

THE BOOKHAM BROADSHEET

The Journal of the Bookhams Residents' Association

November 1999

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Chairman's News

We have had a very busy year since our last newsletter. The developments in Bookham and the many different happenings that affect all residents take a lot of covering and monitoring. Committee members keep a constant vigil on building construction, vandalism, graffiti, parking, speed controls and Surrey CC development in Norbury Park to name just some of the areas we cover. We work in close cooperation with the Police and Councillors and thus do our best to protect the Bookhams in any way we can.

We helped towards the new Post Office by giving Mr Patel our full backing at Council level. I think you will agree that this development is a credit to the village.

Our plans for changing car parking arrangements in the High Street and Church Road were approved by the Council and the traders and will come into force when the refurbishment in Church Road takes place in January 2000. What a good beginning to the new Millennium! In this way we avoid disruption during the run-up to Christmas and we can do all our shopping locally.

The Committee have also made sure that all 17 footpaths in Bookham have been cut back and kept clear for pedestrians. Much time and effort is required but I am sure that this is appreciated.

All housing developments in the Bookhams are vetted by the Planning Committee and our advice is generally accepted by the Council. However, this was not the case in the Lower Road building site opposite the car park, where we wanted a flint wall built along the front but the Council agreed to a hedge. We just hope they keep it trimmed and free from beer cans etc.

The Bookhams Residents' Association

(Founded 1926)

NOTICE OF HALF YEARLY GENERAL MEETING

*Friday 19th November 1999 at 8.00pm
The Harrison Room, The Barn Hall,
Church Road, Great Bookham.*

Chairman's Welcome – followed by;

Guest Speaker

JANE WRIGHT
"How Crimestoppers can
help combat crime in the
community"

Coffee and biscuits will be available.

The BRA exists to maintain and improve the facilities for the community in Bookham. What are the issues you feel strongly about? Please come to the meeting and give us your support. New members are always welcome.

As Christmas is fast approaching we are delighted to find that the traders in Church Road are keen to be responsible for their own street decorations and we look forward to bright new lights to cheer us all up. I am also assured that all trees and lights will be removed shortly after 1st January and not left as an eyesore till June!

We look forward to meeting members and non-members at our Half Yearly AGM on 19th November. **Brenda deBruin**

Planning Sub Committee

Since the last newsletter the Planning Sub Committee have continued to monitor all new planning applications affecting the Bookhams and have made a large number of written representations to Mole Valley. We were able to persuade the Planning Committee to refuse planning permission for the following:

1. Removal of a mature oak tree from the verge in Squirrels Green.
2. Building 5 houses on the Mansard House site in Little Bookham Street.
3. Establishment of a blacksmiths and saddlery business at the Bridleways Equestrian Centre, Chapel Lane.

These are only partial successes as appeals have been lodged.

We were successful in our efforts to get the large, unsightly signs removed from the dentists' premises at the corner of the Garstons.

We have objected to an application to demolish the White House in East Street and to build two pairs of semi-detached houses on the site and also to an application to fell two large Corsican pines in the grounds of Stapledene, Maddox Lane.

We were not successful in stopping the building of a pair of semi-detached houses on the small site opposite the Baptist Church in the Lower Road.

Work is now beginning on the large site at the rear of 220 Lower Road with access from Post House Lane. The Association regretted the loss of this green area in the centre of the village, but the pressure for building land clearly proved irresistible.

The infilling of the space in the Church Road shopping frontage is now more or less complete and the final result is perhaps an acceptable compromise. Hopefully the empty shop will soon be brought into use. **Bob Foster**

Graffiti – The writing's on the wall

Bookham village is not new to graffiti, but many local residents will think of 1999 as a year like no other for the quantity of this mindless, artless criminal damage which has appeared week after week through the spring and summer in different parts of the Bookhams. The purveyors of this graffiti, which consists mostly of "tags" (a tag is a code name for the writer) have no respect for property ownership, ethics or taste.

March of this year saw the start of a new wave of graffiti. Mid April, five young men were caught red-handed but only one eighteen year old appeared three months later before the magistrate.

He pleaded guilty and was ordered to pay £140, of which £40 was court costs, £50 fine and only £50 compensation to the victim of the graffiti damage, which incidentally cost the victim £105 to rectify. The other four were all seventeen and had all pleaded guilty during the police investigation. They were given a police caution. This means that their names are recorded and should they be found guilty of any other relevant offence, this previous caution will be taken into account. It also means that their names are not in the public domain; they cannot be requested to carry out community service such as helping to paint over the fences they have admitted damaging with graffiti.

This is the outcome of catching graffiti artists red-handed and my guess is that the great majority are under eighteen and therefore will only ever be cautioned. There is no public shame or embarrassment on them or the parents of the graffit-mongers.

Sadly the only way of rectifying damage is for the Council and residents to do it themselves. Congratulations to residents of Pine Dean who, with B.R.A. co-ordination, held working parties to paint over the 40 affected fence panels at their own expense.

Thanks also to British Telecommunications who with a little encouragement from B.R.A. have willingly painted eleven street cabinets that had been defaced. Cable & Wireless have agreed to do likewise and this will soon be actioned.

Catching graffiti-mongers is difficult.

The way forward then surely has to be one of prevention rather than reaction; more vigilance, better information, better data collection, better analysis and investigation leading to warnings and guidance for novice graffiti artists. If you see criminal damage to private or public property taking place, call the police immediately by phoning 999. If you suffer criminal damage to your property, however slight, then report it as soon as possible after the event to the police for investigation by phoning Leatherhead Police on 01306 882284. **Gordon Elsey**

