

Monks Orchard Residents' Association

www.monks-orchard-web.org.uk

email: monksorchardweb@btinternet.com

Croydon

(Non Party)

(Independent)

NEWSLETTER - Spring 2006



Notice of Annual General Meeting 2006

The eighty-second Annual General Meeting of the Association is to be held on Friday 31st March beginning at 8.00 p.m. in St, George's Church Hall, Elstan Way, Shirley.

The Monks Orchard Residents' Association was founded in 1923, and represents 2,500 residents.

Chairman's Comment

This newsletter gives advance notice of the Annual General Meeting to be held on Friday 31st March. It is hoped that you will place the date in your diary and make every effort to attend. This Association exists to represent and forward your concerns. If you are worried about the increase in crime and anti-social behaviour, litter strewn streets, transport provision, medical care and proposed developments, come along and voice your concerns to your elected representatives.

Despite ever pressured and busy lives it is sensible to give two hours once a year to retain an idea about what is happening in the community and to exchange views with neighbours and friends.

You may also like to give thought to helping your association in its work in protecting the interests of the local community and keeping residents informed of proposals and plans that may adversely affect their peace and wellbeing.

There is a continuing need for road stewards and area managers to replace those that have become too frail to continue. If you are able to denote a few hours each month for the benefit of the local community please introduce yourself to me at the meeting or phone me on [REDACTED].

Notice of Annual General Meeting 2006

The eighty-second Annual General Meeting of the Association is to be held on Friday 31st March beginning at 8.00 p.m. in St, George's Church Hall, Elstan Way, Shirley. There will be reports from the Local Councillors, and Andrew Pelling, Member of Parliament and Member of the Greater London Authority.

Anyone wishing to become a member or wishing to help with the work of the Association is asked to let the Chairman know before or after the meeting.

Meeting Agenda

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting
3. Matters Arising
4. To receive and adopt the 2005/2006 Annual Reports
5. Report back by Elected Representatives
6. To Elect Officers and Committee for 2006/2007
7. Any Other Business
8. A presentation by visiting speaker

The minutes of the previous A.G.M. are available on our website and were published in the May 2005 issue of the newsletter. A copy of the audited financial report is printed on page 19 of this newsletter.

Reports from the local Councillors and the Member of Parliament form an important and informative part of the Annual General Meeting. Those presenting the reports usually agree to take questions from the audience. However, members wishing to have a more considered answer to a complex question are asked to give advance notice so that a more accurate response can be prepared. Questions should be sent in writing, with the name and address of the sender, by 10 March to Anne Johnson, Secretary of Monks Orchard Residents' Association, [REDACTED] or emailed to monksorchardweb@btinternet.com. At the invitation of the Executive Committee there will be a representative from the Waste Collection Team to report and answer questions about street cleansing. There will also be a representative from Customer Services of London Buses to report and answer questions about the changes to the Bus Route 367.

Planning News

MORA's task of protecting the area from inappropriate and unwanted developments and ill-considered proposals is becoming more difficult and there are increasingly complex issues to be tackled. It was not that long ago that the Council had civic control of almost everything that affected the lives of residents. Now the responsibility of management is shared between local, national and European levels of control. The local community has grown more complex and the lifestyles of the residents are much different from that of previous generations. These all combine to constrain and reduce the grounds for objections to contentious proposals.

MORA will always use its resources and energy to deal with issues that adversely has an impact on members but sometimes the increasingly intricate legislation makes it extremely difficult to achieve an outcome that pleases everyone. The new plan-making system that is to replace the existing Unitary Development Plan will involve residents in the plan-making process and may go some way to redressing the balance. It is not all doom and gloom, there have been many successes when MORA has battled on behalf of the members and proposals for inappropriate developments have been refused or modified but recent experience shows that with some of the issues that concern residents the grounds for objection have been gradually constrained or eroded. Listed below are a few of the issues that MORA, despite doing its utmost, failed in its attempts to protect residents from damaging proposals.

Odour Nuisance

Shopping parades have been subject to great change, the traditional greengrocer, grocer, butcher, florist, draper and hardware supplier have all but disappeared. The economic trend is for the vacant business premises to be acquired by the proprietors of hot food takeaways and restaurants producing a range of cooked food predominantly Indian, Chinese, Italian also burgers and fish and chips. A demand obviously exists for exotic restaurants and takeaway hot food especially in the twilight hours because many families have not the time or inclination to prepare and cook their own meals. The impact of this continuing change on residents living in close vicinity has been enormous. Unpleasant smells, grease laden odours and acrid fumes emitted from these establishments for twelve or more hours each day pervade the local atmosphere, and enter windows and gardens. MORA receives numerous appeals for help from residents especially during the warmer weather when high climatic pressure prevents the fumes and smells rising into the higher atmosphere. Residents have suffered distress, ill health and breathing difficulties and in a number of instances owners have had no option but to sell their homes and move elsewhere. This is a developing problem, for example there are nineteen hot food establishments in what was the Addiscombe shopping centre and similar changes have taken place in other parades.

