

# Monks Orchard Residents' Association

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Croydon

(Non Party)

(Independent)

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**NEWSLETTER - Summer 2008**



## **Tudor Lodge**

The only “listed building” in the MORA area of Shirley  
Built circa 1885.

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

## Chairman's Comment

Amid the worrying news of price increases and more expensive mortgages there is hope that some local concerns are receiving positive attention. The deployment of extra police is bringing about a reduction in crime although much remains to be done; especially that of gang crime, the carrying of guns and knives, street robbery, drug related crime and the theft of motor vehicles. More transport police are being used in an attempt to make bus travel safer and there are rumours that bus conductors may return and that adolescents that annoy or threaten passengers will lose the entitlement to free travel.

After much delay, additional buses for the exclusive use of school children have been introduced on bus route 367 which should ease some of the overcrowding during term time.

The growing resistance to the spread of back land developments has been recognised. The Council is planning to amend the Croydon Plan in an attempt to prevent such developments and the new London Mayor has mentioned that changes will be made to prevent gardens being treated as brown development sites. Many Monks Orchard properties have sizeable gardens that could be sold for development, changing the character of the area, depriving neighbours of privacy and adversely impacting on their quality of life.

It is predicted that in the future, one in three residents will be troubled by housing developments. Croydon has to provide 1,100 housing units each year and this has been achieved by building high density developments near the town centre where there are good transport links, but this cannot go on forever and it is inevitable that more construction will take place in the greener parts of the borough which makes the protection of parks, playing fields and open spaces more important.

It has been confirmed that, at present, the Council has no plans to change the frequency of the weekly rubbish collections and is not to follow the lead of other councils that have reduced their collections from weekly to fortnightly. The recycling of green waste for conversion into compost is working well as are the experimental trials of the collection of food waste. All waste food can be recycled into compost; such as cooked meats, bread, vegetable peelings, almost anything from the kitchen. At first there were fears of unpleasant odours and the attraction of vermin but these problems have all been solved by the use of sealed containers. The recycling collections of paper, plastics, tins, textiles, green and food waste will greatly reduce the proportion of rubbish placed in wheelie bins and this is the time when the frequency of rubbish collections is likely to be reviewed. Recycling will reduce the amount of rubbish going into landfill sites but residents will have to devote time to sorting and separating the household rubbish; also, four or five different box containers will need to be stored nearby.

# **MONKS ORCHARD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION**

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

### **Minutes of the 85<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Monks Orchard Residents' Association held on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2008 in St. George's Church Hall.**

Bob Akers opened the proceedings by welcoming approximately seventy members to the 84<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting and said this is the eleventh year that he has had the privilege of acting as Chairman and it is pleasing that so many members and friends have attended to show support.

The following were welcomed to the meeting; the elected representatives for the Shirley ward, Councillor Janet Marshall, Leader of the Council Councillor Mike Fisher, and Councillor Richard Chatterjee. For the Ashburton ward, Councillor Avril Slipper, Councillor Eddy Arram and Councillor Lindsay Frost were welcomed, also the Chairman and Secretary from the Spring Park Residents' Association, and Representatives from the Ashburton and Shirley Safer Neighbourhood Teams.

He then introduced the visiting speakers: Mr Rory Macleod, Head of Planning Control at Croydon Council Planning Department, Councillor Chris Wright, Cabinet Member for Planning and Kathy Grafham Manager of Croydon Careline.

### **Apologies for Absence**

Unfortunately Andrew Pelling, Member of Parliament and Member of the Greater London Authority was unable to attend due to ill health. Derek Loughborough, our president, was also unable to attend.

### **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the 2007 Annual General Meeting were published in the summer issue of the newsletter, posted on the MORA website and copies were available in the hall. The minutes were approved unchallenged as a correct record of the 83<sup>rd</sup> Annual General Meeting held on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2007.

### **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

### **Election of Officers and Committee for 2008/2009**

The Chair said that the association is managed and organised by a hard working team that forms the Executive Committee, who donate time and energy for the benefit of the local community. During the year Dennis Perry, John Parry and George Mowforth have been co-opted to the Executive Committee. John Parry and George Mowforth have agreed to act as the Tree

and Green Space Officers. Carole Greenwood has resigned from the post of Minutes Secretary because of ill health. He wished Carole a speedy return to full health and thanked her for the valuable contribution made to the work of the association.

He was pleased to be able to report that all the present members have agreed to continue for a further year and the Executive Committee were re-elected en-bloc. It was noted that the positions of Vice Chair, Planning Officer and Minutes Secretary remain unfilled and formal applications would be welcome from members willing to undertake these tasks. Grateful thanks was given for the valuable help given to the association by Road Stewards and Area Managers who deliver the newsletters, collect membership fees and keep in-touch with members.

There are seventy or more Road Stewards, and it is necessary to replace those that are unable to continue and who are required for the following areas; Stoneleigh Park, Mardell Road, Firsby Ave, Eldon Ave, Greenview Avenue and Uplands Court, Woodmere Avenue, Chaffinch Avenue and Chaffinch Close, Gladeside, Brookside Way and Meadow Avenue, Glade Gardens, and Shirley Avenue.

