

Monks Orchard Residents' Association

www.monks-orchard-web.org.uk
email: monksorchardweb@btinternet.com

Croydon

(Non Party)

(Independent)

NEWSLETTER - Summer 2006



New Ashburton Library, part of the new Civic Plaza along the Shirley Road.

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

APPOINTMENT OF PRESIDENT

The Executive Committee of MORA has invited Derek Loughborough to fill the vacancy of Honorary President and is delighted to report that he has accepted. Subsequent to retiring from political activities, he is a most suitable person to fulfil the role Honorary President. For over 30 years he has devoted his life to the local community and has made his mark on the locality through his tireless work as Mayor, member of the Council and as a School Governor. Derek is undoubtedly one of the most respected and well-known residents of Monks Orchard.

The Association has been without a president since Bernard Wetherill (now Lord Bernard Wetherill) stood down over fourteen years ago. It is pleasing to have found a person with the necessary stature, respect and knowledge of Monks Orchard to represent the Association. His appointment will give members of the local community the opportunity to continue to draw on his accumulated knowledge and experience of civic affairs.

MONKS ORCHARD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the 82nd Annual General Meeting of Monks Orchard Residents' Association held at St. George's Church Hall On Friday 31st March 2006

Bob Akers opened the proceedings by welcoming approximately 100 members to the 82nd and mentioning that this is the ninth year he had the privilege of acting as Chairman and it was pleasing that so many members and friends have attended to show their support.

He welcomed the Elected Councillors for Ashburton ward; Derek Loughborough, Avril Slipper and Eddy Arram plus those for Shirley ward; Janet Marshall, Michael Fisher, and Richard Chatterjee. Congratulations were offered to Andrew Pelling on his election success and he was welcomed to the meeting as Member of Parliament and as elected member of the Greater London Assembly. A welcome was also extended to the guest speakers.

Apologises for Absence

Jeff Clark and Anne Johnson were unable to attend.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the 2005 Annual General Meeting were published in the May issue of the newsletter, posted on the website and copies were available in the hall; the minutes were approved unchallenged.

Matters Arising

Disappointment was expressed that during the year there had been no response from members to the appeal for help in the running of the

association. It was stressed that this year there is greater need for Road Stewards and Area Managers to help circulate copies of the newsletters; the work is important and only requires a donation of a few hours every three months. Members were asked to give thought to how they may help the association to continue its important work on behalf of the community.



Chairman's Report

It was reported that during the year, the major concern of all the members of our community is the massive rises in local taxation. The tax imposed by the Council has more than doubled over the past ten years and it continues to rise at more than three times the rate of inflation. The Council tax for 2006/7 will rise by 6.3% resulting in the council tax for a Band D property increasing from £1,224 to £1,301. Last year Gordon Brown gave the pensioners £200 extra help in an attempt to gain their support but this does not look like being repeated at a time when the Government is not involved in a battle to keep power. Curiously, the council tax in Scotland has risen by 40 per cent since 1997 and in England it has increased by 84 per cent.

One of the easiest things to do in this world is to spend money belonging to others. Residents are right to wonder what they receive for the £25 to £35 per week that they pay in Council Tax. The propaganda issued by the Croydon Council informs us that all is absolutely wonderful and massive improvements are being made in services. The truth is that once again we are being asked to pay more for less. For the past eight years the Council has overspent and now has to face some economic truths. In order to remain within the financial restraints imposed by the Government there have been cutbacks in social services, libraries, road maintenance and those for the most vulnerable in our community. Nevertheless, the Council still wastes money on projects in politically sensitive areas.

Londoners suffer much worse than those living in other parts of the country. There are the increasing demands made by Ken Livingston's Greater London Authority that has increased its charges by 6.3%, three times the cost of inflation. In addition there is the first contribution from local Council taxpayers towards the cost of the Olympic games, which for a Band D property is £20. It is estimated that this payment will continue for ten years or more. However, experts predict that the delivery of the Olympic games will be a financial 'black hole' because the Council taxpayer will meet any financial overrun on the massive project. We are told that the whole capital will gain in terms of infrastructure, new sporting facilities, tourism, foreign investment and the largest urban park in Europe. This may prove to be true for some parts of London but it is difficult to see what this offers pensioners and those on low income living in Monks Orchard who will have to economise on food and heating to pay this additional tax burden. It is depressing to know that some pensioners having made the financial sacrifice for five or more years may not live to see the games. Furthermore, it is annoying to learn that those living

outside Greater London will not have to pay for the games but will be able to share in what they have to offer. In an attempt to obtain a fairer Council tax MORA continues to support the aims of the Isitfair campaign. Last year MORA participated in a nation wide campaign to collect signatures for a petition to Parliament asking for the existing council tax system to be scrapped and replaced by a fairer system based on the ability to pay. Residents responded and in a short time 400 signatures were collected.

The local petition was forwarded to Andrew Pelling and was one of those collected in over 200 constituencies.

This year Isitfair organised another peaceful nationwide protest against council tax increases. Residents were asked to make a photocopy of this years council tax demand and to send the photocopy with a suitable comment e.g. *'How am I supposed to pay for this?'* and send to John Prescott the Deputy Prime Minister.

There was hopeful expectation that the Lyons Inquiry would include a full and unbiased evaluation of income related alternatives to the present unfair system of Council tax but Isitfair campaigners have little confidence that the final report, due in 2007, will be worth waiting for. The continuing delay in addressing this problem is likely to result in more and more people being pushed into poverty, refusing to pay the full amount of this years Council tax demand and being sent to prison.



Treasurer's Report

Mr. Greenwood confirmed that the financial accounts for 2005 had been published in the spring issue of the newsletter and this showed that outgoings continue to increase, one example was the production cost of the newsletter, two years ago each issue cost £550 but this has increased to over £700 per issue. He reported that the annual accounts showed a surplus of income over expenditure of £1,571 in comparison to the £12 surplus of the previous year but this figure did not take account of two delayed invoices totalling £1,430 that have subsequently been paid, thus reducing the overall surplus to £140. There is a need to keep expenditure under review especially as there is a pressing need to find a printer as a consequence of the closure of the Crosfield Sheltered Workshop. The estimates obtained indicate that the production cost of the newsletter will be subject to further increases.