The Council has completely failed to recognise, address or manage this problem. It does not control the number of hot food outlets that are granted planning permission, it ignores objections made by local residents, no assessment is made of the potential adverse impact on local air quality and it fails to impose controls to ensure that residents do not suffer discomfort. Acting in response to appeals from residents MORA has monitored the times and amount of the emissions, sought the advice of air conditioning experts, maintained records, requested the support of the local Councillors, written numerous letters, followed the Council complaints procedure and asked for the Local Government Ombudsman to investigate the failure of the Council to protect the well-being of residents. All this activity over eighteen months has been to no good effect and the Council refuses to act to correct the serious problems it has created.

Telecommunication Masts

The news that a telecommunication mast is to be erected evokes great concern and in many parts of the country residents have gone to great lengths to prevent a mast being installed. Residents, supported by MORA have halted a number of ill-conceived applications for masts to be erected in Monks Orchard. The introduction of the new G3 mobile phone technology has resulted in a number of applications for permission to upgrade and increase the power emission from



existing base stations and to erect additional masts to improve coverage. The grounds used by objectors to the erection of a base station and 12-metre mast, are health effects, obstruction and appearance. Recently the office of the Deputy Prime Minister has issued guidelines to planning authorities that it is not necessary to consider the health effects and the concerns about them. However, concerns about the possible health risk can still be successfully used when the base station is to be situated near where children assemble, for example a school or nursery.

The companies applying for planning permission respond by presenting a well prepared and rehearsed case about why the proposal should be allowed. They will reiterate that when the Government auctioned the franchises the successful bidders were granted statutory permission to install equipment and antenna throughout the country in order to achieve complete coverage providing they conform to the prescribed guidelines. They will also claim that mobile telephones are making people's lives easier all over the world. In the United Kingdom alone 4 out of 5 people now own and use a mobile phone. This figure is still growing every day and there are more than 50 million mobile users in the UK. It will also be stressed that where possible operators share base stations or build on existing structures.

When MORA enquires about a new proposal, such as the one at the junction of Wickham Avenue and Wickham Road, it becomes clear that consultations have already taken place between the applicants, the planning, transport, road safety officers and London Buses to select the best possible site for the base station having considered all the other possible options. It is a difficult task to overturn a decision that has already virtually been made. It is interesting to note that both the telephone companies and planners now admit that the base station at the junction of The Glade and Greenview Avenue is inappropriately sited but no attempt is being made to address the problem.

Gating of Estates

Crime and the fear of crime are creating a demand for secure and safe surroundings in which to live. Many new properties are now marketed as being secure dwellings that prevent entry by intruders. A local example is the development of luxury houses in Woodmere Avenue, the entry road to which is made impregnable by a high steel gate which can only be used by those living within.

High wire fences now enclose parts of Council estates, and apartment blocks owned by the local authority are being fitted with 'state of the art' entry phones and security locks. It was probably the local authorities that started the trend by subsidising the gating of the alleys behind shops and houses to prevent them being used by juveniles and others who may be using illegal substances. The trend is spreading as more apartment blocks and estates are made impenetrable.

When the Lawden estate in Orchard Way was constructed it received architectural awards for being a futuristic design and until recently the residents lived in peaceful and safe surroundings, but the estate does have recreational areas which attract gangs of juveniles who commit minor acts of vandalism. In response, a number of the residents have banded together to make the courts in which they live secure from entry except by approved key holders. The practice is spreading and more pathways on the estate are in the process of being sealed.

There needs to be wider consultation and warning before the closing of a road or walkway and it is important that the activity is balanced, because it fails to recognise that not all the residents agree with the course of action. Some residents feel that they are imprisoned in their own homes and are unable to roam freely. There is also concern about access by invited guests and the emergency services. Those living in properties backing onto the estate are prevented from entering their gardens and contractors cannot gain access. Furthermore, the closures also affect those that live on the borders of the Lawdon and for fifty years have used the walkways as a direct link between The Glade and Orchard Way and now have to walk the long way round. It would be totally unacceptable if we were all forced to live in caged areas in order to feel safe and secure.

