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DORRIDGE & DISTRICT RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION




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183 WINTER
2008

THE NEWSLETTER

CIRCULATION
3,800

FOR THE RESIDENTS OF DORRIDGE, BENTLEY HEATH AND FOUR ASHES

Chairman: DAVID GLANFIELD ~ 779635 • Secretary: MALCOLM SHEPHERD ~ 773374 • Treasurer: PAUL DAY ~ 773936
E-mail: dorridgeresidents@googlemail.com • www.dorridge.org.uk

A NEW WAY TO PAY YOUR SUBS.

With a new subscription year approaching, and in response to requests from residents, we are including a Standing Order Form with this issue and we hope this will prove popular with a good many of you. The advantage to us is that we will know how much money will be arriving at given times, and the advantage to you will be that you will no longer have to ring us up to find out when you last paid! Unfortunately we cannot afford to include forms with every issue of 'The Newsletter', so if you wish to subscribe in this way either send the form in now, or keep it somewhere safe until you need it. As a back-up we will also make the form available on our website or on request from the Treasurer. And of course, if you wish to continue paying in the same way as usual, the payment slip is in its customary spot at the end of this newsletter.

DORRIDGE VILLAGE HALL....

...has been with us since 1977, but how much do residents know about it? A registered charity since 1977, the hall is managed by a Committee of Voluntary Officers and User Representatives to provide a facility for the benefit of local residents. The Hall offers good audience accommodation and parking, with disabled access and facilities, and a new Committee (August 2007) is trying to improve the Hall's operation and develop its facilities.

The Hall is used regularly by groups covering a variety of activities, badminton, dance, choir, Women's Institute, fitness, U3A, karate, pilates, Christadelphians, and its large stage is used by the Union Theatre for its performances. **However, there are still opportunities in the weekly programme for new Regular User groups; if you wish to apply contact the Chairman, Graham Ibbitson on 01564 77 5739.**

The hall is also available for private functions on Friday evenings and all day Saturdays. For booking enquiries contact 'UK EVENT! Ltd' on **0845 838 8853 or by post to PO Box 14623, Dorridge, Solihull B93 3EE.** The company can run the bar, arrange catering, marquees, discos etc etc...

And finally, the Dorridge Village Hall Association would welcome voluntary support from residents willing to help with fund raising or the provision of donations to improve the hall, or to offer assistance in any other ways. Computer literacy would be helpful but is not essential. If this sounds like you – GET IN TOUCH, JOIN THE TEAM!!

MEET THE POLICE...

...in Forest Court, Dorridge, on Tuesday 2 December 2008 between 10.00am and noon. This is your chance to talk to one of our local Officers and raise any issues which concern you. Dates for



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the first part of next year will be published later – keep an eye on our website and/or the Notice Boards in Bentley Heath and Dorridge.

AND THERE'S MORE.... Sergeant Jo Comer's latest newsletter reports that crime fell by 7% over the past twelve months, with incidents down from 426 to 398. Good news, but Jo warns that the winter can be a great time for thieves, with cars high on their wish list. They will actually prowl about looking for the car with its engine running to get the heater going while the owner is indoors and, literally before you can turn round, the car is on its way to a new owner or to take part in a robbery or other crime. And as the dark nights approach perhaps we should top up the security advice included in our last newsletter. So don't just remove the SatNav and hide your car keys but also make sure your house is secure and looks occupied when it isn't. The advice from Sgt Ann Strachan last year still holds good – "Imagine you are a burglar. As you walk along your street at night take a look at each house and decide which one you would choose to have a go at. Then make sure your own property doesn't have the same appeal." Doors and windows fully closed and with secure locking systems, interior lights on timer switches, sensor-activated outside lights are all simple ways of saying "Don't even try it" to those who would invade our privacy and help themselves to whatever they fancy.

AND IN SIMILAR VEIN...

...what about Neighbourhood Watch? Do you have one covering your area? If not, would you consider starting one? Our Police Area now has a new Neighbourhood Watch scheme manager, Mrs Celia Davies, based at Chelmsley Wood Police

Station. Celia looks after all the 'Watch' groups across the borough and would be happy to hear from anyone who might wish to set up a group.

Phone : 0845 113 5000 – Ext 7922 6263.

THE BIG CLEAN-UP.

Locals responded well to the Council's 'Big Tidy' initiative and there was a very successful morning's litter picking in Dorridge on September 22. Neighbourhood Manager Kath Hemmings and our own coordinator Kerry Mountjoy were joined by six volunteers from DDRA and Environment Champions. In two hours the group collected 12 sacks of rubbish – including a gazebo! – and the following Sunday two more residents harvested, among other things, almost half of the poster torn from the hoarding by the railway bridge. The worst problems were cigarette ends outside the station and bottles, cans and takeaway cartons around the petrol station and in the car park behind. The council will try to locate new litter bins to reduce some of the litter – but isn't it shameful that this is necessary! However, we would like to give a big thank you to the attendants at the Chiltern Railways car park, who did sterling work in collecting mounds of rubbish for us and stacking it up ready for the Council to collect.

