

# Monks Orchard Residents' Association

[www.monks-orchard-web.org.uk](http://www.monks-orchard-web.org.uk)  
email: [monksorchardweb@btinternet.com](mailto:monksorchardweb@btinternet.com)

Croydon

(Non Party)

(Independent)

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**NEWSLETTER - Spring 2008**



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

# Chairman's Comment

There was scepticism when it was mentioned that Croydon could become the new Barcelona but the plans for the redevelopment of the town centre include the sort of public squares, pedestrian friendly walks and greenery that create character and ambiance. Already one of the biggest retail venues outside central London, the new Park Place shopping centre and the refurbished Whitgift centre will attract additional brand names. Transport links are to be further improved and the erection of tall towers, interesting architecture coupled with new leisure and cultural space will transform the town centre. Providing the economy continues to expand and there is money to be earned and spent, the future looks bright.

A discomfiting sight facing visitors to Croydon is the long queue extending from the central post office where the wait for service can be over one hour. There is scant provision for the weak and infirm and customers have to trek between aisles lined with displays of items that are an unwanted distraction for those requiring stamps or money orders, to renew their travel pass or put a package or parcel in the post. The wearisome wait will be further lengthened by the announcement by Post Office Ltd. of the closure of more local offices. The destruction of the post office network is to be deplored, making it more difficult for those with a debilitating or long-term illness to travel to another branch. The large imposing central Bromley post office building closed at the end of last year and the vital community service was transferred to a corner of the W. H. Smith retail outlet in the high street. Customers requiring service have to take the stairs, escalator or lift to the second floor then navigate through hoards of shoppers whilst trying to locate the end of the correct queue to join. We can only hope that this does not happen to the Croydon central post office.

Another vital amenity under threat is the local chemist. Owners are concerned that the new Department of Health contract could force them to close within a year because of the raising of the threshold number of prescriptions that pharmacists must dispense to be eligible for significant support. The loss of the link with the nearby pharmacist will make life more difficult for everyone and especially the elderly, the infirm and those with young children.

During the past three months the Executive Committee of MORA has been representing the local community on the following; the second round of consultation on the proposed changes to Primary Care leading to the establishment of mini-clinics; pressing for the Planning Reform Bill to be amended to require adequate consultation and planning permission before inconsiderate home improvers add large loft conversions and extensions to their property; acting on the concerns expressed about the number of escapes from the Denis Hill secure unit at Bethlem Royal hospital and

preparing detailed objections to inappropriate and unsuitable planning proposals.

The Croydon Council Tax Services charges are to increase by 3.99% and the GLA Services by 1.95% which results in a combined overall impact on Council Tax of a 3.53% increase. This translates to a £47.99 increase per annum to a Band D property. This is less than the latest known RPI of 4.1% [12 months to Jan 2008]. This year's increase is less than for recent years but this will only be achieved by further reductions in service and increasing the direct charges levied for council services. It is easy to spend other people's money, as shown by the growth in the number of council staff with remuneration packages of over £50,000 per annum from 30 in 1996-7 to 320 in 2006-7 costing each Taxpayer £60.71 per year. As one of the biggest London Boroughs, Croydon needs qualified professional people to manage its affairs but experience shows that not all our services are of a standard commensurate with such high salaries coupled with no performance checks, no fear of redundancy and long holidays. A huge proportion of this year's Council Tax rises will fund the "gold plated" town hall pensions. Overall spending on local council pensions has risen by 13 per cent to £4.6 billion in the past 12 months and for every £5 raised in revenue at least £1 was spent funding the council's pension commitment.

At this time of the year I make my traditional appeal for residents interested in the wellbeing of the community to offer help with the work of the Association. As each year passes the need becomes more urgent, because there is a genuine fear that when the present serving members of the Executive Committee retire from office, MORA will cease to exist. If you enjoy living in the area and do not want its special character ruined further by property speculators, uncaring planning officers and soulless administrators then now is the time to offer your help. This is a time when changes are being considered to the planning system, medical and elderly care provision, transport links, security arrangements and green spaces. Proposals for change need be carefully examined and considered to ensure that the local community does not have its essential services reduced or transferred elsewhere. For eighty-four years MORA has maintained a structure of members that has a voice more powerful than an individual resident and it is vital that this structure remains in place to protect the interests of the community. Please do not leave it until it is too late; now is the time for you to act and offer help so please phone me on [REDACTED].