Perhaps the answer to this problem is to tackle the problem at its source and to have a system of justice and a police force that deters those bent on anti-social behaviour. The Council has been asked if it has a view on property enclosures but, to date, no response has been forthcoming.

Planning Report

PLANNING APPLICATIONS & DECISIONS



APPLICATIONS:

05/05525/P

Outline Planning Permission

Location: 129-131 The Glade, Croydon, CR0 7QQ

Registration Date: 23 / 12 / 2005

Objection Date: 27 / 01 / 2006

Description: Demolition of existing buildings; erection of six terraced houses; formation of vehicular access and provision of associated parking

Consultation: Letters sent to: 123 neighbours

Local residents requested MORA to object on grounds of lack of amenity space, parking space allocation, local traffic, Water Table, no upgrade of local services or infrastructure. Full objection sent on 12th January.

05/05496/P**Outline Planning Permission**

Location: 79 Orchard Avenue, Croydon, CR0 7NF

Registration Date: 22 / 12 / 2005

Objection Date: 16 / 01 / 2006

Description: Demolition of existing buildings; erection of 1 detached two storey four bedroom house with accommodation in roofspace and 4 two storey four bedroom semi detached houses with accommodation in roofspace ; formation of vehicular access onto High Trees and provision of associated parking

Notes: MORA Objected on behalf of local residents on 12th Jan 2006.

05/05459/P**Full Planning Permission**

Location: Land R/O, 95 Tower View, Croydon, CR0

Registration Date: 22 / 12 / 2005

Objection Date: No date

Description: Erection of detached one bedroom bungalow; formation of vehicular access and provision of associated parking.

Previous Notifications Outstanding:**05/04582/P****Full Planning Permission**

Location: 81-83 Orchard Avenue and, 2 High Trees, Croydon, CR0

Registration Date: 22 / 12 / 2005

Description: Demolition of 81 and 83 Orchard Avenue; erection of 4 two storey four bedroom houses with accommodation in roofspace and 1 detached two bedroom bungalow; formation of vehicular accesses and provision of associated parking.

05/05057/DT

Registration Date: 22/11/2005

Application for development by Telecommunications Code System operator

Applicant: T-Mobile (UK) Ltd Mason D Telecoms

Location: O/S 263 Wickham Road fronting, Wickham Avenue, Croydon, CR0

Description: Erection of 10 metre high telecommunication mast with 2 ancillary equipment cabins.

Stop Press - Permission Refused: 10th January.

05/04873/P**Application for Full planning permission**

Registration Date: 10/11/2005

Location: 93 Orchard Avenue, Croydon, CR0 7NF

Description: Erection of detached dwelling at side with associated parking.

05/04872/P**Application for Full planning permission**

Registration Date: 10/11/2005

Location: 81 The Glade, Croydon, CR0 7QN

Description: Alterations; erection of single/two storey side extension, dormer extensions in rear roof slope and construction of pitched roof over existing two storey rear addition.

RECENT DECISIONS:

05/04530/P

Location: 89B Gladeside, Croydon, CRO

Registration Date: 25 / 10 / 2005

Full Planning Permission

Description: Demolition of existing building; erection of 4 three bedroom terraced houses and provision of associated parking

Notes: MORA OBJECTED on 11 / 11 / 2005

Decision: Permission Refused Date of Decision: 14 / 12 / 2005

Reason: 1) The vehicular access would be unsatisfactory by reason of its inadequate width and lack of visibility splays and would therefore have an adverse effect on highway and pedestrian safety contrary to Policies BE10, BE11 and T46 of the Unitary Development Plan and Policies UD10, UD11 and T43 of the Second Deposit Draft Replacement Unitary Development Plan (the Croydon Plan)

Scam Warnings

Latest Email Information

On 2nd December last we reported a hoax email regarding 'Warning be aware of new car-jacking scheme' and referring to a piece of paper on the rear screen of your vehicle; this has now reappeared with slightly changed wording. This originated in America and with regular slight changes of wording continues to be circulated. There are no reported or known cases of this ever happening, it is like the other urban myth which is still circulating where a friend of a friend heard from a friend of a friend of someone that a purse containing a large sum of money was handed back to someone who then informed them never to come back to the shopping centre as a bomb was about to be placed – very common in the run up to Christmas.

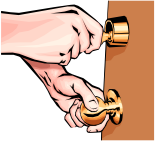
Top Cyber Security Tips:

- Use anti-virus software and keep it up to date.
- Don't open email attachments from unknown sources.
- Use a firewall, essential if you are on broadband.
- Regularly download security patches for your operating system.

