summary will be distributed to members in the hall.
4. Presentation of audited accounts for the year ended January 31st 1997, included in this NewsSheet.
5. Proposal of a motion "seeking authority of the A.G.M. to allow the incoming Executive Committee to raise the level of membership subscription by an amount not exceeding 50p per annum for the financial year commencing February 1st 1998."
6. Election of Officers and Executive Committee for the year 1997/98.
7. Questions for our County and Borough Councillors.
8. Any other business.

Please bring this invitation with you to the meeting.

We hope you will join us in the celebration of our Golden Anniversary,

April 1997
Joanna El-Batal,
Hon. Secretary.

23 Colcokes Road, Banstead
(Tel:- 01737 - 356314)

Annual General Meeting

This year we celebrate the Golden Anniversary of our foundation in 1947. It is a time to indulge ourselves in reminiscence over the past and to look forward to the many challenges which lie ahead.

To mark this event, we hope that as many members as possible will join the Committee in toasting the continued success of the Association. The doors will open at 7.30p.m. when wine and soft drinks will be served. The meeting will start at 8.00p.m. as usual.

As you see, our guest speaker will be Mr. Tom Crowley, who is Director of the Borough's Community Services Department. He will talk to us about "Care in the Community" and will cover such topics as the provision of services for the elderly - sheltered residential accommodation and nursing homes, meals-on-wheels, and the availability of other services for those who choose to remain in their own homes.

This is an area which gives rise to much concern and not inconsiderable anxiety. Mr. Crowley will be happy to answer your questions.

Committee News

It is with great regret that we report the resignation of Marian Hayns, Jack Plimmer and Joanna El-Batal, who have served the Association so well over several years. We extend our grateful thanks to them for their support, commitment and contribution.

In the last issue of the NewsSheet, we appealed for a public-spirited person to come forward to fill the Hon.Secretary vacancy caused by the resignation of Joanna El-Batal for family reasons. At the time of going to press, we have received no response from members.

Surely there is someone out there blessed with keyboard skills, with an interest in community affairs and with the time and energy, who is willing to come to our rescue. The main tasks are the preparation/distribution (by post) of minutes of Committee meetings, together with agendas and arranging meetings of our study groups. All expenses, postage, telephone and stationery, are re-imbursed, and a car mileage allowance is paid by the Association.

These resignations leave three vacancies on the new Executive Committee, including the Hon.Secretary post, to be filled at the A.G.M. I therefore invite community-minded members to come forward and offer themselves for election on May 7th. The Committee meets at 7.30p.m. on the last Tuesday in every month (except December) in the Church Institute, High Street. There is an opportunity to join one of our small study groups which meet to discuss particular issues and concerns. You may be sure your views and ideas will be warmly welcomed, and you will enjoy good company. If you are interested in seeking election to the Committee, or wish to learn more about the Association's aims and its activities, why don't you give me, Peter McLaren, a ring on 01737 - 357463.

Membership and Subscription

The Association's membership continues to grow at a steady pace. As at the end of the last financial year, (January 31st 1997), we had a certified membership of 1,876 households, an increase of 2.85% over the previous year, 1995/96. This means that in the past five years, we have increased the number of paid-up members from 1,622 or 15.6%

This is a splendid achievement and for this we have to thank our network of 78 Road Stewards, who in all weathers deliver the NewsSheet through your letter-box and collect your annual subscription. The Association is deeply indebted to them for their dedication and enthusiasm.

For the current financial year, (February 1st 1997 - January 31st 1998) the subscription remains at £1 per household. This was set at the A.G.M. in 1990 and came into force on February 1st 1991.

We have all felt the effect of inflation and the Association is not immune to this. Even with our modest level of expenditure, the current subscription barely covers our outgoings, as the attached statement of our accounts show. The Committee feels it is prudent to maintain our reserves so that we are able to meet future unforeseen costs incurred in major items such as appeal hearings, (e.g. Waitrose type), planning applications, (e.g. Canons Farm), or the inevitable review, likely next year, of the Borough Local Plan. It is on such occasions that our printing costs rise considerably.

You will therefore see from the Agenda, front page, that the Committee recommends, albeit reluctantly, that the subscription is raised by a sum NOT exceeding 50p per household as from February 1st 1998, the actual level to be determined by the Committee at the end of this financial year in the light of circumstances prevailing at that time. The motion set out in the agenda will be put to the vote at the A.G.M.