You are invited to attend our AGM (see Page 4) to meet other members of the community, ask questions, receive reports from elected representatives and learn more of the constraints imposed by changes to the planning system and how to submit effective objections to unacceptable planning proposals. I look forward to welcoming you to the meeting.

# **Annual General Meeting 2008**

The eighty fourth Annual General Meeting of the Association is to be held on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> April beginning at 7.30 p.m. in St. George's Church Hall, Elstan Way, Shirley. There will be reports from Local councillors but this year Andrew Pelling, Member of Parliament and Member of the Greater London Authority, is not expected to attend or be able to report back to members due to illness.

## **Meeting Agenda**

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting
3. Matters Arising
4. To receive and adopt the 2007-2008 Annual Reports
5. Report back by Councillors
6. To Elect Officers and executive Committee for 2008/2009
7. Any Other Business

## **Presentations**

The minutes of the previous A. G. M. are available on our website and were published in the Summer 2007 issue of the Newsletter. A copy of the audited financial report is printed on page 19 of this newsletter.

Reports from local Councillors form an important and informative part of the Annual General Meeting. The Councillors usually agree to take questions from the floor of the hall but members wishing to have a definitive answer to a complex question are asked to submit the question in writing at least six days prior to the meeting. Questions should be sent in writing, with the name and address of the sender to Dave King, Secretary of Monks Orchard Residents Association, [REDACTED] or emailed to [monksorchardweb@btinternet.com](mailto:monksorchardweb@btinternet.com).

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.

At the invitation of the Executive Committee there will be a representative from the Council Planning Department to report and answer questions about the planning process, how applications are dealt with and give guidance on how to submit effective objections to unacceptable planning proposals. It is hoped that a member of the Planning Committee will attend to give a political prospective on changes to the planning system and why MORA or the Council cannot always prevent unwanted planning proposals from being given the go ahead. A representative of Croydon Careline will introduce and outline the work of the careline service, answer questions and demonstrate the Keysafe entry system.

# Planning News

The number of planning submissions for sites in Monks Orchard means that, at some stage, most residents will be troubled by a development that will threaten their property, amenities, peace and privacy. This is the reason that the MORA Executive Committee has invited a senior member of the Planning Department to attend the Annual General Meeting. Members are advised to attend if they wish to learn about the planning process and the constraints imposed upon the local system by the law and the Greater London Authority, the appeal procedures and how to submit relevant comments on planning proposals. The presentation may also explain why the local planning authority and MORA cannot always protect residents from aggressive developers.



In the important debate on planning that took place at the Town Hall recently much was said about the Government Planning Inspectorate and the Mayor of London overturning decisions made by the Croydon Planning Committee. MORA has always thought it unfair that residents have no right to appeal against the decisions of the Planning Inspectorate but the Planning

Department often fails to use its considerable powers to prevent inappropriate home extensions and loft conversions. Many of the house improvements that are awarded a Lawful Development Certificate do not complement the form and layout of the existing and adjacent properties; protect the privacy and amenities of the occupiers of surrounding buildings, prevent visual intrusion and loss of privacy or enforce the condition that the materials used must complement the design of the original structure. There are an increasing number of examples where the Planning Department have failed to follow its own rules contained in the Croydon Plan. Proof of such negligence is the unopposed award of a Lawful development Certificate to the owners of a small bungalow situated in The Rosary for a massive loft and rear extension. As illustrated in the photograph above, this ugly and inappropriate development breaks all the aforementioned planning rules and has proved highly contentious. Residents may well ask how outrageous, ill-conceived and disproportionate a property extension has to be before failing to gain the approval of the planning officers.

The Government has recognised that people are living longer and has announced proposals to make sure that all new homes and the layout of urban areas cater specifically for the elderly. Under these proposals ministers want all new homes to incorporate age-friendly designs by 2013. This will involve wider doors, improved design of bathrooms and staircases big enough to take stair lifts. The Government also wants to see more age-friendly neighbourhoods which will involve better paving and kerb design,

improved access to public toilets, improved street lighting, well located bus stops, better information services, extra provision for disabled parking bays and more accessible public transport. The aim is to build 'lifetime homes' suited to families with pushchairs through to older people in wheelchairs.