It was stressed that there is always work to be done and extra help is urgently needed; if anyone is interested in helping the local community and wishes to help retain the special character of the area please contact Bob Akers telephone [REDACTED]. There are a variety of ways in which you members can give valuable help to ensure that the association continues to exist.



Chairman - Bob Akers

### **Chairman's Report**

Bob Akers said that this is a time of change, and during the past year MORA's Executive Committee has been actively working on your behalf. It has canvassed and forwarded opinions on the proposed changes to Primary Care, leading to the establishment of mini-clinics. Changes will be made to the provision of healthcare in London but it is essential that the community is kept informed and be assured that the proposed changes will enhance the quality of care. It is forecast that one in five GP surgeries in England faces closure, threatening the

end of the era of a family doctor in every neighbourhood.

MORA is concerned about some of the proposals contained in the Planning Reform Bill and is pressing for amendments to be made that would ensure that adequate consultation takes place and planning permission is required before inconsiderate home improvers are able to construct larger extensions to their property.

Action has been taken on the concerns expressed about the number of escapes from the Denis Hill Medium Secure Unit at Bethlem Royal Hospital. The management has acknowledged that there have been lapses in security and promised that improvements will be made. In order to meet the growing demand for treatment the hospital will continue to expand but at all times the priority must be the safety of the local community.

The new £33.5 Million new Medium Secure Unit named River House has now opened at Bethlem Royal Hospital. It is a splendidly equipped unit with individual rooms with en-suite facilities, communal kitchens, and gymnasium plus a games hall. It is a pity that comparable facilities are not available to those in NHS hospitals and care homes. It is our understanding that the new unit will house similar patients to those previously treated in the Denis Hill unit from which there have been escapes; the hope is that the new unit will prove more secure.

It is important that Monks Orchard retains its green environment especially when there is a demand for more building land. There are now two members of the Executive Committee dealing specifically with trees and green spaces and working to protect and to enhance these important local amenities.

At a time when there is increasing pressure for change it is essential that the interests of the local community are represented and forwarded by an active association of residents.



**Secretary - Dave King**

### **Secretary's Report**

Dave King expressed the importance of membership and mentioned that there has been a slight decline in the number of members as a consequence of people moving from the area and being replaced by new arrivals. It is essential that newcomers learn about the existence of MORA, and he asked for members that have new neighbours to tell them it is in their interest to join the local association. Road Stewards play a vital role and he asks members to consider helping the association by becoming a Road Steward or Area Manager. All that is required is a donation of

approximately one hour each quarter to deliver the newsletters and collect the membership fees.

One of the local concerns that have been discussed during the year is the traffic flow at the road junction in the Wickham Road near Shirley Library and the safety hazards faced by those drivers when attempting to turn right into Orchard Avenue. Subsequent to some research he found that London Streets are responsible for traffic and contacted them in September to which a response arrived in November containing the news that the Road Network

Development Team are looking into improving the traffic flow at this road junction; to date, there has been no further information. He plans to continue badgering them for a reply.



Treasurer - Terry Greenwood

### **Treasurer's Report**

Terry Greenwood thanked Road Stewards and Area Managers for their valuable work and thanked members who have had to face an increase in the fees of membership because of rising costs. Until last year we were struggling and in 2005 there was only a very small surplus. He confirmed that the situation is much improved; in 2006 the income from fees was £2,621, and this year £4,340 was received plus advertising revenue. There were sufficient funds to purchase a projector and screen for the use of the association. Our overall accounts has increased to £10,218 and the largest expense is the production cost of the quarterly newsletters that cost on average

£800 per issue. He concluded by confirming that the financial future of the association is assured and it will soon be in a position to offer further help to the local community.

The Chair also thanked members for supporting the necessary increase in the fees of membership, which has ensured the association's financial future. Members can be confident that the extra income will be used sensibly and prudently; the overriding need is to maintain a substantial fighting fund that can be used to protect those that live in Monks Orchard from major threats to our quality of life, well being and environment. This is the reason we join the association to band together to defend one another.

### **Security Report**

Jean Cook said that she had little new to add to the report printed in the Spring issue of the newsletter. She reported that P.S. Bob Smith is now leading the Shirley Safer Neighbourhood Team and that two of the Police Support Officers have progressed to Hendon to commence training as Police Officers. Mention was made of the continuing theft of catalytic converters especially from high axle vehicles; this is taking place in daylight and is carried out by thieves dressed as motor mechanics. Theft of registration plates continues to be a concern. Members were asked to keep abreast of security issues by reading the crime section of the newsletter.