The meeting thanked the treasurer for the report and for his splendid efforts in increasing income by the sale of advertising in the newsletter; the annual financial report was approved unchallenged.

Security Report

Mrs. Cook began by welcoming the arrival of the long-awaited Safer Neighbourhood Teams. Residents of Ashburton and Shirley had suffered during the year because adolescents bent on committing anti-social activities had migrated from adjoining areas



that have Safer Neighbourhood Teams in place. She registered her concern about incidents involving the elderly being robbed by bogus callers. The precautions to be taken to prevent falling victim to these scams is 'Do not open the door to uninvited callers, keep the door chain on at all times and tell them to leave and if necessary summon the police'.

Election of Officers and Committee for 2006/2007

The Chair said that the association is managed and organised by a hard working team that form the Executive Committee who donate time and energy for the benefit of the local community. During the year Jeff Clark, Shelia Wagland and Diane McInerney have been co-opted to the Executive Committee. Jeff has agreed to act as Transport and Highways Officer. Shelia and Pat Turner have agreed to act as joint Archivists and Diane has agreed to take on the role of Membership Secretary. Alyce Menhinnitt has resigned from the Executive Committee for family reasons and we thank and wish her every success in the future.

He was pleased to report that all the present members have agreed to offer themselves for re-election. The Executive Committee was returned unopposed en-bloc. A list of the members of the Executive Committee is printed on the final page of this newsletter.

Award of Life Membership

The Chair said that this is the time when the meeting honours those who have made an important contribution to the work of the Association and the local community. The Association is fortunate in having long-standing members that form the nucleus of the Executive Committee and help to ensure its survival by their years of unselfish commitment.

The meeting recognised and thanked two loyal members who have both served the Association for over 25 years. The award of Honorary Membership was presented to Alyce Menhinnitt, Membership Secretary and Christine Ross-Smith who served as Membership Secretary and now acts as Social Secretary.



PLANNING REPORT

Bob Akers began by reporting that since the previous report the Government has produced another consultation document that seeks to provide a national framework for housing. The document states that new housing should meet the needs of the local people, positively improve the character of an area, promote community, safety and crime prevention; few would disagree with these aims. However, the statement conflicts with the action being taken by the London Mayor, supported by Croydon Council, to meet the housing needs of the ever-increasing growth in the population of London demands no less than 30 dwellings per hectare. Monks Orchard as a suburban area would, in the future, be expected to have a density in the range of 35-55 dwellings per hectare that would require the building of high-density estates that would completely change the character of the area and destroy the local community.

There are signs that the change is gathering pace, bungalows, that are always under constant threat, continue to be demolished to give way to high density housing. Residents wishing to maximise on their investment are keen to sell their rear gardens and green surroundings to land hungry developers. MORA has had a very busy start to the year responding to requests for help from worried homeowners wishing to prevent multi-storey constructions being erected near their property with the resulting loss of privacy, outlook and peaceful green surroundings.

For those that have affection for Monks Orchard the changes taking place give rise to greater concerns. The design, layout and future appearance of Monks Orchard is being determined by individual developers that want to build as many houses as possible on what are often back garden sites. There appears to be no overall plan or long-term view regarding the housing expansion that is taking place and, as a consequence Monks Orchard is growing like 'Topsy' with little consideration of the effect on the infrastructure or environmental sustainability. One can only wonder what the area will look like in twenty to thirty years time.



Report Back by Elected Representatives

Councillor Derek Loughborough reported on behalf of all the elected Councillors. He began by saying he was not going to repeat those topics that had already been covered unless those present wanted him to do so. He was going to mention planning, because this had been a plague for MORA and the Councillors in trying to prevent the most ugly of all these particular developments. Some are quite atrocious and nevertheless get approved because Planning Inspectors grant appeals, which inhibit the decisions of the local Planning Committee. The particular application for Cheston Avenue that had only recently arrived on the planning list had given rise to more objections that have been received in a very long time and having seen the plans he was sure members would agree that there is good reason for objecting to the development, particularly as it was situated in the middle of recently built £600,000 houses.

There has been presented previously a resume of Council Tax, which he admitted made him blush. It is not too bad for people getting high wage rises but for pensioners who are getting little extra, if any, the cost of living continues to increase, and this is particularly embarrassing. Not only that, but members will have noted in the press reports of the reduction in the services provided by the Council. We have also lost care homes at Corby Court, Stroud Green Lodge, and we cease to provide reasonable employment for the disabled in Crosfield Supported Workshop. These are the sorts of services that are essential for many fragile residents and yet they are being cut in preference to putting in additional staffing for this, that and the other for the particular fad of the moment.

Residents now have wheelie bins, some like them and some hate them. Furthermore, we now have green boxes for recycling and the service is

beginning to expand to include garden rubbish as well. This would progress during the course of next year; of course it will have to be paid for. The Police Safer Neighbourhood Team was now in place and the Councillor hoped that something would be done about the wretched mini motorbikes that cause so many problems. Pensions for the employees of the Council were an equal embarrassment because they have a full entitlement for uplifted pensions and are costing ratepayers something like 20% of salaries at the present time to meet the cost and there remains a very substantial deficit to cover. You will note the Council employees have been on strike to protect their pensions situation, whereas, for many ordinary people their pensions have vanished over the hill.

