

Monks Orchard Residents' Association

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Croydon

(Non Party)

(Independent)

NEWSLETTER - Autumn 2004



THE GLADE DEVELOPMENT

When it was confirmed that the luxury detached four bedroom houses erected in the site of 72-80 The Glade had been sold for social housing, the news was received with shock and disbelief. Many months have passed and the purchase of the superbly equipped luxury homes by Presentation Housing Association still remains the cause of much local anger and resentment. There are few that will disagree that the availability of social housing for the vulnerable is necessary and the taxpayer has always willingly contributed to the provision of such accommodation. Some of the local residents started life living in Council owned property much of which has since been disposed of under the 'right to buy' legislation.

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

The anger felt locally has never been directed at any particular ethnic or social group or newcomers to the area. The crux of the issue is the sheer magnificence and splendour of the estate that is situated in the leafy centre of Monks Orchard. Those privileged to be offered one of these luxury homes will be living in a property that very few hard-working local families could afford, even after working hard all their lives in order to prevent themselves becoming a burden on the community.

The problem associated with the provision of social housing of such a high quality combined with the availability of housing benefit, rate relief and other benefits, is that it will only serve to deter people from any form of ambition or self-accomplishment. If this type of opulent housing were available to all, the private housing market would not exist. Those that are working long hours to pay a mortgage, the ever increasing local and central government taxation demands, property repairs and their contribution towards the benefits paid to others will have good cause to wonder if it is all worthwhile. There has always been a comparison in the lifestyles of those protected families living in social accommodation and those in the private sector.

It is, of course, personally satisfying to be a responsible member of the community, to stand on your own two feet and to buy your own house. However, in order to do so, great personal sacrifices have to be made. No purchases of expensive cars, holidays or luxury items until the mortgage is under financial control. Many young couples starting life together with huge debts from university tuition fees that have to be repaid whilst trying to buy a place to live, find it necessary to delay starting a family or to restrict the number of children. Those that gain access to social housing experience none of these concerns. Massive amounts of public money has been poured into improving social housing and the standard of the accommodation on offer has greatly improved. It is not unknown for people living in social housing to have a better standard of living than those in the private housing sector. It is noticeable that many of those living in social housing can afford expensive cars, and caravans, and it can be argued that these have all been subsidised by those living in private accommodation.

The increasing high cost of property means that those not able to meet the criteria to be placed on the Council housing waiting list are forced to continue living with their parents until later in life so they can save for the necessary deposit towards the purchase of a small flat or a terraced house needing modernisation. The alternative is to take a less responsible approach and to create a situation in which the Council is legally responsible to provide accommodation and thereby gain direct access to good quality, sometimes luxury, social housing? No waiting, no deposit, no mortgage, no repairs and the rent and rates all subsidised by the taxpayer.

MORA has constantly argued that many more houses, not necessarily

luxury but of an acceptable standard, could have been purchased for the £4 million spent on the estate in The Glade and property experts support this view. To provide lavishly equipped homes with shower rooms, fitted kitchens, lined garages, block paved paths and large wooden out-houses all maintained at no cost to the tenant whilst other homeless people languish in bed and breakfast accommodation is certainly not the best way to spend tax payer's money. At any given time there are approximately 3,000 families on the Croydon Council waiting list.

The Executive Committee of MORA has taken the concerns expressed by our members very seriously and has raised these concerns with the National Audit Commission, The Housing Corporation and the Council. The Audit Commission replied that it is not within the Commissions jurisdiction to look at decisions of the Housing Corporation. The Housing Corporation replied that it does not regard The Glade development as luxury housing although many property experts would disagree. The Council was able to confirm that The Housing Corporation expect the cost of such schemes to come in at, or below 100% of the benchmark but, curiously, do also agree to fund schemes up to 110%. Using a rather complex formula that takes into account the cumulative total of the floor areas, The Glade development works out at 103.71%.