### **On-Street Parking**

A car is considered as one of life's essentials and this has resulted in a spectacular increase in ownership with sales of new models rising year upon year. In Croydon, three out of four households have the use of a car and these are being made bigger and wider. Saturation point has not yet been reached but there is growing



concern about air pollution, global warming, congestion and road safety and in large urban areas increasing restraints on car use seem inevitable. Monks Orchard is fortunate in having few restrictions on the parking of vehicles, yet anger and arguments can result from the irresponsible and thoughtless parking of vehicles. The major contributors to kerbside congestion are the increasing number of households with two or more vehicles; the growth in higher density properties and the remarkable increase in back land developments. It is normal for a block of flats of five or more small high-density houses to be erected on sites formerly occupied by a single dwelling. More than half of the homeowners who have a garage do not use it to park their car overnight and some turn their garages into makeshift storerooms or convert them into additional living space with the vehicles being parked on-street. Vans, lorries, trailers and construction equipment used for business purposes can be found occupying front gardens plus a large part of the



kerbside outside local properties. There is also the curse of the used car dealer or collector that fills all the available space at the front and rear of a property and then moves the remainder of his wares to the public highway utilising old pick-up trucks piled with non-taxed vehicles that are randomly dumped on any available on-street space in a narrow side road and blocking the entry for emergency and service vehicles. It

is also not unusual to find vehicles with 'for sale' signs parked on the pavement.

The residents likely to be most troubled by on-street parking congestion are those living in recently constructed back-land inset estates containing three or four bedroom terraced properties. Many of these do not have a garage but have a hard standing space at the front of the property sufficient for only one vehicle. How do speculators gain planning consent for developments that are

designed with narrow access roads and insufficient space for residential parking when the London Plan defines parking standards for each type of development? If these standards were adhered to many of the local high-density developments would have been refused permission because of lack of residential parking and to include additional parking



space, the footprint and density of the proposed development would need to be reduced, especially in urban areas. To overcome this problem and to allow more homes to be constructed on a small site the standards incorporate a degree of restraint in order to support sustainable transport choices. Developers submit a plan of travel to and from the estate that assumes that residents will use local bus services and refrain from using a car, so less parking space will be required. On-street parking space is a scarce resource and the Government has encouraged council housing departments to reduce reliance on cars and allow new housing developments to be built with no provision for the parking of vehicles. Some Councils have ruled that people moving into new homes will be banned from on-street parking in high-density urban areas.

Another group that is troubled by parking congestion are those that live in narrow roads lined with terraced and semi-detached three or four bedroom houses designed and constructed in the early part of the twentieth century when few people owned a car. Many of these households now have the use of two or more cars plus a commercial van or truck and although many front gardens have been converted to hard standing parking spaces a large percentage of vehicles are parked on-street and consequently the public highway is reduced to a single carriageway. In an attempt to improve the traffic flow in these areas the council allows residents to park their vehicles on the pavement. This does little to improve matters but makes life more hazardous for pedestrians as when an inconsiderate driver uses almost the full width of the pavement for parking, people cannot pass without squeezing along the side of the vehicle and pram and wheelchair users have to risk their lives by moving onto the highway. The council parking enforcement officers and members of the Safer Neighbourhood Team usually fail to notice or address this safety hazard. People that live in these areas often mention traffic flow and the safety of pedestrians would be improved if the narrow roads were made a part of a one-way system.

### **Abandoned Vehicles**

A vehicle abandoned on-street or half on the pavement outside a residents' property can be source of irritation and annoyance especially if it remains there for many months. It is natural to want the vehicle removed if it is close to the house, impedes street cleansing, prevents heavy deliveries, looks like





a wreck and blocks the sight lines of road users. The council Enforcement Officers will not touch the vehicle if it is displaying a tax disc that has not expired unless there is evidence that the vehicle is causing an obstruction. Vehicles can be abandoned for a variety of reasons, it may have been stolen, a new replacement vehicle has been purchased or it has failed the MOT inspection and the

owner cannot afford the cost of repair. In law, there is nothing to prevent a person permanently parking a large van on-street outside their own property and using it for storage purposes providing the tax disc is kept up to date.

Some motorists hold the opinion that having taxed their vehicle they have the divine right to park anywhere but thoughtless and irresponsible parking can cause anguish and annoyance, for example an emergency ambulance may be prevented from approaching close to the home of an infirm or elderly patient; it may impede the delivery of urgent specialists equipment or medical supplies; a disabled driver could be prevented parking close to their home; and a vehicle parked on the pavement can be a potential of danger to those with visual difficulties.