People living on the Lawdon estate have found their normal means of access and egress on the estate shut off by gates. The Councillor said he was pretty sure that those particular areas are, in fact, rights of way. Subsequent to twelve months exceptional effort Councillor Slipper has finally obtained the updated method of dealing with a right of way claim and the manner of submitting it to the Council in order that it should be identified and subsequently enforced. The Councillor said that he had spent equal time, although for many members it will not be a matter of interest, trying to get a clarification on who decided that parallel parking, side on, in narrow front gardens was not permitted. Nobody on the Council has, so far, put his or her hand up, and yet it is still being enforced. He was hoping that before he left the Council that this problem would be solved. One thing that was happening, which most members will not know about, is that there is a consultation by the Government with the local authorities throughout London as to whether or not the Mayor should be given additional authority, and no doubt rises in taxation as a consequence. He was pleased to report that, at this stage, the Local Authorities were resisting giving up their authority over local affairs. He was a great believer that the best decisions are local decisions and the closer it is to the people who are actually affected by it, then the better it will be. He was very much aware and very wary of any increase in the Mayor's power bearing in mind what he had done to planning.

The Chair thanked Councillor Derek Loughborough and mentioned that the Councillor will not be standing in the Council elections to take place in May. His political masters have, what is colloquially termed "put him out to grass". He said that it would be wrong to let this opportunity pass without paying tribute to Derek who has devoted most of his life to the local community. He will be known to most local residents and is one of the best known and respected residents living in Monks Orchard.

It is important to note that most of the years of Derek's public service were at a time when Councillors were not rewarded as handsomely as they are today. He was first elected as a member of Croydon Council in 1974 and has represented the Monks Orchard ward since 1978, a total of 28 years. He has successfully served in many important roles. To name a few, Chairman of

Education, Chairman of Environmental Health and Trading Standards and, at present, serves on the Planning and Development Committee. He is also on the governing body of three local schools. In 1998/9 he, along with his wife Hazel, was elected Mayor of Croydon. MORA thanks him for the help he has provided and hopes that he and his wife Hazel will be able to maximise on the extra hours, free from civic responsibility, that they will now be able to spend together. It would be surprising if the local residents did not want to continue to make use of his vast experience and knowledge.



Andrew Pelling was then invited to report back as Member of Parliament and Member of the Greater London Assembly. He began by saying that he would like to be associated with the comments made about the service of Derek Loughborough, who has a proud record of service to the community. Probably the last thing that is wanted at this meeting is a long report from a member of parliament; instead a written report has been compiled that you will have received prior to the start of the meeting. He offered thanks for the opportunity to present the Isitfair campaign petition to which a response has only recently been received from John Prescott. A copy of the response will be sent to all those that added their names to the petition. John Prescott's advice is to wait for the Lyons report to be published. His personal view as to what will happen with council tax, bearing in mind that even people like Ken Livingstone are saying that the council tax system is untenable despite the fact that he continues to add increases to the council tax, is that we will find ourselves in a situation where a lot of the spending which is directed at local government will be taken away, for example in areas like education. We may hopefully move to a system, which is related to what is actually spent in the area by the local Council.

The increase in tax that your Chairman felt so strongly about that he mentioned it in his annual report, would be explained by the Mayor by telling residents he said that he would increase taxes and you voted for him, therefore, he has every right to increase taxes. He is an old fashioned socialist who believes in the redistribution of wealth, and residents should bear this in mind when they come to vote. He said that he feels like the Chairman does when it comes to the Olympic Games tax that is part of a redistribution of wealth from South London to East London. People residing in Essex will find it easier to get to the games than Croydon residents who will be paying for them. What is disturbing is that both the Government and the Mayor refuse to rule out passing on the extra costs beyond the £20 per year for twelve years if there is a cost overrun, which would be devastating in terms of its impact on council tax in the coming years.

Mr. Pelling said that earlier in the meeting, there had been a good presentation from the Police Service. He was happy that the Chief Superintendent and P.C. Shepherd were able to present it but residents are paying for this through their council tax and it is costing £35 million pounds on

the Greater London Authority tax to pay for these Safer Neighbourhood Teams. He did not think that residents should be too optimistic as to what can be achieved by three Police Officers and three Community Police Support Officers. To some extent residents will have to be tolerant of the team as they get bedded in before there are some positive results and there are certainly some important issues to tackle. He expressed sympathy to P.C. Shepherd having to chase around Ashburton playing fields trying to stop people driving around at ridiculous speeds on motocross bikes at great risk to many residents.

Referring to his work as Member of Parliament, from his point of view the most satisfying part of the process is dealing with casework. It is interesting to note what the breakdown of the work is. The biggest share, which may come as a surprise, is immigration cases, and it is partly due to the fact that Croydon is host to Lunar House that a high amount of casework comes in on that issue. Other important issues such as housing, crime and things to do with the local Council come to the M.P. and a variety of things are dealt with. At one time I might be asking about Uzbekistan and another time trying to get people off paying their parking fines. This is the type of variety that is enjoyable. It is fair to say that M.Ps. do not get many opportunities to think for themselves and voting free from the whip. There have been two particular issues on which there have been freedom to vote on a free vote. One was about having to have tail docking on working dogs and he voted in favour of that exemption. He also voted in favour of another exemption, which may not make him very popular especially with the medical profession, for people to be able to smoke in public places. He exercised his discretion on those issues.

It is always a great privilege to come to Monks Orchard Residents' Association, which has a fine tradition of being non-party political and he hoped it is a tradition that has been maintained to some extent in my comments this evening.

Among the questions from the floor were: the outcome of the Isitfair campaign petition, planning development and its connection with water restrictions, and the repair of water leaks by water companies.

3The Chair said that the Annual General Meeting offers an opportunity to respond to those issues that have caused local concern during the past year. In an attempt to find answers to the most pressing issues MORA has invited guests that will be able to provide information on these concerns, explain the thinking behind the actions taken, the constraints in which they operate and to answer questions. The three major worries this year have been crime and the fear of crime, street cleansing and the changes made to our vital local bus route.

The Chair then introduced the first of the meeting's invited guests, Godfrey Davies, Service Change Advocate at London Buses and to provide some background he mentioned that almost a year ago the route of the 367 bus was changed and extended to replace route 494. The change was made without

any local consultation or prior warning and passengers using the service were adversely affected.



