

# **St. JOHN'S RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER**

**AUTUMN 2008**

## **AGM**

Thank you to all members who attended the AGM. Special thanks also to Mandy Leivers from the Avon Gorge & Downs Wildlife Project (<http://www.avongorge.org.uk/>) who gave a very interesting and amusing talk about the project; and to PC Jez Burstow who gave a talk and answered questions.

If you could not make it to the AGM and have not paid your subs then please could you give them either to your street rep or to the Treasurer? Current subs (which are unchanged) are £3 per household or £2 per individual.

## **NEW SECRETARY**

Following the AGM we have a new Secretary – Derek Miller – who is a new member who has stepped in to take over from Sue Pears. Many thanks to Sue for all the hard work that she has put in since taking on the role and to Derek for carrying on from where Sue has left off.

## **NEWSLETTER EDITOR**

Many of the more astute of you will have noticed that there has been a long gap between this newsletter and the last one, for which I apologise. Unfortunately, after over 4 years, I am unable to continue as Newsletter Editor. We are therefore looking for someone to take on this role which involves producing 3 – 4 newsletters per year, getting the newsletter copied and distributing them to street reps, which can easily be done at a committee meeting. Most articles are written for you by other committee members. If you are interested then please contact either me or the Secretary.

## **E-NEWSLETTER AND E-COMMUNICATION**

If anyone wishes to receive the newsletter electronically and/or to receive other important news by e-mail, please could you give your e-mail address to the Treasurer, at the address at the end of the newsletter? Please state which you want to receive electronically. Note that these will be by blind copy so other people will not see your e-mail address.

## **PLANNING**

Unfortunately, as you will probably know by now, the Alma Vale Road Post Office has also been closed down. The council declined to support it (as has happened in other areas) despite some concerted lobbying. However, the mini-market continues to trade – if you want them to remain then please use them as much as possible.

It is also sad to note that Garaways garden centre has closed down after, we believe, some 200 years of trading. It is not yet clear what will happen to the site.

The time for submitting comments about the Residents' Parking Zone has passed and we will now have to wait to see what happens next.

The most significant development since the last newsletter is the **Bristol Neighbourhood Planning Network (BNPN)** which we are now involved in. This is a good thing as there are many changes afoot. The most important one is the Community Involvement arrangements and 'Pre-apps'. Government policy since 1999 and the Planning Act of 2004 are aimed at enabling and empowering people to take an active part in the planning process. Bristol has produced its own Statement of Community Involvement January 2008. This will be examined in public by the Planning Inspectorate. This all coincides fortuitously with a new Head of Planning Services, Zoe Wilcox, who is positively and constructively interested in community involvement in the planning process. Two neighbourhood networks administrators, Alison Bromilow and Andy King have been doing preliminary work in pre-apps by running pilot schemes in Redland & Cotham and St Paul's and so designing and agreeing procedures.

### **So what is it exactly and how does it work?**

Planning applications above 10 dwellings to 10,000 square metres will have to include a statement on how the community has been involved in considering the development. Early involvement allows a real opportunity to affect the

design. Developers are obliged to contact community groups at the earliest opportunity and **before a building design has been started** to discuss options and parameters and hopes on both sides. The applicant/developer has to present to the group for discussion options and early sketches and the group will give a written response to these. Records of meetings have to be kept and at the end both sides have to agree to what has been said/agreed. This record, kept by both parties, has to be signed by both and submitted with the planning application. This Community Involvement Statement will include

- points that were made by the community
- changes made by the developer to accommodate these points
- where the developer is unable or unwilling to respond to these points, giving reasons why not.

We are looking for volunteers, particularly **architects** or those with **planning experience**, who could either be actively involved in the pre-apps or who would be willing to be called upon for specific help and advice should this be required on an ad-hoc basis. If you are interested in helping with this or require further information then please e-mail Dot Field at [dotfield@talktalk.net](mailto:dotfield@talktalk.net) (or via the Secretary if you are not on e-mail).

The first use of this procedure has been with the development of the old Edwards Garage site at 1-3 Alma Vale Road. This seems to have been positive and gone well, with an outcome that is as good as could be expected – we will see.

Dorothy Field

## **LICENSING**

There is not much to report on the licensing front since the last Newsletter. We reported there that the **Subway** take-away had applied to stay open on Fridays and Saturdays till 3 am and we objected strongly to this, but we were then unaware that they already had permission to stay open in this way so that our objections were unsuccessful. We did not oppose the application by the off-licence **Coulters** in Alma Vale Road to change into a "Wine Café" and this was granted, subject to the conditions we had asked for to guard against noise problems.