Peter McLaren

Planning Matters

In our January 1993 issue, we predicted that: "When the recession ends, planning applications will proliferate." Now the economic recovery has begun and in the five months to the end of February, we have looked at 55 applications, eleven a month, which is nearly three times our average rate in 1995.

The most important single application in that period is for Stone Lanterns in Woodmansterne Lane, a few yards from the old well in Park Road. It is a substantial family house in a mature garden which used to be part of the grounds of Well Farm, next door. The farmhouse is a listed building, just over 500 years old, and in beautiful condition.

The applicants want to pull Stone Lanterns down and put up four small detached houses, to make room for which they will have to cut down mature trees and shrubs. The new houses will overlook the gardens and windows of Well Farm and Yewlands on the other side. Needless to say, the occupants of

BANSTEAD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST JANUARY 1997.

	1996/97 £	1995/96 £
INCOME		
Subscriptions Received	1930.70	1837.00
Donations to High Street Initiative Fund	-	342.89
Interest from Bank (net)	47.42	57.30
Interest from T.S.B. (net)	<u>31.82</u>	<u>32.36</u>
	2009.94	2269.55
EXPENDITURE		
Production of NewsSheets	786.11	535.86
Subscriptions Paid	5.00	4.00
Printing & Stationery	173.55	539.93
Postage & Telephone	88.60	27.76
Hire of Rooms	276.00	242.28
Annual General Meeting Expenses	459.68	372.00
Sundry Expenses	89.31	160.80
Excess of Income over Expenditure	<u>131.69</u>	<u>386.92</u>
	2009.94	2269.55

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST JANUARY 1997.

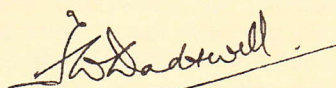
	31.01.97 £	31.01.96 £
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash at Bank - Treasurers's Account	2829.44	2759.57
On Deposit with T.S.B.	1076.45	1044.63
Sundry Debtor(s)	<u>44.00</u>	<u>14.00</u>
	3949.89	3818.20
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Excess of Assets over Liabilities	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Represented by:-	3949.89	3818.20
General Fund -		
Credit Balance Brought Forward	3415.92	3029.00
Add - Surplus Income for Year	<u>131.69</u>	<u>386.92</u>
	3547.61	3415.92
Fund for Preservation of Banstead Amenities -		
Credit Balance Brought Forward	<u>402.28</u>	<u>402.28</u>
	<u>3949.89</u>	<u>3818.20</u>

I have audited the above balance sheet dated 31st January 1997 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 MBE
Hon. Treasurer
61 Commonfield Road
Banstead.

6th February 1997



F.W. Dadswell FCA
Hon. Auditor
5 Greenhayes Gardens
Banstead.

17th February 1997

those two properties have objected, as have other neighbours and the Banstead Society. In our own objection, we drew attention to the ways in which the proposal would violate at least three policies in the Borough Local Plan 1994, covering Maintenance of Character and Amenity, Development Involving Back Garden Land and Design and Layout.

We should be surprised if this particular development is permitted. It would be an outrage if it were, but we fear that we cannot altogether rely on the Local Plan to prevent it, although the Plan provides grounds for refusing the application if the Council wish to do so.

We had high hopes of the Plan in the early days, but it is not proving to be the the legal bulwark against undesirable development which we were led to believe it would provide. The DoE inspector at the public enquiry into the Plan in 1993 told us that the policies must not be too definite, otherwise the courts might rule on appeal that they were "unreasonably inflexible, therefore contrary to natural justice and therefore void".

We now have reason to believe he was wrong about the courts, but he had his instructions from the DoE of course. Partly because of that DoE view, but also because it suited the Council's book, the Plan is very 'flexible' throughout, which is another way of saying the policies are ambiguous. And the ambiguities play into the hands of the developers. We only hope they will not play too easily into the hands of the applicants for Stone Lanterns if they appeal.

We have objected to twelve of those 55 applications, including Stone Lanterns. Two have been withdrawn, two refused, one (at 2 High Street) overtaken by an application (which we supported) for the same premises and two granted. We have just heard that one of the refused applicants is appealing. The other five are outstanding as we go to press.

