

Spring 2008 Newsletter

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

THE AGM OF THE ASSOCIATION WILL BE HELD AT SHAWLEY COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL, SHAWLEY WAY ON TUESDAY 11th MARCH 2008 AT 8.00 PM

AGENDA

1. Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting
 2. Matters arising from the minutes
 3. Chairman's Report
 4. Treasurer's Report
 5. To consider the adoption of the Association's Borough Council candidate for election in May 2008
 6. Election of Committee
- NB: The Hon. Secretary, Mr J Edwards, 18 Ferriers Way, Epsom Downs would be pleased to receive nominations to the Committee
7. Any other business

John Edwards
Honorary Secretary

After the formal business of the meeting there will be a short break for refreshment. Then there will be reports from your Councillors followed by an open forum.

THE TATTENHAMS RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

The R A represents residents living in the Tattenhams Ward of Reigate and Banstead Borough Council. It is a non-party political organisation that aims to preserve and improve amenities in the area and seeks to foster good local government by a close liaison with local authorities and other public bodies.

Any resident wishing the R A to take up questions concerning local matters or interests should write, email or telephone a Committee Member or the Hon. Secretary.

This edition of our newsletter is distributed to all households in Tattenhams Ward prior to our AGM, but normally only to R A members during the rest of the year. If you are not a member and wish to join, please contact the Chairman – see the last page for details.

FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Roads and Pavements

2007 saw some welcome improvements that included resurfacing four sections of Shawley Way and completing the resurfacing of the north pavement of Great Tattenhams. Through the introduction of a new "Rhino" heat machine, it is hoped to improve the quality of patching repairs by welding new tarmac into the existing road surface. It takes longer, but if the seamless repair also lasts longer, it must be a plus. However, what is really needed is the complete resurfacing of many of our worn out roads.

Great Tattenhams

Unfortunately, the pedestrian refuges for Great Tattenhams have been delayed yet again – this time by diverting manpower down to an urgent project in Redhill - but the project has been approved, and the finance is available. We have received confirmation that the County Council remains committed to these works, plus the white line hatching of the centre of the road, as a priority.

The good news – for the immediate residents and pedestrians – is that the engineers and the police have now recommended that a speed camera should be installed. The petition organised by the residents in this road – and the recent accident record – were key to getting this issue looked at once again.

Road Safety

Following requests from residents for a safer crossing at Tattenham Corner, white road markings have been introduced on the bend by the car showroom to slow vehicles down, and force them to move out, so they are more visible to people crossing at the refuge by the Post Office. Unfortunately, the engineers say the site is not suitable for a proper zebra crossing. A warning vehicle activated sign (VAS) is planned near the petrol filling station – funded by your County Councillor's local allowance – to highlight this sharp and dangerous corner.

The south end of Epsom Lane North – the scene of a number of fatalities - now has improved signage and road markings to highlight the difficult corner, particularly for traffic heading towards Tadworth.

Parking

At the suggestion of the Residents' Association, bays have been cut into the verges in Upland Way to afford safe extra roadside parking; this is being financed by Raven Housing Trust. Representatives from the R.A. recently met with Raven Trust officers to urge improvements in Long Walk to relieve congested vehicle parking.

Banstead Leisure Centre

Now that all parties have signed up to a rebuild of the leisure centre, its future should be safe - but we will monitor scheduled progress carefully.

Tattenham Way Recreation Ground

The Burgh Heath Cricket Club is to build a new pavilion following constant damage and the final destruction of the original building by arson. Lighting in the Tattenham Way car park and the Nork Park car park adjacent near The Drive would be a good deterrent to future vandalism.

Local Post Offices

The good news is that none of the local Post Offices in Tattenhams, Nork, Tadworth, Epsom and Banstead are to be closed under the recently announced closure programme. Keep using them to assure their future.

The Dump in Epsom

The programme of improvements to improve recycling and speed things up is just starting.

Police

Yes, they are still about, if not so visible lately due to the seasonal rise in burglaries taking attention. And it's all change again. Inspector Clive Davies is helping reshape resources for Surrey to reduce four divisions to three, hopefully to become more operationally efficient. He has been replaced by Sergeant Richard Haycock from Banstead who is acting inspector, and a new sergeant is coming in.

P.C. Dan Henderson is moving to a fast response unit but is being replaced by P.C Mus Chamadia. We have two Police Community Support Officers - Darren Oliver and Simon Watson – who have both proved to be dedicated to their work. It is a shame that Surrey Police will not give them more powers.