The strong campaign waged by MORA has not resulted in any concessions and that is not surprising when confronting government-funded agencies. The one remaining hope is that MORA's efforts will result in greater care being taken during the highly secretive selection process of those privileged families to be offered homes on this luxury development. The selection process took an inordinate amount of time because the completed houses remained unoccupied for four or more months with the resulting loss of rent and rates.

Promises were made that only responsible hard working tenants who contribute to society would be selected for the luxury properties but it now appears that some of the new tenants will be having all their housing costs paid for out of benefits.

There are remaining concerns about the likelihood of an increase in anti-social behaviour in the area when the new tenants and their off-springs do arrive. Ominously, the Addiscombe Boys Club, which was highlighted as one of the recreational facilities available for the young newcomers to use has had its funds drastically reduced by The Council. It is also anticipated that there will be increased competition for the limited number of available places at the local schools and this could be one of the reasons for the delay in occupancy until the end of the school year.

MORA continues to publicise the concerns of members at every possible opportunity and issued a press release when the tenants moved in. As a result the issue was televised on the London Tonight programme screened on Tuesday 3rd August and a balanced article was printed in the Croydon Advertiser on 6th August.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENT

Council taxes are set to treble over the next few years with pensioners and hard working taxpayers being the hardest hit. The Chancellors statement made on the 12th July contained a warning that Council taxes will rise by at least, 20% over the next three years. This does not include the £30 - £40 per household urgently needed to fill the large black hole in the Council's pension scheme.

The Governments Balance of Funding Review has recommended that a revamp of the eight current council tax 'bands' be undertaken when the nationwide property revaluation takes place in 2007. This could result in one or two bands being added to the top end of the scale and another at the bottom end. **Those living in homes valued at more than £170,000 would be the hardest hit, with bills almost trebling over three years.**

The Bennett Committee enquiry into Local Government revenue advocates nothing more than tinkering with the present system thereby creating even more bureaucracy whilst solving none of the problems. The Committee considers that all the problems faced by local taxpayers can be solved by an increase take up of the Council Tax Benefit system. To prevent having to raise income tax, especially in an election year, the Government want more tax to be raised locally so that local taxpayers contribute a larger percentage of the local budget. The report produced by the Committee fails to address the problem of Council Tax increasing by an average of four times inflation and the loss of revenue because of uncollected Council Tax (Birmingham Council has a reported £43 million of uncollected Council Tax).

As instructed by its members at the Annual General Meeting, MORA is campaigning for the Council tax in its current format to be abolished and replaced by a system of taxation which reflects the individuals ability to pay. It is totally unfair when a taxpayer is overtaxed in one area in order to subsidise the tax costs of council taxpayers in another area. In addition, some people receive help with the payment of Council tax whilst hard working people and pensioners who have contributed throughout their lives towards a small company pension fail to qualify for any support.

MORA continues to give support along with other groups around the country to the 'Is It Fair' campaign. In order to alert the nation to the forthcoming Council tax bombshell MORA contributed to the "Tonight with Trevor McDonald" current affairs programme screened on ITV1 on Monday 9th August. The programme dealt with rising Council taxes and looked at some of the controversial options that could leave millions of householders worse off. The programme also investigated how councils spend our money and revealed a shocking catalogue of waste. Member of the Executive Committee Jean Cook and members living in Lorne Gardens all gave up time to appear in the interesting and informative programme that was well received.

The “**Is It Fair**” campaign is organising, with the help of the Metropolitan Police, another march of protest on 2nd October. MORA is hoping to send a group to represent the Monks Orchard Residents’ Association. If you feel the time has come to display your concern please complete and return the form printed on page 16. If there are enough people interested, we will book coaches for travel to and from the demonstration drop & pick-up points.

Changing Times

Monks Orchard has always been subject to change in order to meet the challenges presented by increases in population, changes in lifestyle and new technology. Changes usually brought about improvements in local services and facilities that benefited the community, however some of the more recent changes have reversed this trend. Facilities and services once considered essential and forming part of the community are gradually being eroded, in decline or are in the process of being withdrawn. The loss or reduction in services impacts on some residents more than others but most will notice the affect in one way or another. The more recent changes are outlined in the following list.