Parking will always be a contentious issue especially in crowded urban areas and a form of control is essential to avoid the chaos and anarchy found in heavily populated urban areas overseas. As the expansion of denser housing increases the number of vehicle owners, it will not be too far into the future before yellow lines and parking wardens follow the urban sprawl to reach the traffic hot spots and shopping parades of Monks Orchard.

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## Planning Report

### Recent Decisions:

**07/04975/P Outline planning permission**

**Registration: 18/12/2007**

**151 The Glade**

Proposal: Demolition of existing building; erection of 4 two storey four bedroom semi detached houses with accommodation in roofspace; formation of vehicular accesses and provision of associated parking.

**Permission Refused 12/02/2008 Delegated**

**07/04564/P Full planning permission**

**Registration: 02/01/2008**

**48 Wickham Avenue**

Proposal: Erection of 2 three bedroom detached houses at rear (fronting Firsby Avenue) with attached garages; formation of vehicular accesses onto Firsby Avenue.

**Permission Refused 22/02/2008 Delegated**



**08/00165/P Full planning permission**

**Registration: 16/01/2008**

**66 Tower View**

Proposal: Demolition of existing house; erection of 2 semi-detached three bedroom houses, 1 detached three bedroom house and 1 two bedroom detached bungalow ; formation of vehicular accesses onto Edgewood Green and provision of associated parking spaces.

**Permission Refused; 28/02/2008 Committee**



**08/00164/P Full planning permission**

**Registration: 16/01/2008**

**66 Tower View**

Proposal: Demolition of existing house; erection of 4 semi-detached two bedroom houses and 1 two bedroom detached bungalow ; formation of vehicular accesses onto Edgewood Green and provision of associated parking spaces (corrected description).

**Permission Refused; 28/02/2008 Committee**

Note: MORA Objections for both applications for 66 Tower View were sent to the LPA within the consultation period specified on the council website, but they were not considered prior to the case officer compiling the recommendation to committee or included in the Agenda Items. An Addendum listing our objections was added to the Agenda. However, MORA lodged a Stage 1 Complaint in relation to this lack of honouring the full consultation period. At the MORA Committee Meeting of 5<sup>th</sup> March it was agreed by the Executive Committee that the LPA answer offered in response to the Stage 1 complaint was not adequate and that we would pursue this to Stage 2.

**Recent Applications:**

**08/00576/P Full planning permission**

**Registration:**

**19/02/2008**

**Land at Glade Gardens**

Proposal: Erection of 2 two storey buildings with accommodation in roof-space comprising 7 one bedroom and 2 two bedroom flats; formation of vehicular access and provision of associated parking.

**Ongoing**

**08/00384/P Full planning permission**

**Registration:**

**06/02/2008**

**31 Woodland Way**

Proposal: Alterations; subdivision to provide 2 three bedroom semi detached bungalows; erection of two single storey front/side extensions, formation of vehicular accesses and provision of associated parking.

**08/00274/P Full planning permission**

**Registration:**

**30/01/2008**

**79 Orchard Avenue**

Proposal: Erection of detached three bedroom chalet bungalow; formation of vehicular access onto High Trees and provision of associated parking.

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**08/00195/P Full planning permission Registration: 18/01/2008**  
**79 Orchard Avenue**

Proposal: Demolition of existing building; erection of a pair of two storey two bedroom houses with accommodation in roofspace and attached garages; formation of vehicular accesses and provision of associated parking.

**08/00076/P Full planning permission Registration: 08/01/2008**  
**79 Gladeside**

Proposal: Demolition of existing building; erection of a pair of two storey three bedroom semi detached houses with accommodation in roofspace and associated parking.

**07/04327/DT Environmental Impact Assessment**

**Registered: 02/11/2007**

**Land bounded by Laburnum Gardens, Parsley Gardens, Woodmere Avenue and off, Poppy Lane.**

Proposal: Construction of a 100 bed nursing / convalescent home.

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## **Old Bethlem's New Secure Unit - River House**

The world's oldest mental health provider has a new state of the art unit. The 89-bed River House opened on the 18<sup>th</sup> of February 2008, at Bethlem Royal Hospital, which recently celebrated its 760<sup>th</sup> birthday. The purpose-built unit is for people who need care and treatment in a medium secure environment. It is a discrete self-contained complex on Bethlem's 240-acre site.