Mr. Davies began by explaining that a Service Advocate represents London Buses to their stakeholders (who are Councils and Residents' Associations), and represents the views of those stakeholders to the planning department at London Buses. He is surprised by what had been said about the lack of prior consultation because London Buses has an effective system and all the local stakeholders are consulted, starting with the Council and community groups. An initial letter is sent giving notice that London Buses are planning changes, detailing the routes that are involved and asking for comment. This is followed by a second letter outlining the proposed changes and seeking further comment. A third and final letter is sent saying that London Buses have taken all representations into account and stating the action that will be taken. There is therefore a process in which all could have participated and Croydon Council did on the planned changes to the bus route 367.

Mr. Davies did agree that the service change made to bus route 367 appears to have had an adverse benefit for Monks Orchard residents. The route is not the same and the changes were made for planning reasons. The bus route 494 was not viable and had to be withdrawn but London Buses have a statutory duty to run a service to within 400 metres of every house and that means that a service has to be provided for the residents of Shirley Oaks Village, which could be provided by route 367. This change added ten minutes to the journey time from Monks Orchard to West Croydon. Five or six minutes were added by detouring through Shirley Oaks Village and the remainder by routing the bus along the Lower Addiscombe Road instead of the Addiscombe Road. The reason for this is that the Lower Addiscombe Road is underserved with buses and if a route is removed it has to be replaced.

The changes were made as part of a service plan for the area, not just for Monks Orchard and it has given rise to several problems that should perhaps have been recognised beforehand and which MORA has informed us.

The buses take longer to travel to Croydon not only because of the extension to the route but because there is a lateness issue caused by the heavy traffic in the Lower Addiscombe Road. The figures show that 70 % of the buses during the peak hours reach Monks Orchard on time, which satisfies the schedule quality contract. However by the time they reach Croydon this drops by 17% so there is a distinct time loss between Monks Orchard and Croydon. There are also overcrowding issues by the time the buses reach Wickham Road in the mornings and on the return journey from West Croydon station in the evenings. A survey is to be conducted which should show if there is a capacity problem during the peak morning and early

evenings. If there is, it may be possible to run a double decker bus on the route for a couple of journeys each day in order to relieve the problem of overcrowding.

Mr. Davies then asked for comments and suggestions that he would make note of and take back to London Buses. Questions and comments were made about the irregular running of the service, the timing of the survey, Sunday services and the problems likely to be associated with double decker buses in Shirley Oaks Village.

The Chair then introduced the second of the invited guests, Keith Turner, Manager of the Waste Collection Team and to give some background he said that in the spring of last year residents living in The Glade were so incensed with the littered streets that over 100 added their names to a petition to the Council.



“Mr Turner began by saying that he is responsible for refuse collection and recycling in addition to street cleansing for the whole borough which is a wide brief. He was aware of the concerns regarding street cleansing and it may be helpful for residents to have some understanding of the rules and constraints that have to be considered. The 1990 Environmental Protection Act includes a code of practice on litter and refuse which underpins the street cleansing operation carried out by Cleanaway on behalf of the Council. The code defines the levels of street cleansing that must be maintained and the response times allowed to bring the street back to standard should it degrade. Contained within the code are the criteria for zoning the borough, which takes account of the density of population amongst other things in determining the zone. The zones are classified 1, 2 and 3 where the north of the borough is generally zone 1 and 2 and the south of the borough is generally zone 3 and the response times for cleansing in each zone is different. Over the years knowledge has been built up of the requirements needed to maintain cleansing standards. It was not an overnight thing and over the last 20 years especially since the introduction of 1990 Act frequencies of cleansing have been determined in order to maintain cleansing standards. The streets are cleansed on an input basis with cleansing frequencies varying from 6 times a day in the Town Centre to every 8 weeks in the far reaches of Coulsdon. The code does not prescribe how often a street has to be cleansed but it does clearly set the standard to which the cleansing has to be maintained.

Street cleansing is a very subjective issue and the code is open to interpretation. Part of his role is to establish as narrow an interpretation as possible between Streetscene Officers and Cleanaway in an endeavour to ensure a consistent approach is adopted. Cleanaway have been operating in the borough for nearly 3 years and the large increase in the cleansing budget has resulted in a noticeable increase in the public perception and satisfaction of the improvements made in street cleansing. Environmental Campaigns, more widely known as the Tidy Britain Group, carry out random inspection

across a number of wards twice a year to establish a benchmark of how clean the borough is which has generally supported the public perception. Their initial criteria was to target litter but they now include detritus as part of their inspection as they felt there was too much litter picking and not enough sweeping. Whilst public perception is that standards are continuing to improve we are not complacent and will strive to use a restricted budget for the maximum benefit of the whole borough. Cleansing frequencies are reviewed and in some areas they have been increased whilst others reduced as a consequence of demographic changes.

Councillor Loughborough made reference about the love and hatred of wheelie bins and to date we have delivered about 80% across the borough and most of Shirley and Ashburton have been delivered. Wheelie bins together with the green boxes are part of a concerted effort to minimise waste with the need to recycle more. As residents are aware we cannot keep filling up holes in the ground regardless and must be mindful of the carbon dioxide emissions from land fill sites, which is a threat to our environment. Improved methods are being sought along with new treatments to manage our waste more efficiently because it is essential to minimise our waste and maximise our recycling. Two new services are being introduced from mid April the kerbside collection of plastics and cardboard, and green waste. The number of properties from which green waste is collected has been doubled from 12000 to 24000 and includes all of Shirley and a large part of Ashburton . The plastic and cardboard collection is going to take place in the same areas that we piloted green waste last year. Progress is being made to provide services that resident's want/need that will help in minimising our waste and reduce our dependency on landfill and avoid paying fines under the current waste disposal legislation. This cannot be over emphasised and if fines are imposed it is the Council Tax payer that will ultimately pay. It is beholden upon us all to minimise waste maximise recycling and help protect our environment.