### **Trees and Open Spaces Report**

John Parry said that he and George Mowforth had volunteered to act as jolly green giants at the end of last year; Helen McMullen is also assisting. Accepting this responsibility had shifted his attention from his garden to the whole area of Monks Orchard. The area is gorgeous, especially when the trees are in blossom and it is a nice place to live. He reported that the tree

and open space officers are making contact with organisations with similar aims. Croydon has its own open space strategy; there is also the Capital Woodland Project, Green Space Community Network, Green Link and Natural England. These organisations all strive to create better open space environments and to retain these valuable recreational areas and make them more attractive for use by children and residents. The aim is to retain those that exist and improve them. We hope that it will be a co-operation with residents, MORA, the Council and other organisations.



**Councillor Avril Slipper**

### **Report Back by Councillor Avril Slipper**

Councillor Slipper indicated that she was reporting back on behalf of the Shirley and Ashburton Councillors. She also introduced Gavin Barwell; the prospective Conservative parliamentary candidate for Croydon Central who is currently holding surgeries whilst Andrew Pelling M.P. is unwell.

Councillor Slipper began by addressing the concerns expressed about the speeding of vehicles in Orchard Avenue by saying that although it was a concern to residents, it was a matter for the police. She pointed out that the Council has repainted the 'SLOW' signs in The Glade and has installed new improved signs warning of the presence of two bends in the road. She stated that the speeding of vehicles is not only a local issue; the problem exists in all parts of the borough and is the responsibility of the police.

Mention was made of the planning application for the site at Glade Gardens, and it was reported that the local residents are still campaigning for the site to be adopted as a Town Green.

She concluded by reporting that significant areas in Orchard Way had been vandalised by Graffiti. This had been reported to the council and that the council had removed the Graffiti within twenty-four hours.

### **Planning Presentation**

Mr. Rory MacLeod began by describing how the Croydon Planning Service can be accessed and it was clear that the growth of the Internet has changed the ways in which the service is used. As well as the traditional phone and letter there is electronic mail and one of the most comprehensive set of on-line planning services in the country that allows users to view the interactive register, submit planning applications, obtain information on listed buildings, and inspect the interactive enforcement register and policy map.



**Rory MacLeod**

The service is under constant pressure having to cope with increasing expectations from central government, the rising volume of applications and appeals coupled with the need to reduce costs. Nevertheless, the service performance is one of the top five in London and the number of applications and turnaround times are among the highest also there is a good record of defending its decisions against appeals.

We were told that for planning control purposes the borough is covered by three area teams plus one that deals with enforcement and trees. The tasks undertaken are numerous and complex; ranging from processing planning applications to tree work applications, enforcement, planning appeals and public enquiries. The target timescales for processing planning applications is 8 and 13 weeks during which the following stages have to be completed; validation and registration, notification, consultations, site inspections, analysis and finally the compilation of the report and recommendation. Applications are usually determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Croydon Replacement Unitary Development Plan (The Croydon Plan) contains policies relating to area such as green belt, housing, parking, good design and sustainability. The London Plan covers some applications and these have to be referred to the Mayor of London. Material considerations include central government policy, representations from consultees and neighbours, planning appeal decisions plus site factors: trees, levels and flooding. Among the non-relevant considerations is loss of property values, trading competition, covenants and disturbance during building work.

Most of the decisions are delegated to the planning officers leaving only a small proportion being made by the Planning Committee in response to a referral from a Councillor or representations from a recognised association of residents.

Applications for new houses are considered against a background of additional pressures; the need to meet housing targets, imposed on all councils, to make fuller and more effective use of development land in order to meet the demand for affordable housing. To meet these needs higher density developments are allowed in appropriate locations, but the decisions have to be weighed against the impact on the character of the area, back land and back garden policies, the impact on adjoining occupiers and the protection of trees with amenity value.

Interesting factors were revealed; Croydon has more recent back land developments than any other London borough, and has had to deal with more planning appeals than any other authority in the country. The number of appeal hearings and public enquiries in the first three months of this year is the highest on record; only 34% of the appeals are successful, which is better than the national average.

Mr MacLeod concluded by mentioning the case study of a planning application submitted for a site at Oak Gardens, Shirley. The initial application was refused by the Planning Committee and the appeal was refused. A subsequent application was also refused by committee but the appeal was allowed with the award of cost against the Council because the application was refused on insufficient planning grounds.

### **Councillor Wright Presentation**

Councillor Wright began by saying that when the new administration took control there were four things he wanted to accomplish:

- To give residents the opportunity to gain a better understanding of the planning system.
- Engage sufficient planning officers to deal with the increasing number of applications.
- Strengthen the enforcement team to ensure that developers abide by the conditions laid down when the application was approved.
- Improve the performance of the planning department.



**Councillor Chris Wright**

To achieve these aims, forums and workshops are held for residents' associations to inform them what the planning team and administration is doing so that the information gained could be passed on. Previously, people had little knowledge of the planning process; an application was submitted and it was suddenly approved and they did not understand why. The forums have been well attended and will continue to be offered in the future. Furthermore, the system is now easier to access. For example, there is now an interactive webpage, to which it is hoped details of trees and tree preservation orders will be added. This is something the new administration can be proud of, but it is only the beginning of a quest to get more understanding between residents and the planning team. Previously there was criticism that the council seemed remote, and this is being addressed and is the reason why he attended this meeting. Neighbourhood Partnerships also form a link between residents and the council.