Healing Courtyard

On the weekend of the 1<sup>st</sup> of February, River House opened its doors for local residents, health care professionals and MPs to look around the unit for themselves. Over 800 people visited during the three days and feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Local residents said; "If only there were more places like this for people who need it", "Fantastic facilities – I am envious! Great to think patients will have access to a great standard of care", "A credit to the NHS."



**Personal accommodation with en-suite facilities**

River House will provide care to patients from the London Boroughs of Lambeth, Southwark and Croydon. The £33.5m unit is beautifully designed around a river theme, symbolising the patient's journey towards recovery. Each of its six wards is associated with a specific stage of this journey, so that patients who respond well to treatment and are close to being discharged will be cared for in a

different area from those who are more acutely unwell. This is a substantial improvement on the previous medium secure care at the Bethlem, where people received care and treatment in the same environment at all stages of their illness.

Medium Secure Units (MSUs) like River House do not admit patients who represent a grave and immediate danger to the public. MSU patients suffer principally from severe mental illness such as schizophrenia, sometimes with other diagnoses such as substance misuse and personality disorder. Most stay about two years, some up to four or five years. The



**Games Hall with underfloor heating**

The unit's security has been a concern for many local residents but the vast majority of those who visited were greatly reassured having seen it for themselves. "As I back onto the Hospital, my worries were about patients being let out and walking behind my home unattended. I am pleased to say I have more confidence now following this tour" was the response from one local resident while others said "I found the building and the security re-assuring" and "We were worried about the proximity, but now feel much happier."



**Full Facility Gym and exercise equipment**

The wards, named after local rivers, have their own gardens and surround a healing courtyard. The overall design is spacious, light and airy. As recovery can take several years, people living there will have a very high standard of therapeutic facilities, including occupational therapy and activity areas, a fitness suite and gym. They will be intensively supported by an expert team of staff from a range of disciplines, including psychiatry, psychology, nursing,

occupational therapy and social work.



River House represents a major improvement in the quality of local NHS care for people with mental health problems. The new unit replaces the existing Denis Hill Unit at Bethlem which opened in 1985. The project is the single largest development undertaken by South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust and the culmination of six years' planning. It was delivered on time, without private finance and has been independently reviewed and approved by clinical and security experts.



Resting area in Healing Courtyard

The above article was provided by the staff of the South London & Maudsley [SLaM] NHS Trust - Bethlem Royal Hospital Medium Secure Unit [MSU] and provides a very positive view of the new building and facilities offered. We decided to reproduce the article in full with supporting photographs and to add a few comments which may provide a slightly more balanced view.

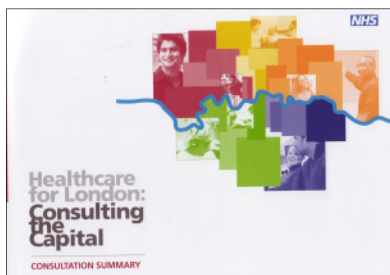
It is our understanding that the new River House MSU will house similar patients to those previously treated in the Denis Hill Unit from which there have been recent escapes. The patients are undergoing Forensic Psychology which focuses on therapy in correctional settings such as these Medium Secure Units. The treatment is on one-to-one or group basis interventions for offenders, people on community orders, and others under supervision, to address their offending behaviour and/or their psychological needs, for example, to manage depression, anger or anxiety. We have not singled out any of the types of offences these patients have committed but they are of significance. We did request that the article provide information on the categories of patients.

However, we do wish to compare the superb facilities offered at the £33.5M River House MSU with those currently offered to the hospitalised, elderly, infirm and/or terminally ill. NHS Hospitals have problems with cleanliness and are poorly equipped. As far as we can determine, the sports and gym facilities at River House are superior to any provided in local schools or sports centres. We need to highlight this anomaly as many of our members are elderly and have paid their taxes and National Insurance Contributions all their lives and have concerns about their future in their advancing years. They have to fund their own care while Forensic Psychology patients have these superb facilities funded by the taxpayer. Also, parents would like to see comparable sports facilities for their children. It seems the quality of life provided in this new Unit will give no incentive to improve and get discharged—it being too comfortable—perhaps also there will be fewer patients trying to escape!