Questions were then taken from the floor and those included: a failure to deliver a wheelie bin to a resident, possible industrial stoppage, frequency of street cleansing and the clearance of spillage during refuse collections."



The Chair introduced the last, but far from the least, important invited guests Chief Superintendent Mark Gore the new Borough Commander. Thankfully Monks Orchard has always been recognised as an area of low crime but during the past year there has been a rise in anti-social behaviour and a murder in a local park. This has created fear and fear of crime that has resulted in gated enclosures being erected on some properties and estates. He said that he knew that the Commander would be able to tell local residents about the actions being taken to address the increase in crime.

Chief Superintendent Gore began by reporting that subsequent to his arrival in Croydon in November his aim has been to see as many people as

possible. He expressed dismay at the news that East Croydon had been identified as the most dangerous railway station in the country. This widely publicised statement is an example of why there is a disproportionate high fear of crime in the borough that is not matched by the reality of the crime situation. The concern is that residents take heed of the adverse news reports and start to believe that Croydon is a crime-ridden area. He stressed that the East Croydon station report was misleading because if you examine the figures only 328 crimes took place which may appear to be a high number but most of the 22 million passengers will acknowledge East Croydon as one of the safest stations because there is a good police presence. It is all about how the media depicts the area and those that read the local papers will be familiar with the sensational headlines and unfavourable descriptions used. The reality is that over the past three years as a result of the work of the local authority and the partnership, Croydon is the second best performing borough and is now one of the safest in London. We are bucking the national trend, violent crime is down and there are less incidents of criminal damage.

The number of police officers in London has never been so high. In 2001 there were 580 police officers in the borough and this number has been increased to 682. In addition people will have seen the Police Community Support Officers on the streets of Croydon and these will eventually number 76. He then introduced Police Community Support Officer Daniel Ashby, who is a member of the Safer Neighbourhood Team serving the Shirley ward.

Chief Superintendent Gore said that he was very proud to be appointed the Borough Commander of Croydon and it was now up to him to continue to build on the partnership that exists between the local community, the local authority and the work that was done by his predecessor Vicky Marr. Safer Neighbourhood Teams are the most important development there has been in the policing of London because they professionalise community policing. In the past, police officers serving in areas around the borough were often subject to withdrawal from the local area to police a demonstration or major sporting event, and the consequence was their involvement with the local community was curtailed. Nowadays, very few of those under training at the Police Training School at Hendon want to be Community Police Officers and yet this is now the whole spirit of modern policing. It is now all about identifying individuals who want to be police officers and have the essential ability and capability to converse with members of the public. It is not about driving fast cars; it is all about providing a visible police presence. Safer Neighbourhood Teams were introduced because in the past, police tended to focus on tackling priority crime, which is right and will still be dealt with, as will street crime, burglary and motor vehicle crime. However, the anti-social behaviour component was being neglected, and that was anti-social behaviour, groups of youths hanging about in the evenings, levels of graffiti, and criminal damage. When your unattended motor vehicle has its windscreen washers damaged and the aerial broken, this makes residents

feel insecure and under attack and it needs to be tackled. The essence of Safer Neighbourhoods is that it allows residents to determine the priorities that each team is going to work on, because irrespective of whether or not Monks Orchard is an area of low crime, the residents' fears and anxieties are important, and the police service should positively respond and deal with them.

The Chief Superintendent reported that criminal damage in some wards had almost been eradicated which proves the system is working. In April this year, there will be 25 Safer Neighbourhood schemes in Croydon, which offers a tremendous opportunity. All he asks of residents is to make contact with them, engage them, speak to them, and tell them about your concerns so that they can respond to them effectively. Anti-social behaviour needs to be tackled, not tolerated; it's all about people understanding what responsibility is, and it's about people understanding what respect is, and this needs to be driven home. There is a large population in the borough and most people are law abiding, but they can be victims of anti-social behaviour. It is important if you are a parent to inform your sons and daughters that if they embark on anti-social activities it will not be tolerated. We have to set an example; all of us have a part to play. Policing is not just for the police, it's for the public, and it is our duty to provide a police service in Croydon that meets local needs. It is up to residents to help us achieve this aim.

Questions were then taken from the floor. Colin Romack said that many more police are being deployed in the borough but he could not remember the last time he had seen a Police Officer or Community Police Support Officer in The Glade. There is vandalism near bus stops and anti-social behaviour in the vicinity of St. George's church and there is never a Police presence. Recently, he contacted Croydon Police Station to report a crime and was told to attend the police station or report the incident online. Fortunately, he has a computer, and reported the problem online, but he is unhappy at the way police are dealing with incidents of crime in the area.

The Chief Superintendent said that he was sorry that such a response was received. More police are being deployed and neighbourhood teams are being formed but each safer neighbourhood area has a population of 11,000 to 12,000 residents and it is not possible to be visible to everyone; it is only at potential trouble spots that this is likely to happen. It is up to local residents to inform the teams and they will try to respond and provide a visible presence. As regard to criminal damage, there are a number of crimes that you can report online and there is a telephone investigation bureau, which accepts reports of crimes. This permits a reduction in bureaucracy and if there is a crime, a suspect, and forensic evidence, the police will deal with it.

Adding to this response Daniel Ashby Police Community Support Officer said that he was born and lived in the local area and attended Edenham High School and knows what is going on in the area and where the trouble spots

are. He is now serving in the area so please feel free to approach him and he will be happy to talk to you.



A further response to the question was provided by Glyn Shepard the Community Police Officer for Ashburton Ward for the past 18 months. He reported that the Safer Neighbourhood Team was now in place and consisted of Sergeant Christopher Watson, himself, another Police Officer who will arrive in September, Police Support Officer Johanna Barnard plus two others forming what is known as a 1,2,3, one sergeant, two constables and three PCSO's. Turning to the comment about The Glade and the lack of a visible police presence, he mentioned that he does regularly patrol the area. It is true that he will rarely be seen, especially on the late turn. At the present time, the main problems are mini-motorbikes, anti-social behaviour at the rear of St. George's church and adolescents assembling outside Kandies. He was fully aware of these problems and had visited the main perpetrator on three occasions and talked to the parents. A Ward Officer working alone finds it difficult to deal simultaneously with all the local difficulties but with six people it will be easier to combat the problems.

