

THE COCKPIT

NEWSLETTER OF THE CHISLEHURST RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

FOUNDED 1934 Membership 3,500

REGISTERED WITH THE CIVIC TRUST

The Cockpit, on Chislehurst Common, has been the traditional meeting place for Chislehurst people on all great occasions from time immemorial.

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CHISLEHURST RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION— AGM

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Annual General Meeting will be held in THE METHODIST CHURCH HALL, PRINCE IMPERIAL ROAD, on TUESDAY, 28th APRIL, 1981, at 8.30 p.m. Only members may vote and speak in the proceedings.

AGENDA

1. Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting.
2. Matters arising.
3. Committee Report for 1980.
4. Accounts for 1980.
5. Election of Officers.
6. Election of Committee.
7. Appointment of Auditor.
8. Any other business

NB. Will members please note that Item 3, Committee Report for 1980, will have been covered by the three most recent issues of 'The Cockpit'. This will avoid the need to give a long verbal report at the AGM. Questions may be asked arising from these issues.

CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW

No reference can be made to last year's activities without reflecting on the passing of Alex Drage in July. A full tribute was paid to him in last April's issue. The wide representation at his Thanksgiving Service was added evidence of the respect he had gained from so many quarters for his zeal and application on behalf of the Association. The high standard he set with regard to all our affairs will be difficult to follow, but we shall endeavour to do our best. To Helen we extend our best wishes for happiness in her new home in Sidcup.

Our main concerns have been with planning and environmental matters and our Planning Sub-Committee has been as active and as watchful as ever. In addition to the Chislehurst Appraisal Area Report, which affects our immediate locality, we have considered the possible effects of Circular 22/80 on planning controls countrywide. Chislehurst and Sundridge Associations produced their combined comments on this circular, and copies were sent to members of Bromley's Development Control Committee and to our local MP. We were complimented by the Chairman of the Development Control Committee on our document which sets out possible

weaknesses in the recommendations of the Secretary of State for the Environment. More and more we find ourselves working in conjunction with Sundridge Residents' Association whose able Chairman, Mr. John Gibbs, is so alert to so many problems affecting our environment.

The Committee's representatives on various bodies such as the Borough's Conservation Committee, Road Safety Panel, Flooding, and the Federation of Residents' Associations attend faithfully and make our views known.

I thank my fellow officers and committee members, and also our road stewards, for their support, loyalty and hard work during the past years. I thank, too, our MP, our local Councillors, including Mrs. Wykes, and various officers of the Borough Council for their ready help and advice in various ways. A word of thanks goes to our local Librarian for giving us additional space on a crowded notice board.

In concluding, may I appeal for a good attendance at the AGM. We welcome nominations for officers and committee members. Please send your nominations to me as soon as possible, with names of proposer, seconder, and the nominee's signature.

Repeat Request

Please help your road stewards by putting your subscriptions through their letter-boxes. They may have called when you were out. AND we need more road stewards. Please contact your Chairman.

Members' and Road Stewards' social

Because of pressures on the same willing band of volunteers, year after year, our 1981 Social Evening will be a combined function. Each road steward is invited as our guest. There will be a charge for the rest of our members—to be announced later.

To be held on WEDNESDAY, 27th MAY, at GRAHAM CHIESMAN HOUSE, 8.00-10.00 p.m.

Cromlix

We have received an assurance from Wates Built Homes Ltd. that it is their wish, also, to preserve as many trees as possible when development commences on this site.

Cookham Dene

We are informed that the ILEA is placing this prime site on the market. The GLC shares our concern regarding over-intensification of development. We shall be watching the tree situation closely.

Sunnymead

It could well be that the fate of this site will have been decided by the time this news-letter reaches you. We shall have done our best to oppose the proposal for office development, having asked that it be returned to residential use. It was pointed out quite clearly to the Leader of the Council that the proposal for office development is contrary to the Planning Department's views as contained in the Appraisal Area Report. 20,000 square feet of office space are still not in use in the High Street!