The distinction between planning officers and elected members was explained. Officers have to conform to the Croydon Plan and Government regulations; elected members have to follow this advice and bear in mind the wishes of people who want to preserve the character of their area. The planning officers may stress that there is no reason under planning law why the application should not be allowed, but the elected members may have different views because they know how the residents view the future of their area. As a consequence they ignore the recommendation and the application is refused and occasionally the decision is supported by the Planning Inspector.

More recently there is a tendency for more appeals to be allowed, which is of concern because it is utterly wrong for a planning inspector to override the wishes of local residents. So great is the concern that a petition that is attracting many signatures is being circulated with the aim of convincing the government of the problem.

The planning bill going through parliament contains some controversial legislation and will have to be carefully examined. Rory MacLeod mentioned that Croydon has been judged the best planning authority in the country and has gained a planning delivery grant thanks to the splendid efforts of the planning team

Councillor Wright concluded by stating that two things are very important for planning in the borough, the first is green belt and metropolitan open land, which will be under increased pressure from a government wanting more land for development; the authority does not believe valuable and diminishing amenity space should be lost.

The second is the character of the area whether it is Shirley, Monks Orchard, Coulsdon or Upper Norwood; each area has its own special character that can be easily eroded by insensitive developments and it is absolutely necessary to prevent this from happening.

### **Presentation by Kathy Grafham Croydon Careline Telecare Service**

Kathy Grafham began by saying that the basic package is a Careline unit and a Careline button, which can be worn as a necklace or a wrist strap. The presentation was based on answering the sort of questions that are frequently asked.

#### **How does the service work?**

When the button is pressed it automatically dials the Croydon Careline control centre via a telephone line and the person's details appear on a computer screen. It is then possible to talk to a trained operator without using a telephone handset. The operator will ask what assistance is required and take appropriate action such as contacting the mobile response officers who, if needed, will visit, or contact will be made with a family member, neighbour, or doctor. There may be occasions when the emergency services will be summoned because their response may be more appropriate.



**Kathy Grafham**

#### **What do I need to get the Careline installed?**

All that is required is a telephone line and a modern 13-amp electrical power socket within 6 feet (3 meters) of each other. If this is a problem it can be overcome.

### **Who can apply for this service?**

Anyone living in Croydon can have a Careline whether for reasons of home safety or personal security. The aim is to respond to the needs of all local people including older people, people with a disability and victims of harassment, domestic violence and bogus callers. A Careline gives an added sense of security for everyone who feels vulnerable.

### **How do I apply for a Careline Unit?**

Telephone 020 8726 6501 or 020 8654 7166 and make an appointment, or fill in the strip from the leaflet and post. Installation of the unit can take place at any time to suit including evenings, weekends and bank holidays.

### **Keysafe**

Used for speedy access in an emergency situation. There is a subsidised charge for this service.

### **Is there a charge?**

At present there is a charge of £5.15 per week for the full service. For those in receipt of pension credit or income support the charge is reduced to £2.80 per week. There is also a one-off payment of £25.00 to cover installation costs. Alarm Installation takes approximately 1 hour together with the paperwork.

### **Response Team**

Croydon Careline is the only community alarm service with its own response team that can come to a residence and give the help needed in an emergency situation.

### **How will the response team enter?**

It is recommended that people have a keysafe, a secure unit discreetly fitted outside the property. Opened by a four or five digit number that the owner knows and can share with anyone they trust to enter their home. It allows fast entry without forced damage to the property.

### **Is a Keyholder needed?**

Not necessarily, if a keysafe is installed. Careline can alternatively hold keys securely at the base office but this can delay the time of arrival due to the need to return to base and collect keys. It is helpful to have the name of a person to be contacted in an emergency to notify if, for example, someone is taken to hospital.

### **How do I communicate if English is not my first language?**

The monitoring centre has access to a service called Language Line and a record is kept of the language used and a three-way conversation can take place between the callers, careline and the interpreter.

### **What if I am not near the Careline unit?**

If someone has a fall and is unable to speak to the monitoring centre the call will be treated as a no-response and the response team will come and access

the situation and offer help. The response team is equipped with special lifting equipment.

### **Will it work in the Garden?**

When the unit is installed all the areas in the dwelling will be tested to ensure they are within the 80-metre range for the pendant to be away from the unit for it to operate safely. In most properties, it will successfully work in the home and garden but if there is a particularly long garden a check will be made.

### **What is Telecare?**

This is an enhanced community alarm service that remotely contacts the monitoring centre without pressing the button or pendant in an emergency situation. There is a range of unobtrusive Telecare sensors that can be programmed to the Careline Unit. They offer a comprehensive way to manage the risks to a person's health or home environment 24 hours a day every day of the year. There is a range of sensors available including:

**Flood Detector:** Provides early warning if there is a possible flood; place near bath, shower or sink for peace of mind.