Barbara White asked about the type of deterrents there are for adolescents that appear not to be concerned about the police, and asked what is done to catch the perpetrators of crime that appear unconcerned when a threat is made that the police will be summoned. How do you contact the police because dialling 999 appears a bit 'over the top' for anti-social behaviour? Responding, P.C. Glyn Shepherd said that once the Safer Neighbourhood Team became fully operative a mobile number and a Safer Neighbourhood Team number would be publicised.

The Chief Superintendent added that there has been a real change in the manner in which anti-social behaviour is dealt with. Anti-social behaviour orders (ASBO's) offer a punitive deterrent, they are not always the right remedy but they do offer the ultimate course of action. The courts have been issuing harsh penalties and the ultimate sanction is that the local authority can evict people from their homes. Attempts are being made to reduce the bureaucracy and quicken the process. If someone is running a 'crack house' the police can move in, arrest the culprits and close the premises.

Councillor Avril Slipper said that we have heard there will be a team of six in the Safer Neighbourhood Team and presumably this will not result in six people patrolling the area every day. Can you please tell us how you will ensure that there is always someone available when taking into account each officer has, at least, two days off each week plus sick leave and courses to attend? Will there always be someone on call when needed?

In response, The Chief Superintendent said that he could not give any assurances that there would always be someone on duty. What we need to

ensure is that there is a team that provides the coverage to deal effectively with problems as they arise.

On behalf of those present The Chair thanked Godfrey Davies, Keith Turner and Mark Gore for attending and added that their input had been useful and members are now better informed and perhaps less worried than when they arrived. He also thanked the ward Councillors and Andrew Pelling for their valuable contribution to the meeting. Elaine Eckhardt and Derek Ritson were thanked for their help with the visual presentation.

Finally, The Chair thanked all the members present for attending the meeting to show support. He hoped that members had found the meeting worthwhile and enjoyable. Bless you all and God willing he hopes to see everyone again at next year's meeting.

FAREWELL AND THANKS

Croslink Sheltered Workshop that employed disabled members of the community and provided MORA with a highly professional printing service for almost ten years closed its doors for good on March 31st. The decision to close the business was made by Croydon council that gave assurances that every worker would be found alternative employment. Sadly, to date, very few have been successfully employed elsewhere. MORA thanks all the workers and wishes them well.

The Ptarmigan Press produced this issue of the newsletter and it is hoped that members find it interesting and enjoy reading it.

Planning Update



PLANNING APPLICATIONS & DECISIONS

NEW APPLICATIONS:

06/01595/P Full Planning Permission

Location: 95 Tower View, Croydon, CR0 7PZ

Registration Date: 24 / 04 / 2006 Objection Date: 18 / 05 / 2006

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

06/01718/P Full Planning Permission

Location: 85 Orchard Avenue, Croydon, CR0 7NF

Registration Date: 28 / 04 / 2006 Objection Date: 27 / 05 / 2006

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

06/01177/P Full Planning Permission

Location: 21 Cheston Avenue, Shirley, CR0 8DE

Registration Date: 22 / 03 / 2006 Objection Date: 16 / 04 / 2006

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Proposal: Demolition of existing building; erection of three story building comprising 9 two bedroom flats; formation of vehicular access and provision of associated parking.

MORA Action: Objection sent to LPA 14th April 2006.

06/00904/P Outline Planning Permission

Location: 114 Orchard Way, Croydon, CR0 7NN

Registration Date: 08 / 03 / 2006 Objection Date: No Date

Proposal: Demolition of existing building; erection of two/three storey building comprising 6 two bedroom and 7 one bedroom flats; alterations to vehicular access and provision of associated parking.

MORA Action: Objection sent to LPA 10th April 2006.

06/00792/P Full Planning Permission

Location: 39 Orchard Way, Croydon, CR0 7NP

Registration Date: 06 / 03 / 2006 Objection Date: 26 / 03 / 2006

Proposal: Demolition of existing building; erection of 2 detached four bedroom houses and provision of associated parking.

DECISIONS:

06/00529/P Outline Planning Permission

Location: 66 Tower View, Croydon, CR0 7PW

Registration Date: 14 / 02 / 2006 Objection Date: 11 / 03 / 2006

Proposal: Demolition of existing building; erection of 4 three bedroom semi-detached houses with detached garages.

MORA Action: Objection Sent to LPA on 09 / 03 / 2006

Decision: Permission Refused Date of decision: 10 / 04 / 2006

06/00858/P Full Planning Permission

Location: 89b Gladeside, Croydon, CR0

Registration Date: 02 / 03 / 2006 Objection Date: No Date

Proposal: Erection of detached two storey four bedroom detached house with accommodation in roofspace and provision of associated parking.

MORA Action: Objection sent to LPA on 13 / 11 / 2005

Decision: Permission Refused Date of decision: 27 / 04 / 2006

PREVIOUS NOTIFICATIONS OUTSTANDING:

06/00537/P Outline Planning Permission

Location: Land R/O Shirley Cottage, 51 Wickham Road, Croydon

Registration Date: 8 / 02 / 2006 Objection Date: 6 / 03 / 2006

Proposal: Erection of two storey building comprising 8 two bedroom flats and provision of associated parking

MORA Action: Objection sent to LPA on 5th March 2006.

06/00586/P & 06/00581/P Full Planning Permission

Location: 59 Greenview Avenue, Croydon, CR0 7QW

Registration Date: 10 / 02 / 2006 Objection Date: 10 / 03 / 2006

Proposal: Construction of roof extension to include dormer extensions in front and rear roof slopes; erection of glazed walkway at rear. Erection of

detached four bedroom dwelling with integral garage on land at side.

MORA Action: Objection Sent to LPA on 12/03/06.