Conservation Area

The leader of the LBB has said there is a possibility of some monies being available for the improvement of our Conservation Area. CRA members are invited to put forward suggestions, and the High Street is especially worthy of your consideration.

Apology

We apologise to the occupiers of 'Tapiola' and 'Greatwood' in Beechcroft for our failure to inform them beforehand of our intention to make the recommendations contained in our previous issue.

FIGHT VANDALISM

Vandalism is a growing problem in Chislehurst. Like a disfiguring disease, the marks of wanton destruction can be seen everywhere, while some areas are affected so badly that residents are moving out. A striking case last year was the destruction of nearly every seat on the Cricket Ground—smashed to pieces in a single night. In their rampage, the vandals went on to break windows in the Club-house and to destroy a five-bar gate across a private road. In another incident, a man and wife watched horrified one summer evening as drunken youths kicked down their fence. In yet another case, an elderly lady was shocked awake one night by a gang outside. Looking out, she saw them uproot the whole of her neighbour's fence and throw it into a busy road.

The list of damage is endless—vandalised phone booths, bus stands and street signs; cars damaged, windows broken and gardens trampled flat. Over a period of time, all result in a serious loss of amenity; especially so when the damage itself leads to a withdrawal of public services. British Telecom, for instance, say that recently one phone booth was damaged so badly that it had to be removed. Now the area concerned has no public telephone within a vicinity of three quarters of a mile. Chislehurst station, another victim, has been so badly vandalised on Saturday nights that British Rail can no longer afford to repair all the damage. From now on, they say, the only repairs will be those essential for public safety.

What can be done to fight this social disease? A puzzling feature of vandalism is that often the culprits are seen in the act, yet onlookers do nothing to stop them at the time. In one road recently, no less than three people in different houses watched from their windows as youths outside broke up a street sign, yet not one of them telephoned the police straight away. **The answer always is to phone 999.**

Vandalism is a criminal act.

You can also help the police by giving evidence in court. Many residents actively avoid doing so, not wishing to get caught up in the law maybe, or perhaps feeling that punishments today are so light

that it's simply not worth the bother. The police know this problem only too well. They assure us that appearance in court as a witness is in no way frightening. They also say, offenders are often so young and so frightened themselves that what they really need is help and guidance from a strong hand.

Indeed, the other, ugly feature of the problem is that much of the damage is done by drunken youths well under the age of 18. So speak to the manager of a pub or off-licence straight away if you see a youth whom you know or suspect is under the legal age being served alcohol. Similarly if you know of a place which regularly serves alcohol to boys and girls under 18, then pick up the phone and tell the police. They will investigate the matter thoroughly without involving you further. If they do find the place is ignoring the law, then, of course, they can take steps to get its licence removed.

Finally there is something else we all can do, which is to support local Scout troops, church youth clubs, and similar organisations. The evidence clearly points to the fact that much of the damage is done by youths from well outside Chislehurst, drawn into the district from areas like Lewisham, New Cross, Woolwich and Deptford. On the other hand, there's solid evidence also that at least some of the damage is caused by our own boys and girls. We can all help by seeing that these youngsters are given healthy outlets for their pent-up energies; activities that begin to give them a sense of belonging and perhaps pride and a feeling of achievement, however small.

It's certainly not a problem that can be solved overnight. However, the CRA will be taking positive steps this year to see that the problem is contained and then reduced. We are already taking special action to help those areas of Chislehurst particularly affected and we would welcome your own suggestions as to how vandalism can be deterred. Remember, vandals don't discriminate in their victims.

Bickley Arms Disco

The CRA has lodged a strong objection to the renewal of the public music and dancing licence of the Bickley Arms, near Chislehurst Station. Grounds for the objection are vandalism, public disturbance and loss of amenity. The whole issue is now the subject of a public hearing at County Hall, