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180 SPRING
2008

THE NEWSLETTER

CIRCULATION
3,800

DORRIDGE & DISTRICT RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Chairman: DAVID GLANFIELD ~ 779635 • Secretary: MALCOLM SHEPHERD ~ 773374 • Editor: PETER RADNALL ~ 770633
e-mail address: dorridgeresidents@goolemail.com • www.dorridge.org.uk

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 47th Annual General Meeting will take place at 7.30pm on Thursday 6th March 2008 at Bentley Heath Community Hall, Widney Road, Bentley Heath, Solihull.

After the DDRA formal business there will be an interval when light refreshments will be served with the Association's compliments, followed by Question Time.

AGENDA

- 7.30 pm - Apologies & Minutes of 2007 AGM & Matters Arising
- 7.35 pm - The Chairman's Report - David Glanfield
- 8.00 pm - The Treasurer's Report - Alan Holder
- 8.05 pm - The Election of Officers & Committee - Malcom Shepherd
- 8.10 pm - Interval - Coffee, Tea & Biscuits
- 8.30 pm - Question Time

SEE YOU THERE THEN.

It would be wonderful if we could beat last year's record AGM turnout of

90 souls. Regulars will have spotted that we have decided not to invite a speaker this year as we feel the time could be more usefully spent in dealing with residents' concerns and questions. Apart from the Committee we shall have our Councillors, the Police, and our Neighbourhood Coordinator on hand, so there won't be many topics that cannot be addressed by at least one member of the assembly.

PETITION FOR PROTECTION.

After a couple of aborted meetings – staff absence and the power cut – we finally met with the Council's Acting Chief Executive Mark Rogers, Councillor Ian Courts, and Senior Officers Gary Palmer and David Simpson on January 25. They were clearly impressed with the level of interest shown in the Petition for Protection, not least because all of you who signed it actually had to deliver it to us rather than simply signing a piece of paper in the street.

As ever there is a gap between desire and reality, as the Council is bound by Government dictat and the pressures put upon it to meet housing targets.



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Nevertheless we were concerned that, although the officers agreed that local planning guidance could be strengthened and that there is a need to review policies, the timescale they envisaged for this was longer than we would like. We have a strong ally in Councillor Courts, who is very experienced in the field, and we will continue to pursue the issues that matter to us all. We will keep you informed on our website –www.dorridge.org.uk – and in the newsletter.....

.....WHICH INCIDENTALLY

is published four times a year, and we deliver copy to the printers on **February 1st, May 1st, August 1st, and November 1st**. Depending on how much work the printer has, we then receive all 3800 or so copies a week to ten days later. These are bundled up into parcels by our two distributors (Committee Members) and taken to our loyal band of deliverers (a mixture of Committee Members and volunteers). However, from time to time we hear that a household has been missed and it is important that our distributors know when this happens, not least so that a copy can be delivered to you as soon as possible. Would you, therefore, if you hear from neighbours or anyone living in our distribution area (Dorridge, Bentley Heath, Four Ashes) that newsletters have been delivered and you haven't had one, telephone Diane Waldron on 77 8954 and leave your address and phone number.

NEWS FROM THE NICK

PC Simon Harrison ran the first of the revised time Police Surgeries for Dorridge between 5.00pm and 7.00pm on Thursday 10 January. He saw three residents but unfortunately had to leave at 6.20pm to attend to a burglary in Hockley Heath. Apologies to anyone who arrived to find nobody there. The next surgeries will be on Thursday 14 February (possibly before this newsletter is delivered) and Thursday 13 March. You may remember that this is a trial, so we will decide after the March date whether the evening sessions have been more successful than the 10.00am to noon slot.

We met with Sgt. Ann Strachan before Christmas to

raise a number of issues, not least being the difficulty of making contact! The most serious causes of stress are being sent round in circles when trying to report an incident via the Lloyd House telephone number 0845 113 5000, and the difficulty of actually speaking to one of our neighbourhood team. Ann suggests that if you do wish to make contact :

To report an incident : Phone the Lloyd House number 0845 113 5000 and ask to be put through to the Solihull Helpdesk. Make sure you are given a log number – ask for one if it is not offered – and make a note of it for future reference. The incident will be passed on to our Neighbourhood Team.

To contact our Neighbourhood Team on a routine or general matter: You can e-mail them at:
knowledorridge@west-midlands.police.uk

Or you can telephone the Lloyd House number above and add the extension number 7928 6666. (As this is the number for the Shirley Police station it is not always answered – in fact it is encouraging if it isn't, as this could mean that our officers are out and about instead of doing paperwork!)

And, of course, for a serious emergency – DIAL 999.

We also asked if it would be possible for us to be given details of the team's shift patterns so that at any time we would know who was on duty if we wanted to make contact in a hurry. No promises yet, but if we had that information we could relay a message quickly through the Solihull Police station instead of e-mailing and hoping that someone would pick it up. Ann also said that she would arrange a meeting for us at Superintendent level so that our concerns can go straight to the (almost) top.