One of the granted applications is for a restaurant in the High Street at number 45. The premises were a retail outlet until they became vacant a few months ago. Many people may think that another restaurant will be good for Banstead, but when the Plan was in the melting pot it was recognised that a shopping centre needs a certain minimum proportion of retail outlets as a 'threshold' if it is to survive *in the long term*. After much thought the Plan set the threshold for our High Street at 75%, as we described in our April 1996 issue. The Plan states plainly that below that level non-retail uses "begin to detract from the core retail function" of the shopping area. "The threshold approach is intended to anticipate the level at which harm would occur and avoid it."

In granting permission for that change of use from a retail outlet to a restaurant, the Borough Planning Committee is allowing the level of retail outlets to fall below the recognised threshold. There are vacant restaurant premises a couple of doors along the High Street at number 49, but they were not considered for this restaurant. So much for the Plan when it doesn't slake the Council's thirst for short-term commercial prosperity!

At the other end of the scale, eight of the 55 applications were for such minor things as pruning trees with preservation orders on them. We needed to do no more than check that a reputable contractor would be employed, otherwise the trees might be ruined by inexperienced treatment.

Of the remaining 35 applications, we positively supported two and had no adverse comments on 33. Members may wonder whether we really needed to scrutinise all 33. Weren't we being rather officious? Well, among the original 55 there was an application for a loft conversion in Commonfield Road. The plans showed the loft windows on the front of the house, looking right across the street, apparently not overlooking anyone. But closer examination showed an error in the plans. The intended conversion was to be at the back and those windows would closely overlook the garden and bedrooms of the house next door, which was round a sharp corner. The occupants of the house had not been notified, probably because the planning department had not noticed the error. Neither had I, but our chairman spotted it and put in our objection straight away. The application has been withdrawn, but the people are going ahead with a small conversion for which they do not need planning permission.

David Rudd.

Banstead Civic Offices

In the January 1997 issue of the NewsSheet we reported that we had asked the Borough Council to re-examine its proposals for the provision of new Civic Offices located in the Horseshoe to replace the Council House in Brighton Road, which is being sold.

We are pleased to record that our request to the Council was heeded and a B.V.R.A. delegation, along with our Councillors and Banstead Society representatives met the Chairman of the General Purposes and Property Committee, which has responsibility for the project, on January 9th 1997.

At this meeting we voiced our concern at the inadequacy of the small meeting room included in the proposed plans which was unlikely to meet the needs and aspirations of the many social, cultural and community groups seeking a suitable venue in Banstead for their various activities. We also emphasised that the loss of parking spaces in the adjacent car park inherent in the Council's plans was not acceptable.

We have expressed our disappointment that the Banstead High Street Steering Group had not been consulted about the Borough's future plans which will most certainly impact on the future vitality of our Village. We feel strongly that the views and wishes of local communities should be taken into account before any final decision is taken.

It is hoped that the Council will have the vision and imagination to provide us with a first class facility which will enhance our quality of life and of which we can all be proud. Perhaps by the time the next issue of NewsSheet goes to press we will be able to let you have more encouraging news.

Peter McLaren.

Banstead Wildlife Field (Banstead Gardens)

In the January issue, we omitted Priory School from the list of very enthusiastic volunteers participating in the tree planting activities. This was an oversight, for which we offer our sincere apologies.

No further work has been undertaken on the site over the winter months, but planting in the pond will be carried out during March.

Downlands Countryside Management Project (DCMP) have produced a design for the wooden bench and this will be constructed by the Banstead Commons Conservators in time to mark the BVRA Golden Anniversary in May 1997.

The Banstead Wildlife Field is adjacent to Basing Road, off Bolters Lane.

Dennis Woolmer

Banstead in Bloom

The Banstead High Street Steering Group is a partnership between B.V.R.A., Banstead Society,

Chamber of Commerce, and the Borough Council whose aim is to improve the quality of the environment of the High Street, making it a more pleasant and safer place to visit.

The Steering Group is keen to identify a person (or persons) - "an enthusiast"- who might be prepared to organise and co-ordinate a community initiative to prepare for entry into the South-East In Bloom competition in MAY 1998.

It is intended the entry would focus on the High Street, and its immediate environs. The initial aim would be to form a partnership within the community to foster civic pride and a cleaner and more attractive environment, and which would enjoy the support and assistance of the Borough Council. More information on the competition, which is organised by the Tidy Britain Group, can be obtained from Terry Boardman in the Town Hall, Reigate. (Tel: 242477). The Chairman of the Banstead Steering Group is Cllr. Bill Bryant, (Tel: 357053), who can also provide additional background information.

Peter McLaren.