Post Offices

Post Offices form a vital part of the fabric of this country and perform a valuable service for local communities, whether they are rural or urban. The local post offices act as a bank, pays out social benefits and pensions, issues stamps, postal and money orders, television licences, pass port applications, freedom passes motor tax renewal and much more. It is used by local small businesses and acts as a centre where residents meet, gossip and exchange news. Who would have thought that such an important part of the local community would come under threat of closure? Nevertheless, hundreds have or are being closed throughout the country. Post Office Ltd. says the branches are under used because traditional mainstream services like pension payments have been replaced by direct payments into bank accounts.

A protest campaign has been waged against the closure of local branches and many people have signed petitions or written letters also the local Councillors and MORA have opposed the closures. Further branch closures are announced at regular intervals and the post office in Shirley Road is the latest to be axed. A decision on the sub post office situated in Woodmere Avenue, Shirley is still awaited. Post Office Ltd. has suggested that residents use the post offices in Bywood Avenue or Wickham Road as an alternative but the future of both these branches remains uncertain. Tesco want the Bywood Avenue branch relocated to allow the present shop premises to be converted into a Tesco Metro store. If it is not possible to relocate the post office it will probably close.

Delivery and Collection Of Mail

The traditional domestic scene is that of residents reading their mail over breakfast or before leaving the house to travel to work because deliveries were made in the early hours of the day. However, the need for the Royal Mail to achieve economies has resulted in the withdrawal of the over night sorting of mail and the consequence is that the postman only delivers once a day (except Sundays) instead of the twice daily deliveries. It is no longer possible to set the clock by the arrival of the postman; deliveries are now made in the morning, afternoon or early evening depending on the amount of mail to be handled. The mail collection times from the local post boxes have also been changed and the notices affixed to the boxes are out of date. The Royal Mail has informed us that collections from local post boxes take place at approximately 11.30 p.m., 2.30 p.m., and 5.30 p.m. on weekdays including Saturdays and 9.00 p.m. and 12.00 p.m. on Sundays. The cost of mailing a letter has increased considerably but the service has been reduced and there is no guarantee that a first class letter will be delivered on the following day. The new arrangements were introduced in April and it will be interesting to note how the new arrangements cope with the Christmas post.



Telephone Boxes

The red telephone box formed a traditional part of the street scene and was an essential feature prior to the arrival of a telephone in almost every home and the development of mobile phone technology. It is hard to believe that residents once queued outside the familiar red telephone kiosks waiting for their turn to use the phone. Sadly the familiar red boxes have disappeared and have been replaced by the modern open version. These are subject to abuse, damage, and graffiti and are often used as a gathering point for adolescents. The consequence is that they are used infrequently and are no longer considered essential and residents are divided in their opinion whether or not the boxes should be removed. In response to BT 's proposal to remove the payphone on Woodmere Avenue thirteen replies were received to a consultation letter sent by Councillor Andrew Pelling. Eight households indicated that they wanted to keep the facility whilst five did not. No doubt the decision will eventually be made on economic grounds such as a lack of use coupled with the high cost of cleaning and repair.

Policing and Security

The responsibility for policing Monks Orchard, considered an area of low crime, is divided between the Shirley and South Norwood sectors. As such, it does not feature in any of the Safer Neighbourhood projects. This initiative was launched in the borough this year and is part of a London wide scheme to provide a team of officers (1 sergeant, 2 police officers and 3 police community support officers) to each ward. The aim is to reduce anti-social behaviour and crimes that affect individual communities. Gone are the days

of the friendly beat officer that walked the streets, got to know the troublemakers, made residents feel more secure and confirmed that the residents were getting some protection for the increasing amount of local taxes levied for policing. We all love and admire our boys and girls in blue but this feeling is fast diminishing. The sighting of police officers is rare except in the town centre, urgent calls made to the Addington and South Norwood police stations are frequently connected to an answer machine. In the case of emergency i.e. someone is in danger of a crime being committed, the advice is to telephone 999 immediately. At one time an emergency call received an immediate response but experience shows that nowadays this is not always the case should officers be engaged elsewhere.

