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173 SUMMER
2006

THE NEWSLETTER

CIRCULATION
3,800

DORRIDGE & DISTRICT RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

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NEIGHBOURS - EVERY NEEDS GOOD NEIGHBOURS

News this month of three ways in which life on our patch can become even better. First, Neighbourhood Policing began on April 3rd and promises to focus more sharply on affairs in Dorridge, Hockley Heath and Knowle. Briefly, the scheme provides a team of 8 or 9 constables led by a Sergeant and managed overall by an Inspector responsible for the whole Rural Sector. We are pleased that Sgt Ann Strachan will continue as our Team Leader as Ann has a good knowledge of the area, attends DDRA Committee meetings and responds well to our needs. The most important factor in the new system is that the team will be dedicated to the area, offering continuous coverage in two shifts between 8.00am and midnight, with occasional double-manning to strengthen the approach to anti-social issues. Better still, the team will not be called away to incidents in other areas, as has been the case up to now.

The team has already been active in Knowle and Dorridge responding to anti-social behaviour in a variety of locations between the two villages and some 50 young people have been dealt with. A number have been taken home to their parents by the Police, other parents have received letters and a number of youths have been arrested. The action, 'Operation Mulberry' will continue until September. There were 28 recorded crimes in Dorridge, Bentley Heath and Hockley Heath between April 3rd and 28th, a reduction of 5.6% for the same period last year. Vehicle offences still constitute the most common category, accounting for no less than 11 of the 28 recorded crimes. Sgt Strachan is pleased with the successful launch of Neighbourhood Policing and is encouraged by the kind of community involvement which led recently to the recovery of £1500

of drugs from an address in Dorridge and the arrest of two suppliers.

The other two items are in a sense related, and have been sent to us by residents. The first, 'Neighbourhood Champions,' may help with the second - 'Litter!' The 'Neighbourhood Champions' scheme is a Council initiative whereby residents can become the 'eyes and ears' of the Council's Environmental Health Officers, working alongside them to combat graffiti, fly-tipping, fly posters, nuisance vehicles and - LITTER. Volunteers can also be trained, equipped and empowered to deal with minor issues such as graffiti and fly posting, and Neighbourhood Champions under the age of 25 can credit their work towards the Duke of Edinburgh or Millennium Volunteers Awards schemes. You could join as individuals, couples or families, and if you wish to know more you can contact:

*SMBC's James Johnson on 0121 704 8086
(e-mail jamesjohnson@solihull.gov.uk)*

*or Cheryl Tyler at West Midlands Police
on 0121 704 8575.*

And the litter - well, along with graffiti it's a constant problem as another of our readers has reminded us. DDRA might look at some ideas for reducing the problem but in the meantime we might all think of a few of our own. Make sure all black bags are firmly tied for example, double wrap food waste so that it doesn't attract animals, maybe even squirt room freshener into the bag, clear wind blown paper etc from outside our own homes, report graffiti to the Council on the Graffiti Hotline - 0121 717 1580. Little things can make a big difference, and everyone can help.



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UP, UP AND AWAY

With your help we really flew with our Airport Questionnaire, receiving even more responses than we had hoped for. The returns showed a large majority broadly in line with DDRA's concerns, with over 90% against a second runway and nearly 80% expecting that expansion would create more disturbance. The most interesting feature was that even though some 40% anticipated some kind of benefit from expansion, the majority of that 40% did not believe the benefit warranted the expansion. Your views have now been collated and a letter sent to the Airport Company, Caroline Spelman MP, and our Ward Councillors. We received a phone call from the Company regretting that so great was the volume of response that they could not reply to individuals or community groups. There will be a response later which we will include in the Newsletter following our receipt of the reply.

HEALTH NEWS

Hearing that dentists are leaving the NHS in droves we carried out a small survey of local practitioners to see where NHS service is still available. In no particular order we offer the following :

Dr Majid, 76 Widney Road, Bentley Heath - 77 3080
Some NHS available.

Philip and Samantha McCullough,
474 Station Road, Dorridge - 77 2578.
NHS for children (up to 18yrs)
8.30am-5.0pm or 6.0pm Mon- Fri.

Mr Sharma, Miss Sivarajh, Ms Rabanni,
1 Downing Close, Knowle - 77 8800.
NHS available • Mon-Fri 9.0am-5.0pm.

News from Dorridge Surgery. Patients of Dr Katrina Davis will be pleased to know that the Practice will welcome her back from maternity leave on July 1st.

ADOPT-A-STATION

The DDRA Committee recently registered with Central Trains' Adopt-a-Station scheme whereby we agree to help keep Dorridge Station litter and graffiti free as well

as carrying out minor repairs and looking after the gardens and flower tubs. We have been doing the flowers for some years and were a little hurt to read in Solihull and Leamington Rail Users newsletter that only Olton Station received any kind of loving care from residents. We were quick to put them right and the 'Adopt' scheme will formalise our commitment. Work will be carried out by a team of volunteers and if you feel you would like to be involved speak to Pam Nunn on 77 2806 or Martin Lambert on 77 9259.

MORE FACILITIES FOR THE YOUNG?

We know there isn't a lot for young people to do in our area and we really do want to address the issues so we would love to hear from youngsters with ideas. Realistic suggestions to Glennis Portsmouth on 77 5032 and we will see what we can do. Ideas might include such items as a football wall or a concrete table tennis table. We promise to look seriously at your proposals and may wish to meet you to talk things over. We are, of course, subject to Council approval and Health and Safety Regulations. We have some money but would launch a fund raising effort - with your help - if needed.