**Smoke Detector:** Contacts control centre if smoke is detected.

**Carbon Monoxide Detector:** Alerts control centre of dangerous levels of carbon monoxide within a property.

**Bogus Caller Button:** Installed by the front door.

**Temperature Extreme:** This sensor alerts the control centre of extreme household temperatures, which prevents hypothermia.

**Natural Gas Detector:** Raises an alarm call to the control centre the moment a gas leak is detected. Helpful if an appliance is left turned on.

**Fall Sensor:** Detects if a person has a serious fall and sends an alarm call to control centre.

**Bed/Chair Occupancy Sensor:** This generates alarm calls for a number of situations; e.g. the user has got out of bed in the middle of the night and not returned.

**Wandering Client/Property Exit Sensor:** This monitors exit points and specifically monitors someone who may be at risk from leaving the property inappropriately and becoming lost.

**Movement Detector:** This device can be used to raise an alarm if the user is inactive for a prolonged period of time.

We were informed of a remarkable fire resistant spray that can be used on furniture, curtains and carpets. It is non-toxic and only a single application is required. There is also one that can be used on clothing but this has to be reapplied after the clothing has been washed.

Mrs. Grafham concluded by describing some care situations that have been successfully solved by the service. She stressed that it provides security and confidence to vulnerable people and permits them to have an independent existence in their own home. It can be especially useful for a person

concerned about someone who may become disoriented or forgetful. The devices and equipment were placed on display, questions answered and information leaflets were available.

Concluding the meeting Bob Akers thanked Rory Macleod and Councillor Chris Wright for skilfully clarifying the complexities of the planning process. Kathy Grafham was thanked for the valuable introduction to the Croydon Careline Telecare Service.

The ward's Councillors were thanked for their useful contribution and those present were thanked for attending and taking part in the meeting.

## Planning News

### Home Information Packs

This newsletter continues to publish updates on Home Information Packs (HIP's) because of their importance to homeowners. The packs were introduced in June 2007 with the aim to cheapen, and expedite the selling and buying of houses. HIP's include an energy efficiency rating for the property which requires a visit and survey by a domestic energy assessor. There is also a requirement to include a local authority search of planning applications in the vicinity together with details of the title deeds of the property and any leases. However, the planning searches become out of date after four to six months and have to be repeated at additional costs to the vendor.



Doubts about the value of HIP's are now being confirmed and the Law Society has gone as far as saying that the packs are the worst piece of legislation in 50 years. Many buyers consider the packs to be of such limited value that they do not ask for them when viewing a property and most say that the HIP had no effect on their decision to buy. Furthermore estate agents routinely do not offer packs to potential buyers.

The packs have failed to match the promises made by Ministers and there are now calls for a review of the entire home sale process to ensure that buying a home is quicker, easier and cheaper, and protects both the purchaser and the vendor.

Home owners will not know about the need to provide a Home Information Pack until a decision is made to sell their home and move elsewhere. Many older properties are unlikely to gain a high energy efficiency rating from a domestic energy assessor unless money has been spent on reducing energy consumption. The expense and upheaval involved in installing energy efficiency equipment may deter them from selling or alternatively they may be attracted by developers that offer to buy the property without a HIP pack. The slowdown in the property market will allow buyers to use the low energy

efficiency rating to negotiate a lower price. The property pages of the local press can be even more confusing - the charge for a HIP ranges from £200 to £350, but some offer them free of charge if you make them the sole agent.

## **Revaluation of Properties**

Three years ago, residential properties in Wales were re-valued and this resulted in a high rise in Council Tax bills because one in three homes was placed in a higher tax band. The move proved highly controversial and an equivalent



re-valuation in London and the South East raised concerns about the prospects of a severe backlash in London and other areas where property values have risen sharply since the last revaluation that took place in 1991.

As a result, the revaluation of properties in England was postponed indefinitely. However, in answer to a parliamentary question, the government has confirmed that the Valuation Office Agency [VOA] is continuing work on the re-valuation exercise that will cover all the 23 million homes in England. This is not a surprise because extra staff had already been engaged to undertake this massive task. Every home will be given a 12 digit "Unique Property Reference Number" to help tax inspectors and town halls to size up and charge higher taxes. For the purposes of this task attention is being paid to properties having desirable features such as available off-street parking places and others are being listed as having significant features of a scenic view. It is not clear whether properties with sought-after view of hills, mountains, fields or golf course are to be identified, but owners of such properties could face even higher council tax bills. It looks as if owners living in a pleasant neighbourhood will find themselves penalised, along with those that have made home improvements, added conservatories or installed provision for off-street parking. It seems that the government view is to penalise residents who try to better their environment by their hard-earned endeavours!

There is little doubt that reform of the local tax system will take place some time in the future in an attempt to make it fairer and linked to the ability to pay. Additional bands are likely to be added to take account of the increased property values. There are few that would not agree that the Council Tax system is flawed but any change is going to be highly controversial.