The northern part of Monks Orchard leading from the top of The Glade down to Long Lane forms part of the section area of Ashburton. Subsequent to the retirement of P. C. Jim Young the area has been without a Community Police Officer for more than six months. MORA has been informed that P. C. Glynn Shepherd has been appointed the Community Police Officer for Ashburton and will take over the responsibility for the area in early September. P.C. Shepherd can be contacted on [REDACTED].

PLANNING NEWS



MORA has discovered that the Boroughs Senior Planning Officers spend a considerable amount of time advising developers on how to prepare and design planning applications so that they will gain the approval of the Council. This traditional practice is acceptable when a resident living in Croydon wishes to extend or modify their property but is not acceptable when the developer submitting the application is from outside the borough and the proposal is for a large development. Many of these applications propose the demolition of existing buildings and the erection of a large number of houses and flats that can cause disturbance for local residents and are strongly opposed. It is totally unacceptable for Council taxes to be used to assist developers who have no concern about ruining the character of the area and usually make a massive profit sometimes running into many millions.

Two London boroughs Barnet and Westminster have identified and taken action to recoup some of the council taxpayer's money by imposing a standard charge of £2,000 for the help provided to developers by the Council. Given the parlous state of Croydon's finances this would appear to be a sensible and appropriate method to increase its income. Perhaps a sliding scale could be imposed relating to the scale of the development?

The planning laws appear to be heavily tilted towards the developer and when planning conditions are not complied with it takes many months and

sometimes years to set matters right and have the law obeyed. Those residents that have asked for an enforcement officer to visit and inspect a problem often have cause to wonder if the officers are working for the good of the local community. Those residents that attend the meetings of the Planning Control Committee in order to represent their neighbours and to object to a planning proposal will know how indifferently they are treated. The Committee seldom takes any notice of considered objections and having followed the procedure usually endorse the recommendation made by the planning control officers.

PLANNING REPORT



Orchard Avenue & High Trees

Over a period of two years, residents, supported by MORA, objected to five applications in a determined effort to prevent the development of the site at 79 – 85 Orchard Avenue and 2 High Trees. At the meeting of the Planning Control Committee held on 1st. July, Land Investment and Development gained outline permission for the demolition of four detached dwellings and to the erection of 2 detached houses, 6 semi-detached houses and 2 chalet bungalows, formation of vehicular accesses onto High Trees and provision of an access road from High Trees. It is upsetting to lose this long running battle in which five previous applications were either withdrawn or refused and two appeals made to the Secretary of State were dismissed.

The Planning Control Committee was advised that the most recent application overcame the reasons why the previous proposals were refused or dismissed.

Sad as it is to lose the battle to retain the character of the area, the developer was forced to make a number of important amendments to the proposal during the long drawn out struggle. The bungalow at 2 High Trees is to be retained, the number of houses on the site reduced, efforts are being made to protect the privacy of the nearby residents and the protected tree in the back garden of one of the houses is to be retained. There remain concerns that the proposal fails to respect the character of the area also that the area will not be made safe for use by pedestrians and vehicles. MORA is disappointed that the Council has failed to use its powers to ensure that the developer contributes to improvements for the local community; for example, the dangerous entrance into Woodland Way and High Trees needs to be made safe. MORA will continue to monitor this proposed development to make sure that when the application is submitted for full planning permission, consideration is given to making the development more acceptable to the residents living nearby.