Crime Hotspots

The main hotspot for robbery continues to be the Town Centre especially at West Croydon end with mainly bags and mobile phones being taken. The peak time is after 2 pm and on Thursday evenings with 14 offences in the area during the past two weeks. Mobile Police Stations and additional, high visibility patrols are operating in the area.

Mayday Hospital Car Park continues to have a number of thefts, mainly tools from vans and car stereos and CD players. There has also been a slight seasonal increase in thefts from cars in the Town Centre.



Bogus Callers

Four men who posed as police officers to steal from the vulnerable and elderly have been jailed following a joint operation between the Met, Derbyshire Constabulary and a number of other police forces.

The men travelled the country and tricked their way into the homes of predominantly elderly women and stole life savings, jewellery and treasured belongings. Some victims even lost money they had set aside for their own funerals. Many of the crimes were committed in the London area including Croydon. Upon identifying a suitable address the suspects knocked at the door and told their victims that they were plain-clothed police officers. They presented their own homemade warrant cards and claimed to have just arrested someone and recovered a large sum of cash or jewellery.

Once winning the trust of the victim they were allowed in. They then asked the victim to check if they had anything missing. As the victim checked, one of the gang would follow. After seeing their belongings intact, the victim would be distracted whilst another gang member would steal them.

Not all burglars break into homes - some will try to trick or con their way in. They are known as bogus callers and will pretend to be on official business from respectable concerns such as the Utility Companies - Gas, Electricity and Water - or the Council. They may claim to be tradesmen or workmen calling to carry out urgent repairs.

Bogus callers succeed because they sound believable, so don't be fooled. Make sure in your own mind that they are whom they claim to be by following these simple steps:

Think before you open the door - use your chain and spy hole or look out of the window to see if you recognize them.

Ask callers for proof of identity. Genuine tradesmen should carry an identification card with their photograph on. Check this carefully. If you are unsure, telephone the company the caller claims to represent.

The Utilities now offer a password identification system. Any caller from one of these companies should be able to give a pre-arranged password as additional proof of identity.

Beware of callers who attempt to distract you by claiming that they have seen something untoward in your rear garden or somewhere which may encourage you to leave your house - they may have an accomplice awaiting this distraction.

If you are not convinced of the identity of the caller, don't let them in. Ask the caller to come back later and arrange for a friend, relative or neighbour to be present on their return or ask the caller to contact this person.

Treat every stranger with caution. If you are still worried, dial 999 immediately and ask for the police.

Premium Rate Phone Scam

A postcard is now being posted to addresses in the Borough referring to a digital camera, which was not ordered by the householder. The card asks you to phone a premium rate number to arrange delivery. The call will last some 6 minutes and you will be charged approx £9 for the call to be told that there is nothing for you.

Crime Alerts

| Offence | Location | Date | Method |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|---|
| Criminal Damage of Motor Vehicle | Wickham Road | 04/01/2006 | By persons unknown ripping both wings mirrors from car and taking them. |
| Theft of Motor Vehicle | Orchard Avenue | 03/01/2006 | By unknown suspects taking the car from the victim's driveway. |
| Burglary of Dwelling | Orchard Way | 6/12/2005 | By unknown suspects forcing the window open with a tool and then entering the venue, searching it and removing property from inside before making off. |
| Snatch | Wickham Road | 13/11/2005 | Victim was driving away from parking bay when a black male suspect, approx age 20 years 5'09" tall wearing light coloured baseball cap and dark anorak, opened car door and snatched her handbag. |
| Criminal Damage | Cheston Avenue | 11/11/2005 | Person unknown threw stone and smashed window at rear of property. |
| Criminal Damage of Motor Vehicle | Kempton Walk | 11/11/2005 | Suspect gained entry to vehicle by forcing driver's door, steering lock damaged, in an attempt to steal vehicle. |

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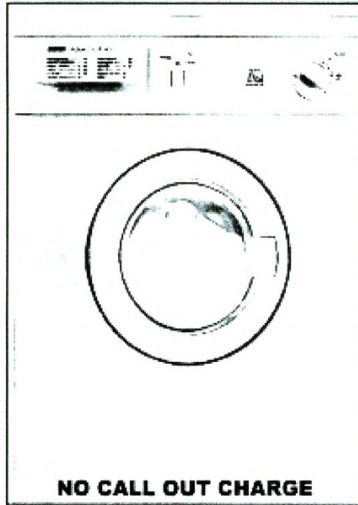
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Street Cleaning



As reported in the December issue of the newsletter, MORA is actively pursuing the issue of street cleansing in response to numerous complaints about litter-strewn streets. A formal letter of request was sent to the Street Scene Team Manager in August 2005 stating the concerns expressed by residents and that MORA was going to launch an investigation into the cleaning contract and the whole decision making process that stipulates that some areas are cleaned more frequently than others. No acknowledgement or response was received and in November a formal complaint was submitted. This evoked a response from the Support Services Unit Manager stating that MORA's request was being dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and that a fee may be payable. The Executive Committee was perplexed and surprised that a simple request about the cleaning of the area in which we live should need to be dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act.