NOTE: Due to lack of space in this issue, you can find further Planning details on our website: www.monks-orchard-web.org.uk.



Security Report

I attended the last MET meeting on Wednesday the 12th April at the Forum, Forestdale. There were 24 Neighbourhood Watch Committee Members present, our Chair person, Sonja Curtis, Inspector Alec Stowe and 4 PCs and 2 Councillors; quite a gathering to hear the good news that at last we have most of our Police Teams in **Shirley** with Sgt. Andy O'Donnell, PC Nicola Duffy and PCSOs Jon Read, Colin Ham and Dan Ashby (the tall lad present at the AGM). **Ashburton** have Sgt. Chris Watson, PC Glyn Shepard (also present at AGM) and PCSO Joanna Barnard and another PCSO not named, who is still on training, so we should see many more "police on the beat" from now on.

They are to be provided with personal direct lines to contact, which will be available shortly and will be announced in due course. This will make a quick response to incidents in their local area. It must be stressed that victims **must** give a clear name, address and phone number, and the exact place of incident and description of the crime to get an immediate response and advice on action to be taken by the victim. We should have **complete** teams of 1 sergeant, 2 PCs and 3PCSOs by October this year as some are still in training. There will be a Police Safer Neighbourhood Office in Shop No. 293 Wickham Road, but it will **not** be open to the public.

I have received a letter from Councillor Janet Marshall on the felling of the preservation Oak Tree in No. 97 Tower View. It was inspected by authorised experts and found to be badly diseased right at the root and base including structural roots, making it dangerous to vehicles and pedestrians in the area due to the dry and windy weather of late. However, the owner must provide a replacement tree before the end of the next planting season (March 2007), and show this on future planning applications.

Jean Cook

Scam Warnings

Bogus Police and Age Concern Workers

Recently there have been a number of reports of bogus Police and Age Concern Workers carrying out distraction burglaries in Croydon. The Police Safer Neighbourhood Teams are being encouraged to get involved with their local communities and there could be an occasion when they might like to call on you to introduce themselves. The other time a Police Officer may call without an appointment would be if they are investigating a crime in the area and call on you to check whether you have seen or heard anything that could be of use in their investigation. So if a Police Officer does knock on your door

ask them if they mind waiting whilst you make a phone call. Shut the door and call the Police Station on 0208 667 1212 (or 999 in an emergency) and check whether they are genuine.



Don't let them in whilst you phone. Ask them to wait outside and shut the door. If they are criminals, that will probably be enough to send them packing. Don't just rely on checking their ID as fake ones are being shown. If someone says that they are from Age Concern and you are not expecting them, do the same. Shut the door and call Age Concern on 020 8680 5450 to check. A genuine caller will not mind you checking.

Alarm System

The Crime Prevention Officers at Croydon have been made aware that a company selling Alarm installations have been cold calling on people, offering alarm systems that have been recommended by the Neighbourhood Watch and Crime Prevention. We DO NOT endorse any particular companies, but recommend that if you are considering installing an alarm, that you only use N.S.I. (National Security Inspectorate) approved companies. Please ring 01905 773131 for a list of approved Installers; alternatively you can ring the Crime Prevention Officers on 020 8649 1414 for general security advice.

Hawkers of Kitchen Equipment and Furniture

Croydon Trading Standards are issuing warnings about two groups of doorstep traders that are operating nationwide.

First Group: Dutch salesman using false stories to sell kitchen equipment to consumers on their doorsteps are again active in this country. The salesmen target consumers at their homes or places of business. They claim that they are passing through the local area having attended a trade fair, and are trying to sell the remains of their unsold stock of allegedly 'high quality' knives and saucepans to avoid paying duty or because of problems with border security. In fact, the salesmen are visiting the UK for weeks at a time, renting out space in caravan parks to use as a base then driving out to target consumers in areas across the country. They have set up UK companies to allow them to take payments by cheque. The salesmen's activities appear to be in breach of the Doorstep Selling Regulations - no cancellation rights are given to consumers on making a purchase, although the salesmen have been known to return to collect goods when the consumer has cancelled their cheque before it can be cashed.

Second Group: this warning relates to upholstered furniture, settees and armchairs from Poland, which is arriving in the UK by lorry. It is off-loaded at remote warehouses, and put into smaller white vans. The furniture is then hawked door to door. Typically the furniture is labelled with photocopied swing-ticket safety labels but when tested, fails flammability requirements.

Anyone with information concerning either of these issues is asked to contact: Croydon Trading Standards. Telephone number: 020 8407 1310
Email: trading.standards.gov.uk

Crime Alerts

Offence	Location	Date	Method
Criminal Damage	Orchard Grove	01/05/2006	Persons unknown pushed garden wall over.
Robbery of the Person	Firsby Avenue	29/04/2006	Victim was walking along the street when was approached by five black male suspects who struggled with him, searched him, threatened him and then stole his phone.
Criminal Damage of Motor Vehicle	Tower View	28/04/2006	Suspects smashed the rear window of a stationary unattended car and then left the scene.
Criminal Damage of Motor Vehicle	Orchard Way	26/04/2006	Person unknown bent open passenger door.
Burglary of Dwelling	Orchard Avenue	23/04/2006	The two white male suspects told the victim that they were plain clothes Police Officers and that they had spoken to the neighbours and that they were on their way round to see them and gained entry by being let in.
Criminal Damage	Burrell Close	04/04/2006	Unknown suspect kicked down fence panel at side of garden adjacent to the road.
Robbery of the Person	Orchard Way	27/03/2006	Suspects followed victim and asked for his money, then threatened him and asked for his mobile phone. They took the victim's coat and bags and fled from the scene.
Theft of Motor Vehicle	Kempton Walk	24/03/2006	Persons unknown removed vehicle from back garden.

Crime Prevention

Please be aware that there has been an increase in thefts from garages in the borough with doors being smashed open where made of wood or metal doors being bent back to gain entry.