The Glade

CBP News Homes Ltd. has been active in submitting planning proposals for

the boarded up site at the junction of The Glade and Greenview Avenue. The remaining bungalow formed part of the larger site and was used by the building contractors as a site office and is now in a sorrowful state. The first proposal was for the erection of a detached four-bedroom house and formation of vehicular access. The Council refused this application because it would result in pressure to remove or prune a protected oak tree which is of high public amenity value, also that the development would appear over dominant in the street scene by reason of its height, design, massing and roof form. The second proposal was for the erection of a two-storey building comprising 2 two bedroom and 2 one-bedroom flats and formation of vehicular accesses onto The Glade and Greenview Avenue. The Council has decided to grant outline planning permission for this proposal.

Cheston Avenue

Antler Homes have submitted an application for full planning permission for the site of 25 – 31 Cheston Avenue. The proposal is to demolish the existing buildings and to erect 3 five bedroom detached houses with integral or detached garage and formation of access road.

CONTACTING THE COUNCIL

The Council has introduced a new one-stop telephone based contact centre with the aim of dealing with complaints and enquiries more efficiently. The contact telephone number of the new service is 020 8686 4433 which is the initial point of contact for residents when they wish to contact the Council. Prior to the introduction of the new service callers experienced problems contacting the Council and often had to wait for a call to be answered especially at peak hours now the response is much faster.

Large amounts of council taxpayer's money have been spent on improving the service and the number of specialist's operators has been increased to deal with 7,000 or more enquiries received every day. Callers wishing to complain about a problem or the non-delivery of a service are connected directly to the Contact Centre. The problem or service request is identified and the information is entered on a computer database. The caller is given a reference number that should be quoted if there are any further problems.

Users of the new service have noted an improvement in the response to enquiries especially those related to street cleaning and the removal of graffiti. However, the response to other problems requiring the attendance of an enforcement officer or planning information remains low and ineffective. Residents that used the old system will be familiar with the usual excuses such as, staff shortages, staff sickness, and flexible working hours or annual leave and the promise to phone back later. The service is still being developed and these problems may eventually be solved also, in the near future, it will be possible to directly contact the service by E-mail.

MONKS ORCHARD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION HANDY ADS SECTION

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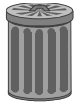


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Rubbish Collection



COLLECTION OF BULKY WASTE

The withdrawal by the Council of the rolling rubbish collections as part of a cost cutting exercise has had an adverse impact on local residents especially those without their own vehicles to transport rubbish to the dump. An alternative to the rolling rubbish collections is the residential bulk collection service that will accept seven items, which are not suitable for re-use, from every household every twelve months. The service is free but if you wish to dispose of additional items or have an extra collection a small charge is made.

Items for the bulk collections can include furniture, beds, mattresses, small electrical items, such as toasters and microwaves and even unwanted pieces of timber provided it is reduced to a acceptable size and assembled ready for collection. To use the service phone 020 8686 4433 and ask for the Bulk Collection Service and guidance will be given on the arrangements for the collection of the items.

It should be noted that the service does not accept large domestic “white goods” including fridges, tumble driers, dishwashers, cookers (gas or electric) television sets, computer monitors that are now classified as hazardous waste and, as such, must not be sent to landfill sites but disposed of in an environmentally friendly way. These items have to be collected and processed separately and are included in a “white goods” collection service for which a charge of £15 is made. More than one item will be taken for the same charge so it might be worthwhile asking if a neighbour has any white goods that they wish to dispose of at the same time and perhaps share the cost. To use this service phone 020 8686 4433 and ask for the white goods collection service.

GARDEN WASTE

Residents have in the past experienced difficulties with the disposal of garden rubbish that is unsuitable for composting. A much-used practice was to disguise it and hope that it would be accepted with the domestic rubbish. It has now been confirmed by the Council that one bag of garden rubbish will be accepted along with the weekly domestic rubbish collection. So there is no longer any need to argue or to offer bribes to the rubbish collectors.



Report Back by GERAINT DAVIES M. P.