AND LASTLY – we are always looking for new road stewards to lighten the load of our current network and to fill up gaps in our coverage. In addition, volunteers for the committee will be welcome. Come initially as an observer to give you an insight into what we do, without any commitment.

John Butcher

COUNCIL TAX....COUNCIL TAX....COUNCIL TAX

With RPI inflation running at dead on 4 per cent in December, your Council Tax bills will unfortunately be weighing in at about an extra 5¼ per cent in April. The bill is made up of three separate levies.

County Council – 4.8% increase

The County Council takes three-quarters of the Council Tax and hence has the biggest influence on the overall increase. The greatest challenge for the County Council is how to meet the growing demand for social care, both for our elderly as our population ages and we live longer, and for those unfortunate enough to be born severely disabled whose life chances are benefiting from advances in medical science. Around about 40% of the County's budget is spent on social care, and the impact of the increasing demand for social care alone – ignoring the impact of inflation - is a 2% increase every year. The Council has recognized that providing this extra care is a priority, with the emphasis on helping the elderly to continue to live longer in their own homes. Given inflation and other pressures, then savings have to be found in order to just stand still.

The Residents' Association Councillors scrutinized the budget in a great deal of detail and came up with a detailed list of savings which would have kept Council Tax down to the 4% inflation level. Our analysis won a great deal of praise, but the Council Leadership plumped for the higher figure of 4.8%.

The Government's grant to Surrey is very low – if we lived in Manchester our grant per head would be **four times higher!** Yet we all need the same basic services – roads, waste disposal, libraries, fire brigade etc. In Manchester, the Government pays for more than half the cost of these services; in Surrey it's less than 20%, and the Council Taxpayer the rest. The differential is made all the worse by the high cost of property in Surrey, which means that inevitably our housing is in a higher tax band than many other areas. Clearly inner city areas of our large cities do have more problems and needs, but pensioners and others on a fixed income in Surrey are paying more than those in work up north.

The final insult was the increase in Government grant awarded for the coming year – just £2 million on a budget of £650 million – more than offset by a counter-demand for £3 million in landfill tax!

Borough Council – 2.95% increase - A very creditable result, which your RA councillors supported, although we were defeated when we asked for a small amount of this year's surplus be spent on shoring up the Planning Service which is facing some major problems and is performing below par.

Police Authority – 9.72% increase – Surrey Police have the lowest grant per head of any police force - £80 compared to a national average of £106 (the Met has £250 per head). They have many challenges – near to two airports – terrorism – the M25/ M3 / M23 - burglars on day trips out from London. But we do think it unwise to take on the Government – they are almost certain to be capped. Council Tax demands will be withdrawn and then re-billed, with all the added admin cost involved.

ENHANCED NEIGHBOURHOOD PANEL MEETING

Joint Police and Council Meeting

The Police are anxious to improve their contacts with residents, whilst at this time the Council is also keen to engage during the development of the Tattenhams Local Community Action Plan, LCAP.

The result was the first 'Enhanced' Neighbourhood Panel meeting held on 13th December. Cllr Allen Kay, the relevant Borough Executive Councillor, chaired the meeting. Two Council officers accompanied him: Ben Skipp, responsible for producing the LCAP, and Terry Boardman, the Peoples and Places Manager. They were joined by Surrey Police - PC Dan Henderson and PCSO Darren Oliver, for Tattenhams, and PCSO Nicola Dooris, who looks after Nork. Also present were your Residents' Association Councillors for Tattenhams and Nork

Issues Raised

Regrettably, despite promotion in this Newsletter, the Nork Quarterly, and through the Police, the audience numbered just 17. The points of concern raised – and the responses given - were as follows:

- Vehicles are being parked on the corners of roads, even on the white hatched markings and on grass verges making exit dangerous due to poor sight lines. **The Police agreed to take action.**
- The reporting of crimes is very bureaucratic and rarely resulted in any Police action. **The Police are very stretched and have to allocate priorities for action.**
- Incidents of youth disorder in the Rosebushes area have been reported but insufficient feedback has been given to residents. **Residents should contact their PCSO for feedback, if concerned.**
- During the construction of developments, contractors' lorries are causing damage and depositing mud on the roads. **Contractors are required to keep the roads clean and residents should report instances to the Borough Council.**
- Gutters and gullies are not cleaned frequently enough and local flooding is the result. **Gullies are the responsibility of Surrey County Council and gutters, the Borough Council. Residents are encouraged to report problems.**
- Graffiti is appearing on both private and public property. **The Borough Council will remove once reported, with obscenities and racist graffiti taking priority.**
- The speed camera and the Vehicle Activated Sign VAS on the A217 near Burgh Wood are proving very effective in discouraging speeding. However the VAS only appears to be partially working. **This will be reported to the Safety Camera Partnership.**

Love Where You Live

Mr Boardman gave a presentation on the Borough 'Love Where You Live campaign' emphasising that residents can make a real difference to improve and shape their neighbourhoods. Problems of fly-tipping, graffiti and anti-social behaviour should be reported promptly. Residents' self-help ideas to enhance and improve their area should be discussed with their Councillor who will in turn seek help from the Council. Mr Boardman can provide expertise and equipment – e.g. for a residents' clean-up.