There has been an application to serve alcohol with meals until 11 or 11.30 pm in a new restaurant, called **Say Pasta** in Clifton Down Shopping Centre (where McDonalds once was; the premises have been empty for some time), which we did not oppose and which was duly granted. Similarly there has been an application to serve alcohol with meals in the newly built restaurant section of the **Clifton Lido** in Oakfield Place when it opens, which again we did not oppose.

Nationally, the licensing picture becomes increasingly confused. We read of many pubs going out of business, including the **Henry J Bean** chain, because trade is falling off. But then we read that this is because people are binge-drinking at home on cheap supermarket booze, so that they are already drunk when they go out for the evening, and there has been a rapid increase in alcohol-related injuries, illnesses and deaths. We are told that because of EU regulations, the government can do nothing to prevent the supermarkets offering cut-price alcohol; instead, they are now proposing to modify the Licensing Act slightly to make it easier for the licensed trade to survive. As originally proposed, these modifications would have made it easier for pubs to increase their opening hours if they wished to, but at least the government has now, under pressure, withdrawn this idea. But we have a long way to go yet.

Bob Chambers

## **NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH**

By being a member of SJRA you automatically become a member of the relevant Neighbourhood Watch scheme. The NHW scheme continues to help reduce crime and assists in the development of neighbourliness. By everyone being more conscious of the possibility of a crime being committed and taking appropriate action, however small, we can help maintain the safety of our area.

The condition and siting of our Neighbourhood Watch signs has been reviewed and action will be taken shortly to clean or replace some of the existing signs. This, hopefully, will contribute to a more effective promotion of the scheme within the area.

Within the SJRA area there are 4 NHW sectors. Each sector has its own Co-ordinator and contact persons. Elinor Whitaker has agreed to take over as Co-ordinator for Sector 3. The Co-ordinators are:

Sector 1 – Ernie Peck – Apsley Road, Beaufort Road, 106-118 Pembroke Road

Sector 2 – Catherine Hutton – Miles Road, Duchess Road, 68-104 Pembroke Road, All Saints Road.

Sector 3 – Elinor Whitaker – 21-51 & 22-60 St Johns Road, Hurle Crescent, Hurle Road, Chantry Road, Whatley Road

Sector 4 – Ian Mitchell – 5-19 & 2-20 St Johns Road, Thorndale (& Court & Mews), Alma Vale Road, Alma Court.

A Ringmaster system exists, through which Wendy Hull, North Bristol NHW Administrator, sends 'ringmaster' messages from the police giving warnings of crimes in the area. If you would like to receive such messages, please email Elinor Whitaker at [elinorwhitaker@bluevonder.co.uk](mailto:elinorwhitaker@bluevonder.co.uk) and she will arrange for them to be forwarded to you.

Further advice about home and business security is available on the Avon & Somerset Police website at <http://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk> and follow the link to Crime Reduction and Community safety. <http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk> also has plenty of information for reducing crime.

There has been a leaflet drop in the area advertising a 'Trusted Quality Cleaning Service for your Home'. The leaflet did not state an address for the company, and only gave a freephone or mobile number, no landline contact number was given. Even the Website address leads to something which appears not to be a standard Website and does not give the address of the company. A Trading Standards Officers advice is:

1. Don't deal with traders if you don't have the name of the owner, the geographic address or a landline number where they can be contacted - how will you contact them if there is a problem?
2. The website appears to be unobtainable - any trader website must, by law, carry a geographic address to enable customers to make contact.
3. Both phone numbers only offer answer phone messages
4. You are taking a great risk if you contract with any trader whose name and address you don't know, especially where the type of service they provide means they are likely to be in your home when you are out. How do you know you can trust them?

### **Crime figures for the Clifton East Ward**

These are the figures for financial year 2008/9 compared with the same period last year:

Domestic Burglary	down	14	to	44
Non-domestic Burglary	up	2	to	28
Theft from vehicles	down	76	to	45
Theft of vehicles	down	6	to	17
Criminal Damage	up	27	to	85

**Police and Communities Together (PACT)** With the introduction of Neighbourhood Policing, one of the vital changes is the way in which public issues are prioritised and dealt with. PACT meetings are an opportunity for you as a local resident or key individual in the area to raise your concerns in an open and public forum. These issues may be anything that you feel impacts on the quality of life in your area (e.g. parking, littering, nuisance behaviour, etc). The meetings will have members from the police, council and other local agencies present to address the issues identified by you. PACT meetings will be held on a regular basis to provide the public with an update and continue to address new concerns, see <http://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/LocalPages/SSN/PACT.aspx>

On Friday 5th September 2008 Clifton East took part in a day of warnings and education to people that cycle on pavements. This was done due to the volume of complaints that the police receive regarding this issue. Many cyclists had a warning and any further breaches will incur a fine. There is going to be another date this side of Christmas to include the students when they return in the near future.