I've been urged by Monk's Orchard Primary School to help provide a 20mph speed limit outside the school. With the support of the local community, I am pressing the Council to introduce a 20mph limit, which is self-enforced through speed-cushions and tables.

Thanks to the support of local residents, I have got the Police to provide extra 3 teams of 6 officers to combat anti-social behaviour in my constituency, Croydon Central. I am now arguing the case for extra Police in Monk's Orchard who can use the new powers to combat anti-social behaviour introduced by the Government in February. These powers include fixed penalty notices for 16 and 17 year-olds, rounding up children late at night, parenting orders for parents who fail to keep their children under control and dispersing intimidating gangs of youths.

Following the damage done in Croydon town centre after the England-France and England-Portugal games, I am calling on the Government to allow Councils to charge pubs and clubs for the extra cost of policing and any costs of property damage that their customers cause. In addition, I am pressing the Council to reduce the number of licenses in Croydon and to close down any particular pubs whose clients were the sources of the violence.

In co-operation with the World Wildlife Fund, I presented a bill in Parliament, which would require manufacturers to replace potentially dangerous chemicals with safe alternatives. There is evidence of particular chemicals, which build up in the body causing neurological and fertility problems in children and animals. My bill will put pressure on the European Parliament to require such chemicals to be substituted by safe alternatives.

Childhood obesity has doubled in 10 years from 5% to 10% and obese people live nine years less than the average person. As the NSPCC Ambassador, I've been presenting my ideas to Ministers on how to protect children from obesity. In schools we shouldn't have vending machines selling high fat, sugar and salt products; healthy cookery classes should be introduced along with more healthy eating education for children and parents. I've been calling for food products to be clearly labelled and the advertising of unhealthy products during children's TV to be banned.

For help and advice, contact Geraint Davies MP, PO Box 679, Croydon CR9 1UQT: [REDACTED] E: GeraintDaviesMP@parliament.uk



Shirley Short Mat Bowls Club

Shirley Short Mat Bowls Club recommences its season on Monday 13th September in the Parish Hall, Wickham Road, Shirley. We hold sessions on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday Mornings from 9.30am to 12.30pm, and also Friday afternoon and Friday evening.

We are now taking bookings for all sessions. If you would like more details, please ring either Pat Godden, Hon. Secretary, tel: [REDACTED] or Mr. Peter Hacker, Hon. Treasurer, tel: [REDACTED] who will be happy to advise you and send membership details. Why not join us?

BOGUS CALLER ALERTS



Bogus scaffolders

Two male suspects, one white, claimed to be working for a scaffolding company and asked to come to inspect the scaffolding from inside the premises. Whilst one did this, the other stole over £400 in cash. A lot of scaffolding companies put their advertising boards onto the scaffolding so it is very easy for a bogus caller to know the name of the company. Never let them inside to “inspect” the scaffolding.

Burglaries targeting high performance vehicles

There have been a number of these incidents recently. In the majority of these cases entry had been made by gaining access to the rear of the premises and then forcing a rear window. Please ensure that your windows are locked and that your car keys are put away out of sight in a locked drawer. If you have a garage then put your car inside it rather than leaving it out on the drive.

Don't give burglars an open invitation to commit crime

With the Summer and the warm weather upon us, police are taking this opportunity to advise members of the public to remember crime prevention in and around their home. They are urging the public to assist the police with the continued decline in burglaries by remembering basic crime prevention measures. Potential burglars welcome an open invitation to commit crime and open windows or external doors could provide them with that opportunity to commit crime. Every burglary committed on the borough is one too many and police are advising the community to remember to get into a routine of remembering to check that all windows and doors are locked when they are leaving their homes. PC Andy Williams, Crime Prevention Officer at Croydon said:

“During hot weather it is often tempting to leave windows open at night or whilst you are just popping out to the shops for five minutes. Our advice would be for the public to try and remember that burglars are opportunists. We would recommend that all ground floor windows are fitted with industry standard window locks when not in use. Think about installing security lighting to the front and rear of your property. Try to view your property like a burglar would and look for weaknesses in Security. We carry out regular roadshows and are on hand to provide crime prevention advice.