## **Speculative Developers**

For a house owner, nothing is quite as unsettling as to receive an approach from a developer saying that a number of free inspections are taking place in the area and enquiring if you wish to sell your property. Inducements may be offered like a free survey and valuation. Subtle pressure may be applied by

mentioning that in the near future the Government is to impose a development land tax which will affect any kind of owner who is thinking of selling his property for any form of development. Unscrupulous speculators may use scare tactics and warn that there are plans for large scale development in the area and who would choose to live in the centre of a construction site.

Reactions to this type of approach will be complex and varied depending on the circumstances of the owner. Frail elderly residents struggling with the expense of property maintenance and a large garden may welcome the approach. It will allow them to overcome the expense of engaging an estate agent, providing a Home Information Pack and the disruption and inconvenience caused by potential purchasers viewing the property. The danger is that they may believe that the development will take place and commence to plan and prepare for a move to a smaller property or a care home. There are those that waited patiently for years and never heard from the rogue developer again.

There will be a different reaction from an owner that selected the area and property with care, toiled for years to pay the mortgage, carried out home improvements, landscaped the gardens to make it an ideal place for the family to enjoy a blissful existence. The reaction will be immediate and a decision will be made to ignore the approach but nagging doubts and worries will start to grow and answers will be needed to the following questions: have the neighbours accepted the proposal? What size of development is being planned? Will it be a large backland development with an access road running alongside my property? For how long will the construction of the development disrupt the peace and security? Will the development overlook the garden and take away the privacy? Without answers to these questions the confidence of rejecting the proposal may weaken.

There is an understandable fear of living close to a development site. A local example is the development taking place in The Glade which has been in progress for over four years; fences, adjacent buildings, and footpaths have been damaged and left unrepaired. Those living in the vicinity have had to tolerate noise disruption and the work is still not complete. Furthermore, building



sites tend to attract unwanted visitors and the security of the nearby houses can be put at risk. It is clear that speculative developers do not care what problems they cause and it might be part of a plan to encourage owners of nearby properties to move and sell at a reduced price to the developer.

There are those who will not wish to tolerate the changes and disruption created by a development being constructed near or adjacent to their home

and will consider moving elsewhere. As many have discovered, the search for a new property can be time-consuming and complicated because the normal desire is to move to a well-presented property in a pleasant location with easy access to transport and shops. Such properties are rare and difficult to find and it is usually necessary to compromise on choice.

If an acceptable property is found, the next stage is to enquire about the cost of selling and buying a new property, which can be approximately £20,000; for a selling price around £275,000 the cost incurred would be approx £800 Stamp Duty; £3000 to £9000 Agents Fees; approx £2000 Solicitors and Land Registry Fees, Structural Survey and valuation fees of around £1000; and finally around £250 for the required HIP. This does not take into account the expense of furniture removals estimated between £600 to £1000 and any new carpets, curtains, or structural alterations at the new property. The current costs will be a shock to anyone that has not used these services for many years. Furthermore, there will be advice that this is not a good time to sell, in a buyers market, and it may be a considerable time before a buyer can be found. Faced with such daunting prospects many will lose heart at this stage and decide not to be driven out of their home and to stay put instead.

Speculative developers are constantly searching for opportunities to make money and they will know where properties with large gardens are located and only a small amount of research is required to obtain a profile of the occupants and if it is worth making a tentative approach. Usually the aim is to convince one owner to sell and having gained a route of access to the back land, to coerce the owners of adjacent properties to sell and move elsewhere. It is not necessary to own a potential development site to submit an application for planning permission. The outlay is small, and only sketchy plans and drawings are required if the application is for outline planning permission. When the basic work is completed the project is usually sold on at a profit to a development company or speculative builder.

The owners that do decide to sell their property usually have a considerable time to wait before any money exchanges hands. Often years pass before construction of the new development begins and the previous owners are not fully reimbursed until purchasers are found for the new properties. In the meantime, if property prices increase, the agreed payment received may not be sufficient to purchase another property of an equal or higher standard.

Approaches from speculative developers, whether by letter or a cold call need to be treated with suspicion. Owners of properties should reject approaches from speculative developers or seek professional advice. The sale of a property is an important decision and is not one to be debated on a doorstep with a glib-tongued caller.

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To the full extent permissible by law, Monks Orchard Residents' Association disclaim all responsibility, liability, or otherwise, or from any action or decision taken as a result of using this 'Handy Ads Section'. We reserve the right to withdraw any advertisement if we receive any complaints about service. To contact us for more details, please telephone Terry Greenwood on: [REDACTED].

# Planning Report



## Applications / Decisions:

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

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

**Permission Granted** **11/03/2008** **Delegated**

**08/00384/P** Full planning permission  
**31 Woodland Way** Registration: 06/02/2008

**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.

**Permission Refused** **27/03/2008** **Delegated**

**08/00274/P** Full planning permission  
**79 Orchard Avenue** Registration: 30/01/2008

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

**Permission Granted** **13/03/2008** **Delegated**

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

**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

**Permission Granted** **11/03/2008** **Delegated**

**08/01171/P** Full Planning Permission  
**37 Woodmere Avenue** Registration: 18/04/2008

**Proposal:** Erection of a three bedroom detached house; formation of vehicular access and provision of associated parking.