On December 6th a considered response was received from the Principal Cleansing Manager from which it can be deduced that the more rubbish that is deposited in a particular area determines the frequency of cleansing across the borough, which can vary from 6 times a day in the town centre to every eight weeks in the rural South of the Borough. Apparently there is a Code of Practice that provides a cleanliness standard based on land use and the time by which a Council should comply. It sets out grades of cleanliness and divides land into zones according to usage and volume of traffic, and sets out a response time by which the Council should restore its land (the adopted highway) to an acceptable level of cleanliness.

The Principal Cleansing Manager said that he is quite prepared to come to a meeting of the Association and the offer has been accepted. Street cleansing in the borough is obviously a complex issue and those residents wishing to learn more how the Code Of Practice evolved and is applied should make every attempt to attend the Annual General Meeting on 31st March.

IsItFair Press Release



Christine Melsom, founder of the Isitfair council tax protest group, issued the following statement in response to the publication of the Consultation Paper and Interim Report of the Lyons Inquiry into Local Government, 15 December 2005.

"Under its terms of reference the Lyons Inquiry into Local Government, was to 'make recommendations on how best to reform council tax'. The inquiry's interim report was published on 15 December 2005, and gives Isitfair

campaigners no confidence that its final report due in 2007 will be worth waiting for. For the past three years the Isitfair campaign has been arguing for council tax to be scrapped. The present system based on property value results in a disproportionately high tax on those least able to afford it, and it should be replaced by a tax based on everyone's ability to pay.

"We expected the Lyons Inquiry to include a full and unbiased evaluation of income-related alternatives to the present system of council tax, which include our own proposal for an Income Tax/VAT solution and also local income tax as proposed by others. We now know that it will do no such thing. The interim report of the inquiry makes many references to the unfairness of the present system, but then states that it will not even consider an income-related replacement for council tax.

"This position is made clear in the report where Sir Michael Lyons states that his terms of reference 'asked me only to look at local income tax as an additional local tax, rather than as a replacement for council tax' and then proceeds to say that 'people were dubious about the idea of having an additional tax alongside council tax to fund local spending'. He must be on a different planet if he finds this surprising - people want an income-related tax INSTEAD OF the present property tax, not in addition to it.

"There are numerous references in the report to the unfairness of the present tax, for example in the section 'Key findings from public attitudes' it says: 'Fairness was considered by focus groups to be the most important principle underlying a tax system, and most equated fairness with ability to pay. To most people this meant income and, to a lesser extent, savings. Property, especially a home, was not considered to form a component of ability to pay, as it was not seen as a source of wealth that was immediately accessible.'

"Isitfair maintains that an income-related tax would be far cheaper to administer, simpler to understand and, above all else, fairer to everyone. Why have such alternatives been rejected without any investigation whatsoever?

"The inquiry's blinkered approach leads them to the conclusion that extending the council tax benefits system will address the unfairness in the present system. The means-tested CTB system has been a failure but they appear determined to keep flogging this dead horse. If the tax was related to income instead of property value the whole council tax benefits system would be redundant, saving tens of millions of pounds every year in administration costs alone.

"We can therefore expect their conclusions in 2007 to centre on patching up the present system with more means testing. They even refer to the possibility of other taxes in addition to council tax, but make no reference to the considerable cost of the associated bureaucracy that would be required to implement and administer them.

"The people at the sharp end of this tax have had enough, and will continue to fight for it to be scrapped and replaced by a system that takes account of everyone's ability to pay.

"We are heading for yet another round of delaying tactics and Government impotence. If Sir Michael Lyons continues along the lines set out in his interim report then this long-awaited inquiry will be nothing more than a sham as far as its council tax reform proposals are concerned."

[Reprinted by kind permission of IsItFair]

Stop Press - 2005/2006 Council Tax

Tony Newman — Head of Croydon Council, has pledged that next year's Council Tax will be pegged at 5% or less at a Croydon Retired People's Campaign meeting on 11th January. The Croydon average Band D would be £970. However, the Greater London Council precept would raise that figure to £1224 in total. The final tax bill will depend on the Budget set by the Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone. We will have more information at the time of the AGM, where you will also be able to put questions to your local councillors and MP Andrew Pelling, who is also a member of the GLA.