Local residents who took advantage of the opportunity to visit the MSU have expressed their amazement at the facilities offered to those patients who have committed crimes against law abiding citizens and have asked the question; what is to be provided for the victims of the patients in the MSU?

It would also be interesting to know the cost of MSU care per patient per week for which the taxpayer will no doubt also be footing the bill.



## Healthcare for London:

### Consulting the Capital

Following the distribution 'London wide' of the consultation document, and further to two members of the executive committee attending a consultation 'road show' at the Arnhem Gallery, Fairfield Halls on February 7<sup>th</sup> 2008, the MORA Executive Committee

took the decision to complete the questionnaire that accompanied the document, on behalf of our members. This document, due to be returned by 7<sup>th</sup> March 2008 gave us little time to contact our members as we would wish, i.e. via newsletter/magazine.

A Sub committee was formed for the purpose and included three executive committee members and two members of the association. The discussions during the completion of the questionnaire centred on the proposals outlined in the document which are:

- > Staying Healthy
- > Maternity and newborn care
- > Children and young people
- > Mental Health
- > Acute (Urgent) care
- > Planned care
- > Long-term conditions
- > End-of-Life care

### All proposals aim to:

- Improve the quality of care and safety
- Improve access to services
- Reduce inequalities of care and help people stay healthy.
- London's Health Service needs you to Take Part.

The sub-committee took a good deal of care and time in discussing the various options/proposals. We were mindful of reaching a balanced view on behalf of our members. One of our members is a trained Marie Curie Nurse, another had family patient experience. Opinion has been sought from a local GP's nurse practitioner a GP's practice manager and local pharmacist which

added weight to our considerations and replies. We had a good insight and valuable input having been instrumental in completing and submitting the document on Health Care for Croydon 3 – 5 yr Plan. Added to this, a member of the committee had recently attended the open days and guided tour of the new River House Medium Secure Unit at Bethlem Royal Hospital.

All 29 questions were answered as applicable, always putting the best case for patient care.

Confidentiality is assured but MORA members can be given access to the completed questionnaire if requested.

## Crime Alerts

### Bogus Callers

There has been reports of a water board bogus caller in Shirley where the elderly occupier had a white male, approx age 30 years 5'07" tall with short brown hair and of stocky build, wearing a light brown cotton jacket, call saying he needed to check the water supply. While in the kitchen he managed to remove cash from the victim's handbag.



A Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator has reported that an elderly Shirley resident was walking down West Wickham High Street when he was befriended by a white male with a foreign accent, possibly eastern European. The stranger was very persuasive and guided the elderly gentleman to the stranger's car where he proceeded to sell him an expensive "designer" jacket. The stranger then arranged for the elderly man to go to his bank where he withdrew £780 to pay for the jacket. The conman then offered him a lift and dropped him off near his Shirley home. Unfortunately the elderly gentleman was too confused to give any further description of the car or the conman. This person will probably try again, please warn any elderly neighbour or relative.

## Green Space and Tree Action Plan



Dear Members,  
Earlier George and myself volunteered to join your committee to  
Develop a "Green Space And Tree Action Plan"  
I set out below our ideas of how and what to include in this.

- Establish boundaries of MORA
- Make contact with relevant officers in LB Croydon

- Tree survey (talk to Croydon)
- Lb Croydon open space policy
- Current tree preservation orders
- Establish any priorities for areas and or trees – committee input
- Walk main road arteries in our “patch” and note open areas and anything that requires action.
- Involve local residents - schools
- Detail, photograph any action to clear etc, areas.
- Pursue those relevant with LB of Croydon
- Liaise with other residents associations

We are moving slowly to achieve this point – some are already achieved. Please see us at our AGM – all input is very welcome.

We are, as I am sure you will understand, not able to deal with domestic problems.

**John Parry – George Mowforth**

## Online Democracy in Action

Talk2Croydon offers the people of Croydon a platform to discuss public services, start discussions/ campaigns and voice opinions. As well as being able to raise issues that matter to you, knowing that the site will be viewed by the borough's decision makers, will mean you'll be able to find out what changes as a result. By logging on to [www.talk2croydon.co.uk](http://www.talk2croydon.co.uk) you can...



### **Start a buzz**

an online discussion or campaign around a particular topic, or add your views to an existing buzz/ poll or survey.