The next meeting will be at 7:30pm on Tuesday 4th March at Shawley Way School, and will include a briefing on the Local Community Action Plan, as discussed below.

LOCAL COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN- LCAP

Your response to the Feedback Form provided by Ben Skipp, the Borough Council officer, enclosed with the autumn edition of our Newsletter has been disappointing. Less than 100 forms have been returned to date. This is in stark contrast to the response we had a couple of years ago to our Tattenhams Residents' Appraisal (TARA) when a magnificent 843 of you replied. We would like to know why the response was so poor. Are we too busy, or too frustrated with the consultation, or reasonably content? In other parts of the Borough this LCAP process has led to real improvements involving extra funding.

In the meantime, Ben has been talking to as many people as he can, shops, youth, schools, local leaders etc and is now putting his results together. He has also been given the TARA report so that conclusions and ideas from that can be taken into consideration.

HOSTS NEEDED FOR 'CHERNOBYL CHILDREN'

The Mid Surrey Link is part of Chernobyl Children Life Line, a national charity dedicated to providing rest and recuperation breaks for children from the most contaminated areas of Belarus, where the population continues to suffer from the after-effects of world's worst man-made disaster. It is believed that, nearly 22 years after the Chernobyl nuclear explosion, more than 2 million people living in contaminated areas still have no access to 'clean' food or water, giving rise to a high incidence of childhood cancer and illness.

A four-week break from radiation, eating uncontaminated food and breathing clean air, is believed to increase significantly the children's life expectancy, by giving their immune systems a chance to recover. Each year, nationally, the charity helps over 4,000 children in this way.

Since its formation in 2002, the Mid Surrey Link has brought more than 100 children, in six groups, each accompanied by a Belarusian leader, to the Epsom, Ashtead and Banstead area for respite. The children are around 11 years old, and stay in pairs with local hosts, who in turn are supported by willing volunteers providing practical help. All the children visit the dentist and optician during their stay and are provided with any treatment they need. The visitors participate in a programme of activities that enables them to get together and enjoy educational and fun outings, for example to London, the seaside, Legoland, horse riding through a local riding school (RDA group) and swimming at Epsom College.

In 2008 our visit will run from Friday 18th July to Friday 15th August. We are particularly keen to hear from anyone living locally who would consider hosting two children for two or four weeks during this period. Information about hosting, supporting a host, assisting with outings, fund raising and other ways of helping can be found on our website at www.midsurreylink.org or by telephone to 01372 -741228. We would love to hear from you.

EPSOM DOWNS CHILDREN'S CENTRE

One of the Government's key initiatives, launched under its 'Education, Education, Education' agenda has been the development of a network of Children's Centres throughout the country. One of the first in Surrey, and likely to be the only one in the north of the borough, is attached to Epsom Downs Primary School in Merland Rise.

The School now provides a nursery and there is also a wide range of facilities and events – see below - to support young families in the area, through its Family Centre.

Do visit the Centre (St Leonards Road entrance) or call 01737 – 851079 or 01737 – 354313.

Monday morning:

Breakfast time – a cooked breakfast and a chat
UNICEF breast-feeding group
Health Visitor advice sessions
Citizens Advice Bureau outreach

Monday afternoon:

Family gardening
After school family fun

Tuesday morning:

Adult self-esteem
Childminders coffee morning
Story time!

Tuesday afternoon:

Stay & play
Trouble with your paper work – make an appointment with a Family Support Worker

Wednesday morning:

Stay & Play
Family Links parenting class (10 week course)
Post-natal group for first time parents

Wednesday afternoon:

Baby, baby
Teens 2 Twenties – young parents group
After school family fun

Thursday morning:

Fund raising meeting

Thursday afternoon:

Home visits from a Family Support Worker
After school family fun

Friday morning:

Ready, steady, cook – cooking skills

Friday afternoon:

Stay & play