Home Information Packs



Anyone who has been involved in the buying and selling of a house knows that it can be a nightmare. Estate agents and solicitors are involved. There is a lot of 'mumbo-jumbo' and jargon in conveyancing, which seems to be a very old-fashioned esoteric procedure. There is no binding contract until a very late stage; it is all 'subject to contract'. There is a chain, and the strength of a chain is, of course, always in the weakest link. Synchronising the timing is a real problem. In a sellers' market the prospective seller may withdraw, at a late stage; in a buyers' market the prospective buyer might withdraw, at a late stage. 'Gazumping' is where one party may incur considerable abortive expenditure, e.g. surveyors' fees, search fees, solicitors' fees, advertising fees, time and travel, delay, indeed annoyance, frustration, misery.

Accordingly, an attempt is being made to rectify the situation with the Housing Act 2004, by the introduction (early 2007 the target date) of HOME INFORMATION PACKS - HIPs. The aim is to simplify, facilitate, cheapen and expedite the selling and buying of houses (not commercial premises).

When putting the house onto the market, the seller or the estate agent will, by law, have to provide a HIP, containing all kinds of prescribed information, such as title, easements and rights of way, results of searches, planning, warranties, service charges, home condition survey, fixtures and fittings, energy efficiency, water, gas, electricity details; you name it, it has to be there. It is to be hoped that the HIP will be comparatively 'basic', i.e. sale statement, title, lease title, local searches, and home condition. Thus the buyer will have all the necessary information from the start, and the deal can go through promptly and satisfactorily for all concerned.

There may be problems. The seller may have difficulty in finding an approved surveyor or 'home inspector', as they will all be busily engaged in preparing HIPs. There may be delay. The HIP must be accurate, otherwise the seller may be liable. The HIP must contain 'fact', not 'puff'. The seller may be suspicious about 'snoopers', pretend buyers wanting to pry into his business; though he need only disclose to genuine buyers. But how do you identify them? He may be concerned that the prospective buyer may pass on sensitive information to third parties, though conditions may be imposed to try to prevent this.

The seller will have to pay for the HIP, an estimated £750-£1,000 and more if it begins to go stale and needs revision. The seller will try to recoup the expense of the HIP in the price asked for the house, but there is only so much the market will bear even in these times of inflationary house prices.

The buyer may not wish to place much faith in the seller's HIP. He may prefer to instruct his own surveyor to act on his behalf. The bank or building society may insist upon their own surveyor to act, as a condition of a mortgage loan. So the buyer may end up in effect paying directly or indirectly for two or even three surveys.

The cost of all this will have to fall on someone. The cost of selling and buying houses is likely to increase because of HIPS. The cost may be a disincentive in the housing market. On the other hand the HIP may indeed simplify and expedite conveyancing, and reduce the incidence of abortive sales. Time will tell.

The Minister will make regulations and introduce the scheme when he feels it is appropriate. He is advised by the Home Information Pack Components Project Board, and pilot schemes have been and will be carried out in certain parts of the country. Surveyors and estate agents will need to prepare. The OFT and trading standards officers will be responsible for monitoring and enforcement.

The scheme may turn out to be a success, or it may prove to be politically too sensitive and it may have to be dropped (like council tax revaluation). We shall see.

Reprinted by kind permission of The Journal of the National Consumer Federation.

367 Bus Route



Almost a year has passed since bus route 367 was extended to cover Shirley Oaks Village, and sections of the withdrawn bus route 494, and the change is still the cause of frustration and resentment. To add to the problem the buses at peak hours have become more crowded since the introduction of the child Oyster card which gives free travel to the under 16's. MORa has tried to obtain some answers to the concerns expressed by residents and has written to the London Mayor, the Croydon Transport Officer, local Councillors and London Buses. Unfortunately not all letters elicit a response but Stephen Summers on behalf of Customer Services at London Buses did respond with a lengthy explanation and the relevant paragraphs are reproduced below:

“Thank you for your letter of 25 October concerning the operation of bus route 367. I am sorry that a number of residents have experienced problems when using this service recently and have expressed dissatisfaction with the change made to it earlier this year.

We appreciate that for some through passengers of route 367 their journey is now longer. We regret the inconvenience caused to such passengers by the route change. This disbenefit (sic) was recognised, and given full consideration, in our review of both routes 367 and 494. However, we are required by law to use public funds in the most efficient way possible. Demand for travel changes over time. We therefore need to constantly check that resources are being allocated to the service pattern that best reflects overall travel needs, and the amount of money currently available. I regret that to retain the 494 and 367 unchanged was not considered the most appropriate use of our limited resources.