BUT ON A BRIGHTER NOTE.....

.....jobs have been done and there's more to come. Works completed recently by the Council include improvements to the Arden Road approach to Dorridge Park, resurfacing of the footway outside the station, resurfacing on Mill Lane, relining the pedestrian crossing by the railway bridge in Dorridge, and improved grounds maintenance

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in Hanbury Park. Works still to be carried out will see refurbishment of the two benches on Station Approach, the relining of the Zebra Crossing at the Station Road/Poplar Road junction, a new gate, trip rails and bench repair at Conker Lane, and the much needed improvement to the footpath from Conker Lane to Chadworth Avenue which will involve edging and tarmac throughout the whole length. As reported earlier, we have had talks about improvements at Bentley Heath and our suggestions are currently being costed. Many thanks to Kerry Mountjoy for her continuing efforts on our behalf, and to Kath Hemmings for her persistence in obtaining the cash needed for the Conker Lane/Chadworth Avenue footpath improvement.

AND ALSO....

.....we hope you have noticed improvements to the planting on the railway land opposite the Forest Hotel. The volunteers have worked hard to really make a difference here and they are now hoping to recruit a small band of helpers to meet on a rota basis. With a large enough group individuals may only be required every two months. The work will entail litter picking, some weeding and hoeing, and general maintenance on the site to continue to enhance the street scene in Dorridge. If you can help, contact **Jill Erskine - 77 5218**, or **Ruth Shepherd - 77 3374**.

Looking after our environment is a prime function of DDRA and we can only be successful if we have practical assistance from residents and the Council. The work being done by Jill, Ruth and friends is a fine example of this cooperation but we are always

pleased to hear from anyone who can offer their own thoughts on what else we might attempt - preferably with their own involvement!

AND ALSO....

.....Dorridge will light up for Christmas on (or about) Monday December 1st and the word from Street Lighting is that none of our equipment needs repair or replacement, which will keep the cost down.

WELL DONE TREE WARDENS

The Dorridge Tree Wardens have been successful in obtaining a grant to plant trees in Dorridge Park. The aim of the application was to increase the amenity of the area and to involve children in the Forest School, based at Dorridge Junior School, in learning how to care for trees and the environment and combat vandalism. The youngsters will be involved in planting the trees during National Tree Week (26 November to 7 December). A selection of sessile oak, birch, black poplar and swamp cypress trees will be planted in the wetter areas along the boundary with the stream at the southeast end of the park. As the trees mature there should be a reduction in water logging in this area. Details of the planting will be placed on the notice board at the park, and the wardens would welcome voluntary help with the planting. The work will involve digging holes, staking and backfilling, and further details can be obtained from **Brian Chapman (77 0775)**, **Dave Tomkins (73 22580)** or **Ian Spencer (77 0813)**.

The wardens have also spoken with Council officers about management of the copse on the Dorridge Road/Avenue Road corner and agreement

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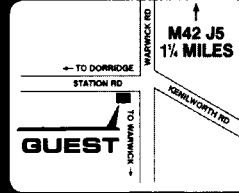
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has been obtained to tidy up the boundaries, maintain a wider mown strip of grass and open up the area around the benches. There will also be some additional thinning of plants and saplings. Throughout, the aim will be to enhance the amenity without damaging the habitat it provides.

Many thanks to Brian Chapman and his team for all their efforts. They haven't been around long but they are certainly making their mark!

END PIECE

Time was, when a horse went by, we would rush out with a bucket and shovel to collect anything it might have left behind and put it on the garden. Times change, and we have received an e-mail from a resident pointing out that whereas dog owners clean up after their animals, horse riders do not. Our correspondent quotes Conker Lane and Manor Road as problem areas affected by large smelly deposits and we pass the comments on to see if this a concern shared by other residents. We can't guarantee to solve the problem, but it is an

interesting thought which has not previously come our way. Opinions please to: dorridgeresidents@googlemail.com or by phone to 77 9635.

AND FINALLY...

...it's a bit early, but the DDRA Committee would like to offer our best wishes for Christmas and the New Year to you, the residents, and to those who support us so loyally, in particular Solihull Council and our Ward Councillors, our Neighbourhood Police Team, the Dorridge Tree Wardens, and that hardy band without whom you would not be reading these words – our newsletter delivery team.

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