### **Link up...**

with Croydon projects, network with others who share similar work or concerns. The site will be a hub for public engagement activities and includes a searchable database of activities, a calendar of events and a skills database. To make sure it's accessible to everyone, including those traditionally hard-to-reach, six local community groups representing young people, BME communities, refugees, disabled people, people with learning difficulties and mental health service users have contributed to the project.

Developed by Croydon Voluntary Action and supported by Croydon Council, Croydon Primary Care Trust and Mayday NHS Trust, the site was launched at the Town Hall by The Leader of the Council, Mike Fisher, on Thursday 13 September 2007.



## The Campaign Continues

There is a continuing debate about child poverty which the Government aims to eradicate but little is said about the growing number of pensioners, often referred to as the forgotten generation, living in poverty – the majority of them women who gave up work because they put their family first.

Rising living costs coupled with increases in Council tax has made it more difficult for pensioners to cope. The average Council tax bill per household has increased from £564 to £1,101 since the present Government came to power in 1977. At the same time the basic state pension has only increased by a third. The irony is that around a fifth of council tax goes to providing gold plated pensions to public service workers. It is not surprising that some elderly people continue working past the normal age for retirement and that some have even gone to prison than accept inflation busting increases. Admittedly poorer pensioners can top up their income to at least £119.05 per week if they are single or £181.70 for couples by claiming Pension Credit.

The problem is that those people that have worked and saved all their lives to receive a small additional pension find themselves paying income tax and unable to claim any of the available benefits. This group will be even worse off from April because of the Governments decision to scrap the 10p-starting rate for income tax. MORA has a high proportion of elderly members and this is why a decision was made years ago to support 'Isitfair' which is a UK wide, non-political campaign for the reform of the existing property based system of Council tax. An ever-increasing burden is being put on council taxpayers and the issue is no longer only a matter of how much council tax goes up because at the same time services are being cut.

'Isitfair' is a voluntary body with no paid staff continues to campaign for this unfair tax to be reformed in England and Wales; Scotland's 2008 Council Tax having been frozen at last years level. Unless instructed by its members to do otherwise 'Isitfair' will continue to have MORA's support.

## Traffic Lights

### Traffic Lights at the Junction of Wickham Road and Orchard Road

MORA members will be aware that turning right at the traffic lights from Wickham Road into Orchard Avenue has become quite hazardous.

On 18<sup>th</sup> September 2007 the committee wrote to various departments (i.e., Department for Transport and the GLA) to be informed that traffic lights came under the department of



Transport for London (London Streets). Following this information we wrote to TFL requesting they carry out a traffic flow study with a view to installing a filter to prevent a future accident.

On 6<sup>th</sup> November 2007 a reply was received apologizing for the delay in responding but they would be working on this enquiry as 'a matter of urgency'.

On 30<sup>th</sup> January 2008 the Customer Service Advisor for TFL was telephoned to be informed nothing yet has been done, so much for 'a matter of urgency'. Your committee will continue to act on your behalf and will continue to press for an answer.

## Girlguiding 12 Hour Challenge

Girlguiding UK calls on the people of Shirley to take up the 12 hour Challenge



Girlguiding UK is calling on residents who live in Shirley to take part in the 12 hour Challenge and give 12 hours of their time over the next 12 months to extend opportunities to local girls.

The 12 hour Challenge is an initiative to tackle the high number of girls waiting to join Rainbows, Brownies and Guides due to a shortage of adult volunteers.



The 12 hour Challenge is completely flexible; volunteers might choose to help out for an hour a month or do a couple of half-days in a year. It could be that they have an interesting hobby or expertise - whether it's acting or pottery, or book-keeping, the local Rainbows, Brownies and Guides would like to hear from them. Volunteers might be able to help with publicity, create a website, lend a hand to organise a special event, or give

a talk to inspire the girls to become more involved with a topical issue - the list is endless. The opportunities for volunteering are diverse and existing volunteers speak enthusiastically of the rewards of working with young people and like-minded adults. We are not asking people to make a regular commitment. We simply need extra adult help with various jobs.

Girlguiding UK recognises that, due to changing lifestyles, adults have less disposable time to dedicate to community projects and volunteering. The 12 hour Challenge is the perfect solution to enable guiding to continue successfully within the local community, with the help of adults who have busy lifestyles and want to volunteer.

For further information please contact either Beverley on [REDACTED] or Jane on [REDACTED]. We hope to hear from you!

## The Shirley Players Presents...



The Shirley Players are presenting "SUDDENLY at HOME", a thriller by that master of suspense Francis Durbridge.