The Beat Surgery is now held weekly on a Thursday from 10:00 – 13:00. We are there to give crime prevention advice and we are currently running a scheme called "immobilise" This is a scheme that enables us to register your property (laptops, mobile phones etc) on a website so that if it's stolen and then recovered we can return your property. However you do need to have an e-mail address for this service. Also at the beat surgery we can refer you to a scheme called the "Bobby Van" – this is where a member of staff comes and assesses your home security; any improvements, such as window locks, door locks etc are fitted or replaced. This is a FREE service provided by the police and Bristol City Council.

From a recent PACT meeting, residents wanted us to provide some education to some motorists regarding the parking problems in and around Clifton. We have now developed a leaflet explaining various offences and the consequences. They will be left on vehicles of offending motorists.

The web site for registering items such as mobile phones, iPods etc. to aid recovery in case of loss or theft is <http://www.immobilise.com/>.

PC 278 Jez Burstow (0117 945 4417, [Jeremy.Burstow@avonandsomerset.police.uk](mailto:Jeremy.Burstow@avonandsomerset.police.uk)) is the Beat Manager for Clifton East, which includes the SJRA area. He is supported by PCSO 7068 Sue Passmore (0117 945 4455, [Susan.Passmore@avonandsomerset.police.uk](mailto:Susan.Passmore@avonandsomerset.police.uk)) and PCSO 9758 Richard Yule ([Richard.Yule@avonandsomerset.police.uk](mailto:Richard.Yule@avonandsomerset.police.uk)) all at Redland Police Station, Lower Redland Road, Bristol BS6 6SU.

Beat surgeries for Clifton East are held at Clifton Down Shopping Centre (near the entrance) weekly, every Thursday, between 10:00am and 1:00pm.

Remember, if you see a crime in progress, at risk of being committed or an offender is still on the scene or nearby, then call **999**; if you see anything suspicious then get descriptions and car registrations etc. and call the Police on **0845 456 7000** – as well as alerting them to potential problems this also gives them the power to stop and search should this be necessary.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

Please can everyone remember to sort the recycling etc. in their bins properly – if it is incorrectly sorted the bin-men may refuse to take it, leaving it to blow around the neighbourhood.

Street drainage is still a problem, despite the work done to clear drains – the same problem areas are still flooding. A November deluge (with fallen leaves) could be a major problem. You can report blocked drains to the council by phoning them on 0117 922 2100 or e-mailing them at [customer.services@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:customer.services@bristol.gov.uk) (or see <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/streetcare/>).

## **USEFUL INFORMATION**

Crimestoppers is completely independent of the Police. It is an independent charitable trust. Informants will NOT have to declare any personal details, nor appear in court/police station or any other public place associated with the information that they give. Crimestoppers is NOT a substitute for the 999 Emergency Call system but is, merely, an information gathering service. *They want to know what you know – not who you are* – **0800 555 1111**.

The local Police web-site is <http://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk>. There is also an interesting site about the police helicopter and what it has been doing at <http://www.westerncounties.org.uk>.

The Whiteladies Road Farmers Market has now become a regular fixture. It takes place on the 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of each month between 8:30am and 1:00pm and on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month between 9:00am and 2:00pm on the corner of Whiteladies Road and Apsley Road. All of the produce is locally grown or made and includes meat, fruit, vegetables, bakery, cheese, preserves, wild food and more. The market is organised by Sustainable Redland, further details are at <http://www.sustainableredland.org.uk/home/farmers-market/> and the contact is [johnnywood@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:johnnywood@blueyonder.co.uk).

## **AOB**

If any readers have any ideas for what they would like to see in the Newsletter, then please tell the editor or other committee member. Even better, if you have something relevant that you can contribute then I would be delighted to hear from you.

News is sometimes available, along with current and previous copies of the Newsletter, on the SJRA website which is <http://www.digitalbristol.org/members/sjra/sjra1.html> (note the double 'r's).

SJRA members may attend committee meetings if they wish. Please contact Derek Miller if you wish to do so.

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