On speeding, the Speed Watch scheme is being rolled out across the Rural Sector, enabling residents to record speeding vehicles and pass the information to the police, who write to the driver. The incident is also logged and put onto a database so that persistent offenders can be

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identified. The Council has recently provided the police with a Pro Laser enforcement camera which can be used to trigger prosecutions at hotspots identified by residents' reports under the Speed Watch scheme. And in case anyone is in any doubt as to the value of the scheme, residents with cameras have recorded speeds of 80mph on local roads with a 30mph limit.

**So, from speeding to standing still
 - PARKING!!!**

Residents ask us if the Council's Traffic Wardens visit Dorridge and surrounds. Indeed they do, and between the launch in October and the end of December 120 Penalty Charge Notices were issued on our patch. There are still problems of course – will there ever be a time when there aren't any? – but surely the persistent abusers will start to think before they leave their vehicles where they know they shouldn't. However, **residents should not become involved in dealing with them.** There have been reports of notes being placed on cars by objecting residents and a suggestion that damage has been caused. The Police and the Council have both stressed that no-one should interfere with parked vehicles and although the Council is now responsible for general parking infringements the Police still take an interest where vehicles are causing a hazard. Simon Harrison reports that he is keeping an eye on this and recently dealt with a lorry parked dangerously while waiting to deliver to Tesco in Dorridge. Simon has uncovered an agreement between Tesco and the Council whereby one lorry only may be parked outside the square when delivering, and he is sending us a copy.

DORRIDGE SURGERY NEWS.

The Striders and Strollers Walking Group organised by the Dorridge Practice is going from strength to strength, with a gentle half hour walk setting out from St George and St Teresa's Church on alternate Thursday mornings

at 10.15am and returning for a cuppa and a chat. The next walk will be on February 28th and new walkers will be welcome.

The Practice has welcomed Dr Sangha as GP Registrar during the absence of Dr Davis on maternity leave.

WELL DONE KATH!

The award of an MBE in the New Year's Honours list to Kath Vale for her many years of loyal service as a School Crossing Warden has been well publicised in the local press, but we would like to add our own special DDRA thanks to her on behalf of all the children – and their parents – who crossed safely to school under her watchful eye. Many congratulations Kath, and we look forward to the photos on Presentation Day.

ON TRACK FOR IMPROVEMENTS

Starting with new trains. The Chiltern Railways fleet is running to capacity and during the New Year West Coast Main Line crisis it was standing room only on a lot of services. The company is therefore ordering new stock, but we do not have a delivery date at present. With new trains, new signalling and the altered junction at Tyseley, travellers are bound to see big improvements. And in the opinion of many, Chiltern is already one of the country's best operators.

London Midland, having taken over from Central Trains, is also ordering new stock for delivery in 2009 plus an improved timetable, with later trains, in December this year.

**BUT ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT
 ON THE ROADS....**

.....especially Four Ashes Road and Dorridge Road. Both have recently been resurfaced but the covering has not lasted and the Council has reported the problems to the contractors. Meanwhile, we do need reports from residents on crumbling surfaces, potholes and the like so that we can keep the Council informed.

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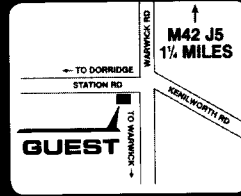
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WHEELIE BINS

During March we should all receive a schedule for wheelie bin collections from April 1st. The date will also mark the beginning of public consultation on the management of the wheelie bin scheme (collection frequency etc) to provide information to the Council to guide its discussion on future waste and recycling management. Prompted by a resident we did ask if green wheelie bin collection could be extended into the winter to cover leaf-fall, but the answer is that it isn't on the cards at the moment and residents can purchase green garden sacks from approved retailers.

STILL SINGING AND DANCING!

We are pleased to report that the Children's Theatre School mentioned in the last newsletter has had a strong beginning in Dorridge and the group has now been selected to perform at the Royal Albert Hall in September. They will also be performing a local musical show, written by a Dorridge resident, in Solihull in June/July. To find out more contact Sara Shepherd at : solihull@theatretrain.co.uk

WE ARE READY....

.....for the opening at 10.00am on February 12 of the Public Inquiry into the Motorway Service Area proposals at Junction 4 and Catherine-de-Barnes. DDRA has submitted two Proofs of Evidence, and we are timetabled to present these 'live' towards the end of the Inquiry. As this is a **PUBLIC** Inquiry, taking place in the Council Chamber, anyone may attend at any time, but if you wish to speak you should turn up on the first day and register your request. Our Proofs of Evidence will appear shortly on our website.

AND THANK YOU....

.....to everyone who has already joined - rejoined - paid up as existing members - this year. By January 21 membership stood at 350 and rising, beating the total for this time last year. Keep it coming - your membership slip is below and we look forward to welcoming you as a new member or to receiving your cash for another year. And we **are** spending, and there will be an opportunity at the AGM for residents to put forward ideas. Later in the year we will report fully on how money has been - or will be - spent.

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