The production will be held at the Parish Hall Wickham Road on Friday and Saturday April 25th and 26th at 8.00pm.

Tickets are £6.00 and are obtainable from the Box Office on [REDACTED] or from any member of the Players.

## Shopping Bus

### Shopping Bus to Tesco Supermarket

Shirley Neighbourhood Care run a mini bus every Wednesday to Tescos At Elmers End, to help older and or disabled members of the community with their heavier shopping.

We have a volunteer driver and escort on each trip, and we make a charge of £4. If you would like more information or book a seat to make use of this facility, please call the office on 020 8662 9599.



### WANTED URGENTLY

Due to illness, we need more escorts to help people on and off the bus, placing shopping on board and taking it into their homes from the bus. If you feel you could offer a few hours a month to help, please call Christina on [REDACTED].

## Road Stewards Required!

### Eyes & Ears of the Association:

We need Road Stewards to deliver our Quarterly Newsletters and collect yearly membership fees for the following roads:

**Stoneleigh Park, Mardell Crescent, Firsby Ave [odds], Shirley Ave,  
Valley Walk - Eldon Ave, Greenview Ave - Uplands Crt, Woodmere Ave.  
Lorne Gdns.**

Anyone willing to undertake this important activity for the residents, please contact the Membership Secretary - Diane McInerney on [REDACTED].



# MORA ACCOUNT OF INCOME & EXPENDITURE

## YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2007

|                                                | 2007         | 2006        |
|------------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| <b>INCOME</b>                                  |              |             |
| Subscriptions (1)                              | 4340         | 2621        |
| Bank interest                                  | 24           | 27          |
| Advertising revenue                            | 1925         | 1915        |
| Donations                                      | 8            | nil         |
| <b>Sub Total</b>                               | <b>6297</b>  | <b>4563</b> |
| <br><b>EXPENSES</b>                            |              |             |
| Printing & stationery                          | 3141         | 4498        |
| Road Stewards                                  | 400          | 312         |
| Hall hire                                      | 45           | 30          |
| Vestry hire (2)                                | 330          | 60          |
| Chairman's/secretarial expenses                | 5            | nil         |
| Sundries: (Includes projector & Screen @ £897) | 1081         | 260         |
| Insurance (BTCO)                               | 100          | 156         |
| Donations                                      | nil          | 25          |
| Audit                                          | 10           | 10          |
| Website                                        | 20           | nil         |
| Subscription to BCTV                           | 35           | 30          |
| <b>Total</b>                                   | <b>5167</b>  | <b>5381</b> |
| <b>Surplus</b>                                 | <b>1130</b>  | <b>-818</b> |
| <br><b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>                      |              |             |
| Current account                                | 5319         | 4210        |
| Deposit account                                | 4899         | 4878        |
| <br><b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>                 | <b>nil</b>   | <b>nil</b>  |
| <b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>                      | <b>10218</b> | <b>9088</b> |
| <br><b>Carried forward from previous year</b>  | <b>9088</b>  | <b>9906</b> |
| <b>Balance for current year</b>                | <b>1130</b>  | <b>-818</b> |
| <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>                             | <b>10218</b> | <b>9088</b> |

Notes: 1 Increase in membership subscriptions for 2007

2 Vestry Hire for 2007 includes 2007 and all 2008 charges

# MORA COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2007

|                            |                      |  |
|----------------------------|----------------------|--|
| President                  | DEREK LOUGHBOROUGH   |  |
| Chairman:                  | BOB AKERS            |  |
| Vice Chair:                | VACANT               |  |
| Secretary:                 | DAVE KING            |  |
| Membership Secretary:      | DIANE McINERNEY      |  |
| Minutes Secretary:         | Vacancy              |  |
| Planning Officer           | Vacancy              |  |
| 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: | VACANT               |  |
| Committee Member:          | MICHAEL NASH         |  |
| Joint Archivist            | PATRICIA TURNER      |  |
| Joint Archivist            | SHEILA WAGLAND       |  |
| Tree & Open Space Officer  | JOHN PARRY           |  |
| Tree & Open Space Officer  | GEORGE MOWFORTH      |  |
| Committee Member:          | HARRY CROFT          |  |



## MONKS ORCHARD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

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

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

Please send this completed form to:

DIANE McINERNEY

**Thank you for supporting MORA!**

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