**MORA Objection Sent:** **05/05/2008**

**Permission Refused:** **04/06/2008** **Delegated**

## Appeals: Received / Decisions:

**08/00576/P** Full planning permission  
**Land at Glade Gardens** Registration: 18/02/2008

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

**Permission Refused:** **15/04/2008** **Delegated**

**Appeal:** **APP/L5240/A/07/2035739** **16/03/2008**

08/00164/P

## 66 Tower View

Full planning permission

Registration: 17/01/2008

**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**

**Planning Committee**

**Appeal Application:**

**22/04/2008**

**APP/L5240/A/08/2071798**

## MORA Success:

We can consider the refusal for the proposed development for a detached dwelling in the front garden of 37 Woodmere Avenue to be a MORA success.

Initially, the local Planning Authority sent letters to only a few of the local residents. However, in the weekly scan of the LPA Website by MORA, we became aware of the proposal and as a result our committee member in the area took full details of the proposal to all local residents who would be affected, and to obtain their views; most of whom were not even aware of the plans. As a result of this effort 18 local residents sent letters of objection to the LPA along with MORA's objection letter. We also contacted our local Councillors which resulted in a referral from the councillors. All of this lobbying resulted in a comprehensive refusal of the application which we can be proud to report to our members.

## The reasons for refusal were:

1. No pedestrian visibility splays and vehicle sight lines achievable.
2. The siting and layout of the development would not respect or improve the existing pattern of buildings and the spaces between them, appearing cramped and overcrowded, thereby out of keeping with the character of the locality.
3. The development would not respect the height of the existing buildings which play an important role in the character of the street scene.
4. The development would be detrimental to the residential amenities of the occupiers of the host property by reason of overlooking and visual intrusion.
5. The development would result in an unsatisfactory residential environment being provided for the occupiers of the proposed dwelling by reason of the inadequate private amenity space.

## ICE (In-Case-of-Emergency)

We all carry our mobile phones with hundreds of names and numbers stored in its memory but yet nobody, other than ourselves, know which of these numbers belong to our near and dear ones?



If any of us were involved in an accident or had a heart attack and the people attending us get hold of our mobile phone, they won't know which number to call to inform our family members. Yes, there are many numbers stored, but which one is the contact person in case of an emergency?

For this reason, we must have one or more telephone numbers stored under the name ICE (In case of Emergency) in our mobile phones.

Recently, the concept of 'ICE' is catching up quickly. It is simply an important method of contact during emergency situations. As mobile phones are carried by the majority of the population, just store the number of the person/s who should be contacted at during emergency as 'ICE' (meaning In Case of Emergency).

The idea was thought up by a paramedic who found that when they went to the scenes of accidents, there were always mobile phones with patients, but they didn't know which number to call. He therefore thought that it would be a good idea if there was a nationally recognized name for this purpose.

Following a disaster in London, the East Anglican Ambulance Service has launched a national 'In case of Emergency (ICE)' campaign. In an emergency situation, Emergency Service personnel and hospital staff would then be able to quickly contact your next of kin, by simply dialling the number stored as 'ICE'.

It really could save your life, or put a loved one's mind at rest. For more than one contact name simply enter ICE1, ICE2 and ICE3 etc. A great idea that will make a difference! Let's spread the concept of ICE by storing an ICE number in our mobile phones today!



## Crime Alerts

### Protect Your SatNav

In-car satellite navigation systems are the new "must have" for motorists and for thieves. Croydon police has noticed an increase in these types of thefts and believe they are going to be on increase as more people invest in them.

Hiding the system in the glove box or under the seat is simply not enough - this is the first place thieves will look if they break into your vehicle. Satellite navigation systems are small, hand-held devices that are easily transportable - take them with you when you leave your vehicle, as you would the fascia of your car stereo. Consider placing a prominent notice in your car stating that the system has been removed. Where possible, do not even leave the cradle for the system on display and remember to wipe clean the mark left on the windscreen where the cradle was. If you have to leave the cradle for the



system in your car, make sure it is marked overtly with poster or UV paint. Mark your Satellite Navigation system with your postcode and house number or your vehicle registration number, using special UV security markers. These pens are readily available from any good hardware store.

Never leave anything on view in your car. Thieves are opportunist; make sure to always lock all doors, windows and sunroofs. The effects of having your vehicle broken into is not only time consuming but can also increase the cost of your car insurance.

### **Thefts of Catalytic Converters**

Thefts of catalytic converters in the South of the Borough and in the neighbouring Surrey Police area have re-started with a gang operating overnight, stealing the catalytic converters from underneath Ford Transit vans and other large vehicles such as 4x4's where it is easy to get underneath the vehicle without using a jack. They use pipe cutters to avoid making any noise. If you see or hear anything suspicious involving these types of vehicles do not approach the vehicle but call 999; a note of the registration number of any vehicles involved will greatly help the Police.