THE DORRIDGE FUN RUN CONTINUES

By popular demand the Dorridge Fun Run is back in June and seems set to become an annual event. This is an event for everyone - and you don't even have to run! Serious runners can be joined by joggers, walkers, cyclists, pets, pushchairs and any form of non-motorised transport. You can wear Fancy Dress if you wish, and there is a choice of 3 or 8 mile courses through picturesque countryside.

Comedian Malcolm Stent will start the run from St Philips Church in Dorridge at 10.30am on Saturday 10 June. Details from the Parish Office on 77 5652 or at www.stphilipsandstjames.org

BOOKS ON WHEELS....

Did you know that you can now visit the Mobile Library on Saturday afternoons? This entirely new venture

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began on April 22nd and the Mobile Library stops in Forest Road, Dorridge, every Saturday afternoon from 1.45-2.40pm. We hope this will prove to be a popular service with people who are busy during the week. For details of all Mobile Library stops and times contact 0121 704 6947 or go to the DDRA Website www.dorridge.org.uk where you will find all the information.

...AND A BLOKE ON WHEELS

A recent edition of 'Classic Racer' Magazine revealed that Dorridge's own Paul Whitehead of Dorridge Cycles rode a 1936 KSS Velocette motorcycle between 1975 and 1977, winning 20 races and finishing in high positions in many others. In 1977 Paul won the prestigious BP Vintage Race of the Year at Mallory Park. Now not a lot of people know that...

THE DDRA WEB

More and more people are visiting the website and one of our committee members recently had a call from a documentary film maker in London who had found our details there. It proved to be an offer we had no difficulty in refusing! However the site provides a wealth of information about all things Solihull and Dorridge, as well as a section for purely local news to which you can submit items you would like us to consider.

PLANNING MATTERS

We continue to consult with and support residents with concerns over Planning Applications, but we have been encouraged by recent decisions reached by the Planning Inspectorate. The Inspectorate acknowledges that this is a spacious and pleasant place to live and that the Council has been right to reject dominant and intrusive developments. DDRA's policy is to review any significant development proposal against planning guidelines and, if appropriate, to raise objections designed to ensure that the council's assessment takes account of all relevant factors. One of our main concerns at the moment is the continuing desire of

developers to demolish good quality housing and their attempts to justify the application by using one aspect of planning guidelines, housing density, while ignoring other provisions such as good design, neighbourly developments and environmental impact (how much energy, waste and landfill are generated by demolishing a building?) Another worry is the rapid loss of bungalow and smaller detached properties in favour of larger - and more expensive - dwellings with smaller gardens. In the process trees are lost, drainage problems become more acute, 'breathing space' is reduced and, perhaps most important of all, there are fewer properties available to younger buyers or elderly residents who want to downsize without leaving the area in which they may have spent many happy years. Finally, we are conscious that there are many old trees in the area, some of which are nearing the end of their natural span and may eventually have to be removed, but we do not see evidence of a forward policy to replace these. Without such a policy, what may Dorridge and its surroundings be like for future generations?

AND PLANS FOR St PHILIPS' CHURCH SITE

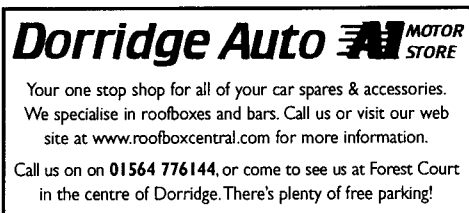
St Philips Church is proposing to review how its entire site - Church and Vicarage - could be used to better advantage, and plans are expected to include aspects which would be of benefit to the whole community. A not-for-profit approach is to be adopted and the Church will manage the project without the involvement of commercial developers. Consequently the Church is keen to hear the views of local people and organisations, and would favour a community partnership as the way forward. If you have any ideas or would like more information you can contact the Parish Office (details in the FUN RUN item above) or visit the Information Desk during the run on June 10th.

KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH THE ELDERLY.....

Knowle and Dorridge Lions do great work in providing outings, parties, Christmas presents and cards for older residents who may be lonely, but from time to time they need to update their records. If you know of someone



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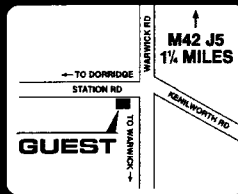


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(or you are someone) over 75 years of age who has not been contacted by the Lions you can help by giving details to Wilf Davey, 206 Station Road, Knowle, SOLIHULL, B93 0ER.

....AND KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH NATURE

You can by joining the Lions 5th Summer Stroll and Leisure Ride starting from Packwood House on Sunday 16 July, 9.30am.

ON THE RIGHT TRACKS

"Our railway" continues to improve, with more platforms becoming available at Marylebone in the Autumn and at Moor Street by Christmas, and recent engineering work allowing for additional services and faster trains to London. The two extra platforms at Moor Street should ease morning and evening rush hour congestion. There is no doubt that train travel is more popular - now what we need is somewhere for commuters to park their cars!

FANCY A CAREER IN MOTORSPORT?

We learned recently that the motorsport industry in the UK supports more than 4,000 companies employing

over 40,000 people, of whom 25,000 are skilled engineers, and generates more than £5billion to the UK economy. We were so surprised to discover that no less than 20 Colleges or Universities offer motorsport related courses that our in-house racing enthusiast has listed them all with details of what they offer. So if you know of someone who might like a career in this growing industry, Peter Radnall on 77 0633 can provide you with the list.

AND LAST OF ALL....

As always at this time of year we remind readers that we really can use your money to make Dorridge and District better in various ways. If you haven't paid yet for this year, if you have never paid, or if you have just moved into our patch, your £1 per head contribution to the common good would be most welcome. Just fill in the form below and deliver to any of the addresses listed.

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