More information can be found on www.met.police.uk website, crime prevention advice. To join Neighbourhood Watch call Rosemary Oram at Croydon Police on 020 8649 0168 or contact the Crime Prevention Officer at Addington Police Station on 020 8649 1414.”

DS Martin Wilde, South Norwood Burglary Squad said:

"We need the public to assist the police in the continued drive to reduce burglary in Croydon. By taking simple crime prevention measures you can help deter a potential burglar and significantly reduce the risk of becoming a victim of crime."

Bogus Boiler engineer

A white male suspect claiming to be from EPS Services called at an address and stated he was there to repair the radiators. He told the victim to relax and watch TV whilst he walked around the house. He said his name was Ray. The victim later found that money had been stolen from a bedroom.



Bogus Police Officers

Two white male suspects wearing black t-shirts claimed to be police officers. They showed what was believed to be a warrant card. They talked about having been in the SAS and on gaining entry, stole an air rifle, two knives and some money.

Serious public disorder in Croydon Town Centre

Supt. Nick Jupp was interviewed by BBC News and London Tonight as well as radio stations:

"Approximately 400 people were involved in serious public disorder in Croydon Town Centre between approx 22:15 and 23:15 on Sunday 13 June 2004. The incidents followed the televised England v France football match. Missiles, including bottles, were thrown at police. A tram and police vehicles were damaged. London Ambulance Service have attended several locations in Croydon Town Centre. At this stage we have no knowledge of major injuries. 15 Police officers were injured, Two police officers attended hospital with minor injuries. There have been fourteen arrests. All are in custody at a South London police station."

Croydon Careline –a new community alarm scheme

A new community alarm service was recently launched in April for all Croydon residents. The aim of the service is to enable vulnerable people to remain in their own homes giving reassurance and peace of mind that help can be obtained at the touch of a button. All that is needed is connection to a telephone point and nearby power socket. By pressing a button on the unit or worn either as a pendant around the neck or on a wrist strap like a watch, a call is connected to the contact centre. They will know who is calling and where you are and if necessary they will call the local response team to visit the user's home and assist with the emergency. Their aim is to arrive at a service user's house within 30 minutes. The service including equipment can be provided for a weekly charge of £4.50 or £2.50 if in receipt of Pension Credit, plus a one off charge of £15 to cover the visit to the home for installation. A team of trained, suitably equipped, council-run

mobile response staff will be available 24 hours a day, every day of the year to provide support. This service will also help vulnerable people living in fear of crime, such as bogus callers. If you are unsure of a visitor at your door, the contact centre would give advice, reassurance and help you to verify the caller's identity. Similarly, the service could assist people suffering domestic violence and racial harassment. If you are interested in receiving further information contact Croydon Careline, Community Alarm Service on 020 8654 7166.



She's back again! Bogus Neighbour

A 30 year old, 5'8" tall white female suspect with shoulder length blonde hair called at the door saying she had been locked out of her flat and needed to get to see her mother. The elderly victim was tricked into handing over £60.00. This victim had been targeted before.

POP UP SCAM ON INTERNET WEB SITES

You may have read recently about the pop-up scam on internet web sites. The scam works through pop-ups which sometimes appear over the front of web sites you are visiting. The pop-up box asks if you want to download free software to aid your connection to the site. Even if you click 'no' or close the box, software is automatically downloaded to your computer. This overrides your normal dial-up number and installs a premium rate number instead. You only find out that you have been using the expensive connection (usually £1.50 per minute) months later when you get your bill. The costly calls will be to either 09 numbers or overseas (typically to Sao Tome). The Premium Rate Regulator is trying to shut down the numbers once they have been alerted to them. However, it may be worth talking to your service provider about barring such numbers. There may of course be occasions when you want to use 09 numbers so be aware that barring would prohibit such use. You can of course check your 'dial-up' connections if you think that you have been affected. This scam is also being investigated by the Independent Commission for the Supervision of Telephone Information Systems (ICSTIS).