### **Metropolitan Police Service details used by internet lottery fraudsters**

Currently one of the most common types of fraud are lottery scams. You will receive a letter or email stating you are the winner of a lottery of which you were unaware and had not bought a ticket. To corroborate the win, the fraudsters will often attach a certificate, letter or other correspondence to prove its validity. Recently this has included naming members of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) as providing such an authentication. The Metropolitan Police would **never** support or substantiate any lottery wins or other financial windfalls. Once the fraudsters have you hooked, they move on to demand a fee to release the winnings. Remember, if it looks too good to be true it probably is!

### **Bogus Callers**

Please be aware that in a recent burglary, items of Croydon Council uniforms have been stolen. Three purple-coloured council warden coats and a council handheld radio were taken. These items may be used to commit bogus caller offences, so be aware if anyone comes calling.

In Shirley, a man was approached by three white males who claimed that they were from Thames Water and that there had been an explosion in the sewer. They looked around his flat, and later some property was discovered to be missing. It appears that a key was kept outside the back door which the suspects had used to enter the property. There have been reports of a team of three white males working all over South London. They are approx. 25 years of age with Irish accents. One suspect is described as having a 'moon' face with a blank expression, which is very similar to the description given of the

three males in Shirley, so be aware when someone claiming to be from the Water Board knocks.

Trading Standards have received reports from their Bromley colleagues of a salesman from Southern Electric operating in their area who is very intimidating towards possible customers; he may cross the borough boundary into the Croydon area, so please take care.

Also, please be aware that there has been a new scam reported recently in Shirley where a note is posted through your door telling you that a parcel for Mr. David Edwards is to be delivered to your address, and requiring you to sign for it. This is a scam, and may mean that you might be invoiced money for the goods you have signed for. They could also possibly be stolen goods obtained by 'cardholder not present' fraud, so if you receive a note through your door or any similar strange parcels, please refuse delivery. Trading Standards and Shirley Safer Neighbourhood Teams are aware of this scam, so if you do receive any suspicious deliveries or notes, please contact them.

### **When did you last speak to your Neighbours?**

A new poll from the BBC suggests we are fast becoming a nation of strangers. One in ten of those questioned for the programme by ICM Research didn't speak to their neighbours. More than a fifth (22%) of Britons believe that the UK's neighbourhoods are becoming less friendly.

Three years ago neighbourhoodwatch.net took part in a survey that compared Neighbourhood Watch members with members of the public. Our results showed that Watch members appeared to get on much better with their neighbours. More than 90% of Watch members said they regularly spoke to their neighbours at least once a week. Over half of all members (56%) said they were on excellent terms with their neighbour.

Worryingly, when members of the public were interviewed, eight per cent admitted they would not be able to tell whether an intruder in their garden was their neighbour or a complete stranger.

## **Diabetes UK**

### **Walk in the Park 2008 - Croydon**

Join us for a Walk in the Park to raise crucial funds and awareness for Diabetes Research Projects. Previous walks have raised more than £1.3 million in total.



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For more information, contact: Tom Baterip, 19 Richmond Road, Thornton Heath CR7 7QE. Telephone: [REDACTED].

Email: [REDACTED]

## Street Trees

It would appear that street trees that are damaged or destroyed are only replaced if the local residents contact the council to express their interest in having a replacement tree planted. The reason being that "if residents ask, the tree is more likely to be looked after." So, if you know of a tree that needs replacing, please contact the council either directly or through John Parry, our Tree and Open Space Officer ( [REDACTED] ).



## Spring Park Wine Circle

Do you enjoy wine? The Club maintains that you can learn how to enjoy wine even more in the company of a friendly easy-going group.

They meet at 8.00pm every 2nd Thursday of the month in the Shirley Parish Hall on Wickham Road on the opposite side to the Post Office.

There is a varied wine tasting schedule with visiting speakers from every part of the wine industry. Waitrose and Marks and Spencer are included on this year's list.

A supper is provided at each meeting.

If you would like to go along one evening to see whether it is suitable for you, the first visit is free. Buses 119, 194 and 198 pass the door.

You are welcome to simply turn up, but for more information, contact the Secretary Mike Long on [REDACTED].

## School Governor

Do you have a desire to help provide children with the best possible standard of education and so enable them to realise their expectations and aspirations? Do you have experience you could put to use, perhaps from working in education or business in the past?

If so, you may like to volunteer to become a school governor at Monks Orchard School. To find out more about the role of a school governor, and for an informal chat about what it involves, please ring the school on 020 8654 2540 and leave your contact details.

## Correction

### Correction to Spring 2008 Article "The Campaign Continues"

Even after fairly extensive proofreading, a typo gremlin got through. The reference to the length of time the present government came to power indicated 1977 whereas we all know it to be 1997 – please accept our apologies for this error.

# SUNFAYRE



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## 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:

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