Bus route 367 has been consistently reliable for many years, and its frequency of operation has been well matched to passenger demand. We are therefore confident that, although the journey will take slightly longer, passengers will still benefit from a reliable service. The average total journey time is only around 10-12 minutes longer when compared to the former routing. The new routing also provides improved links to Bromley and East/West Croydon.

I am concerned to learn about the long waits some passengers have been experiencing for buses on route 367. Our Performance Manager, who oversees the day to day operation of this service, has been made aware of this and is closely monitoring the reliability of route 367 in conjunction with the operator, Metrobus. Passenger loadings are also being monitored, particularly during the peak

periods, and these together with the other points that you have raised will be considered as part of the ongoing review of this service and the local bus network.

I note your request for the re-instatement of the bus stop near the Post Office in Wickham Road, Shirley. I have today passed a copy of your letter to our Infrastructure Development Manager, who is responsible for bus stops in your area for consideration.

Thank you for taking the time to contact us about this matter. I can assure you that the revised arrangements for bus route 367 will be reviewed, and every effort will be made to ensure that the route delivers a good level of reliability in the future.”

The Executive Committee has invited a representative from London Buses to attend the Annual General Meeting to be held on Friday 31st March to discuss local bus provision. All those who have concerns about route 367 bus and bus provision generally should use this opportunity to voice their concerns and give planners an idea of the experiences of local bus users.

Community Protection Manager



Reduction in crime is one of the highest priorities of the Council towards making Croydon a safer place to live, work and visit. To assist in this aim the Council has appointed a new Community Protection Manager who will assume responsibility for all the services and 61 staff brought together within the new community protection unit – including street wardens, community safety and anti-social behaviour unit, mobile enforcement team, the noise team and CCTV. The Community Protection Manager is also assigned to help implement the Council’s crime strategy 2005-08, which aims to cut crime by 20% and to work with the police to ensure the continued development of the Safer Croydon Partnership.

The extra taxes paid by local Council Tax payers must be spent wisely and seen to achieve positive results, not just an improvement in statistics. The last year has seen an increase in vandalism and anti-social behaviour in Monks Orchard. When the local bus cannot travel through the area without being attacked by stone throwing jobs, action needs to be taken and taken quickly.

If the strategy of extending drinking hours in the town centre does, as predicted by the Government, bring about a reduction in crime in the town centre, local residents hope that some of the larger numbers of police and community support officers could be successfully deployed in Monks Orchard and Shirley to protect local people and property.

Aircraft Noise



Croydon is situated under the flight paths of Heathrow and Gatwick International Airports and, as a consequence, residents are subjected to annoying aircraft noise at certain times of the day and night. There are those that remain unperturbed and are able to ignore or shut out the noise but more sensitive individuals suffer considerable distress and sleep disturbance. We are all being exposed to unacceptably high levels of noise from night flights, which are continually being increased. Noise made by aircraft is recognised as a major problem and the World Health Organisation is very concerned. Curiously, aviation is above the law as far as noise and pollution are concerned.

Responding to concerns Geraint Davies, the previous Member of Parliament for Croydon Central, raised the problem at Prime Minister's Question Time and gained only a polite, defensive reply. The British Airports Authority, the voice for the expanding aviation industry, does not deny that there is a noise problem but states that technological developments will result in new generations of aircraft that will make less noise than their predecessors. It also stresses that aircraft remain at a high altitude until close to the landing strip.

The problem is undoubtedly going to get worse, as much larger aircraft are being introduced and all the London airports have plans for expansion with more runways and additional flights. Flight path alteration might help give this part of the country a quieter and healthier environment but it will need great pressure from the electors and strong political will to do so. If you are adversely troubled by the increasing noise and pollution coming from overhead you are invited to contact our new MP, Andrew Pelling, by phoning 0207 219 8472 or by post to: House of Commons, London, W1A 0AA or by email to Andrew.Pelling@london.gov.uk.

There is also a freephone complaints line at Heathrow Airport: 0800 344 844. The more people complain, the better the case.

[Note: Andrew Pelling has agreed to the insertion of this information in this issue of the newsletter].



Shirley Christmas Lights

MORA has contributed £100 for the Christmas Lighting Display for Shirley. The lights were in use from the end of November, and have helped towards brightening up the Christmas period in Shirley. With support from the Spring Park Residents' Association and all the local business, the lights gave the community of Shirley and Spring Park pride in their area through this joint venture. With thanks for all your help, from the Shirley Business Association.