The Nominated Neighbour Scheme

This is a Bogus Caller initiative to help older people and vulnerable members of our community to feel safer in their own homes and was launched on Monday 5 July at 11am at Old Coulsdon Centre for the Retired, Grange Park, Coulsdon Road, Old Coulsdon. Crime Prevention Officers, Trading Standards Officers and Chief Superintendent Marr were there. The scheme works by providing an A5 laminated card that can be held up to the window or shown through the gap in the chained door. It states "I do not recognise you! Please go to number # who is my nominated neighbour. They will check your identity and return with you." For further details please call PC Andy Williams, Crime Prevention Officer on 020 8649 1414.

The Crime Prevention Officers have a new telephone number!

020 8649 1414

Police Liaison/Security Report

In the past 2 months, I have received many phone calls complaining of the unacceptable Anti-Social Behaviour and vandalism by a number of teenagers in this area of Monks Orchard and the Shirley Ward. In consequence, I duly contacted our one and only WPC, Denise Allen on the Shirley Ward, who did her very best to sort out the troubles on her own. Some effect has been achieved but there is anxiety that there will be a repeat performance when the Schools break for the Summer Holidays.

I subsequently attended the NHW Committee meeting on Wednesday July 7th, and again made our complaints loud and clear. In answer, Inspector Steve Price at Addington Station would definitely pass these serious complaints on to PS. Sue Thomas at South Norwood Station for serious consideration. This has been done, and Sue rang me to inform us that a long overdue Beat Officer will be starting here on Ashburton Ward in the middle of August when he has been commissioned and signed on. Let us hope this phenomenon will take place and we can at last hope to see a 'Bobby' again with a mobile telephone number to contact him directly.

Crime alerts and bogus caller updates can be found here in the newsletter, and are updated regularly on our website (www.monks-orchard-web.org.uk). My next police report meeting will be on Wednesday, October 6th, when I hope to have a good report for you.

Lastly, our Ex Beat Officer, PC Chad Timms has received his OBE from Her Majesty on Tuesday 29th June, and from the photo he gave me, he was 'over the moon' - his words, and spent 10 minutes talking to the Queen on all 5 of his other Medals he has won during his very busy life. He thanks all of us for our kindness and good wishes for the future. His friendship will not be forgotten in a hurry.

Jean Cook

Advertisements



The current term of "Handy Ads Section" is due for renewal. A new period will start in the Christmas edition.

If you would like to renew or place an advert in the advertisement section of the MORA Newsletter please contact Terry Greenwood on [REDACTED].

All Adverts will be included on the MORA Website for free.

MORA COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2004/5

Chairman:
Vice Chair & Secretary:
Membership Secretary:
Hon. Treasurer &
Advertising Manager:
Editor:
Transport & Highways &
Area Manager:
Social Secretary:
Police Liaison/Security:
Primary Care:
Committee Member + AM:
Committee Member + AM:
Committee Member:
Neighbourhood Watch rep:
Committee Member:

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ANDREW SEGRAM
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WHY YOU NEED TO MARCH on 2nd October!

It is widely known that the Government intends to increase revenue from Council Tax nationally by **two billion pounds** each year for the next two years. Local Council Leaders say 2004 is a respite year. This Government WILL continue to increase council tax for as long as we continue to pay. Direct action is the last reluctant option. Without such action by a mass of people, there will be **no** change of heart and the continued emptying of our pockets will be relentless. Send off the slip below to pre-book coach travel.

We will let you know the cost for the return trip and further details when we have an idea of the numbers attending the march.



MONKS ORCHARD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

I/we wish to join the Is-it-fair march of protest against Council Tax charges, on 2nd October, 2004.

Name:	Tel No:
Address:	

Number of people in party wishing to join the march:

Send this completed slip to:

Christine Ross-Smith,



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