Postcard Scam

The postcard scam reported on the 12 January last is still appearing. If you get a card from PDS saying a parcel is awaiting delivery to you this is a premium rate scam do NOT reply.

Reverse Charge Phone Scam

A member has reported a possible reverse charge phone scam where a woman rings saying that this is a reverse charge call. The number used was 0845 685 3000.

Which magazine have recently reported a complaint regarding a TV advert from '0800 Reverse' which has now been banned by the Advertising Standards Agency. Anyone accepting a reverse charge call is charged at least £2.50 for the connection plus a minimum three minute call charge.

Safer Neighbourhoods Team: Shirley Ward

If you have concerns about day-to-day crime and disorder issues, please contact a member of your local team on:

0208 721 2469 or 07920 233890

In an emergency call 999.

For non-emergency crime reports call 0208 667 1212.

PS Andy O'DONNELL

PC Nicola DUFFY

PSCO Dan ASHBY

PSCO Jon REED

Safer Neighbourhoods Team: Ashburton Ward

Call: 07920 233885

SGT Chris WATSON

PC Glyn SHEPHERD

PCSO Joanna BARNARD

PSCO Simon CARTER



HEALTH – Do we do enough or ourselves?

We are all aware that the Government want us all to spend less time in the NHS even though they want it to be an all-singing, all-dancing service to one and all. The simple truth is that although millions have been poured into the service during the last few years, there are still capacity issues and dissatisfaction amongst many unhappy patients and a certain proportion of NHS staff. The recent publicity about overspends and cutbacks can only lead

us to one conclusion – there'll never be enough money, staff or resources to meet everyone's needs. The Department of Health doesn't need more doctors, nurses or pharmacists – what the Government really needs are FEWER patients.



So where does that leave us? Obviously, we should all be doing more, according to the various Government advisory bodies, to make ourselves healthier than we are as a nation. More exercise (I prefer to call it activity – less onerous), cut out smoking, cut down on alcohol, eat sensibly and watch your weight are the simple messages. However, if we just look around us, all the temptations in life are now far more affordable than they ever have been in modern history. When I was queuing in a Disneyland Park a few years ago for one of those awful rides with my young daughter, I got chatting to a young Asian father behind me. We were discussing the huge number of overweight American people that seemed to be presenting the park and how this reflects on our judgements about a population. He responded by saying that his father, who lived in India, was longing to visit the USA so he could see with his own eyes people on low incomes who were grossly overweight. In India, this would be impossible. The poor are thin because they are malnourished and cannot buy sufficient food. The raw truth in a Western democracy is that if you are at the wrong end of the social ladder, you are more likely to smoke, be overweight and die earlier due to ill health. It is a perverse fact of life that the wealthy are the healthiest as they tend to act more assertively on informed healthy choices. Those in low income brackets do not. Poverty in the west does not mean you go without food – they simply eat too much of the *wrong* food.

We are also now able to access far more readily diagnostic tests that will provide many of the answers to our body status. We are naturally curious about our cholesterol levels, diabetic risks, cardiovascular status and body mass index. More and more pharmacies like mine are now able to provide customers and patients with accurate test results within a few minutes that would have been unobtainable a few years ago. Modern digital chemical analysis has reached the microchip revolution and technical advances have produced much more accurate small scale laboratory testing equipment. Pharmacists can now equip themselves with a range of diagnostic testing facilities which will spell the end of most hospital test visits in the future. It will take the NHS a little time to catch up with the rapid progression of technology but the Government has made it clear that moving diagnostic testing out of the hospital sector is a major consideration for commissioning future services. They have recognised the improvements in digital chemical testing and are prepared to acknowledge the inevitable – a hospital is not the ideal place to travel if services can be provided cheaply and locally removing unnecessary waiting times.



If we know just what our metabolic measurements are and can get a true picture of our overall health situation using accurate testing, then we really do

have no excuse for failing to act and put things right – or at least try to correct any imbalance. Knowledge is king, as they say and there's no reason now why we should remain in the dark on the way our bodies are functioning. So many diseases creep up on an otherwise healthy body without strong symptoms. High blood pressure is a case in point. For many, hypertension (to give it its proper name) is asymptomatic but failure to correct it could be literally fatal.

I would urge all who are mildly curious about their health status to dig under the surface and find out more – it's a rewarding exercise and may prolong or even save your life. We all know that prevention is much better than the cure and more importantly, it will keep our use of the NHS to a minimum!

Shirley Methodist Church -75th Anniversary

As part of the celebrations we are pleased to welcome back one of our former Ministers Revd. Dr. Peter Stephens. He will first of all be preaching on Sunday 18th June at the morning service at 10.30am. Then in the afternoon at an Open Air Service at Hall Grange, Shirley Church Road. This event will begin with music at 2.30pm with the service at 3.00pm followed by a cream tea at 4.00pm.



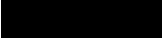




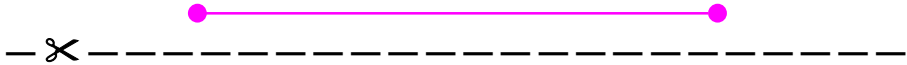
We extend an invitation to you to greet Peter at these services. We are hoping for fine weather in the afternoon in which case it would be helpful if you could bring a small folding chair. However, if it is wet, we shall have to make the most of the restricted accommodation.

Committee Capers

Oh, give me your pity; I am on a committee
Which means that from morning to night
We attend and amend and contend and descend,
Without conclusion in sight.
We confer and concur, we defer and demur
And reiterate all our thoughts.
We revise the agenda with frequent amenda
And consider a load of reports.
We compose and propose, we support and oppose,
And the points of procedure are fun.
But those various notions are brought up as motions
And terribly little gets done.
We resolve and absolve but we never dissolve
Since it's out of the question for us.
What a shattering pity to end our committee:
Where else could we make such a fuss?

MORA COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2006

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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:	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:	

Tick box for membership:

- Full Membership £2.00
- Senior Citizen £1.00

Please send this completed form to:

DIANE McINERNEY


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