Volunteer Drivers Wanted

Could you offer a few hours a month to drive disabled and/or elderly people in your community to/from a clinic or hospital appointments?



If you can, then please call Christine, Volunteer Co-ordinator for Shirley Neighbourhood Care on [REDACTED].



Great Book Sale

The Great Book Sale will take place at the Shirley Methodist Church, Eldon Avenue, on Saturday 11th March, 2006.

Collection is underway for hardbacks, paperbacks, children's books, records, tapes, CDs and videos. Please drop any unwanted books, tapes, CDs or videos off at the following collection points: [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and [REDACTED]. Collection will stop on 28th February to allow for sorting.

Houseproud

If you are a homeowner aged 60 or over, or a homeowner of any age who is disabled or has a disabled person living with them, Houseproud can help with repairs, improvements or adaptations to your home.



We know that the prospect of having building work done is daunting enough even without the dangers of cowboy builders and concerns over how to pay for the work.

Houseproud offers a safe, easy way to get those essential jobs done professionally and with the minimum of fuss. If finding the money to pay for it all is a problem, Houseproud can help with that, too.

Houseproud offers a variety of loans, which not only are tailored to the needs of older and disabled people, but also carry a guarantee of no repossession - no matter what happens.

Houseproud is run by a group of 'not-for-profit' organisations headed by the Council. Their sole aim is to help homeowners to continue to live safely and independently in their own homes. For more details, freephone 0800 783 7569 or go to www.houseproud.org.uk.

**ACCOUNT OF INCOME & EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR ENDING
31/12/2005**

| | 2005 | 2004 |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| INCOME | | |
| Subscriptions | 2694 | 2717 |
| Bank interest | 31 | 18 |
| Advertising revenue | 1475 | 1295 |
| Donations | 25 | Nil |
| Total Income | 4225 | 4030 |
| EXPENSES | | |
| Printing & stationery (*) | 1383 | 3090 |
| Road Stewards | 400 | 400 |
| Hall hire | 24 | 32 |
| Vestry hire | 60 | Nil |
| Chairman's/secretarial expenses | 50 | 39 |
| Sundries | 364 | 256 |
| Insurance | 168 | 166 |
| Donations | 150 | Nil |
| Audit | 10 | 10 |
| Website (Domain | 20 | Nil |
| Subscription to BCTV | 25 | 25 |
| Total | 2654 | 4018 |
| Surplus (*) | 1571 | 12 |
| CURRENT ASSETS | | |
| Current account | 5053 | 3509 |
| Deposit account | 4853 | 4826 |
| Net Current Assets | 9906 | 8335 |
| CURRENT LIABILITIES | Nil | Nil |
| REPRESENTED BY | | |
| Surplus at 1.1.2005 | 8335 | 8323 |
| Surplus for year (*) | 1571 | 12 |
| Total Surplus at 31.12.05 | 9906 | 8335 |

Note (*) Surplus for year 2005 includes two outstanding Newsletter Printing Bills awaiting invoices. This is estimated to be 2 x £750 = £1500 bringing the total operational surplus for 2005 to approx £71 (the actuals will be shown on the 2006 accounts).

MORA COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2006

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| President | VACANT |
| Chairman: | BOB AKERS |
| Vice Chair: | VACANT |
| Secretary: | ANNE JOHNSON |
| Membership Secretary: | ALYCE MENHINNITT |
| Minutes Secretary: | CAROLE GREENWOOD |
| Hon. Treasurer & | |
| Advertising Manager: | TERRY GREENWOOD |
| Editor / Website | DEREK RITSON |
| Social Secretary: | CHRISTINE ROSS-SMITH |
| Transport & Highways: | JEFF CLARK |
| Police Liaison/Security: | JEAN COOK |
| Primary Care: | MERCIA NASH |
| Neighbourhood Partnership: | ANDREW SEGRAM |
| Committee Member: | MICHAEL NASH |
| Joint Archivist | PATRICIA TURNER |
| Joint Archivist | SHEILA WAGLAND |
| Committee Member: | DIANE MCINERNEY |



MONKS ORCHARD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

'I wish to become a member of the Monks Orchard Residents' Association'

| | |
|------------|------------|
| Name: | Signature: |
| Address: | |
| Post Code: | |

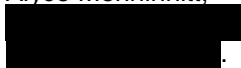
Tick box for membership:

Full Membership £2.00

Senior Citizen £1.00

Please send this completed form to:

Alyce Menhinnitt,



Helping People with Disabilities to Help Themselves
Printed by
CROSLINK
Supported Workshop
 020 8255 5473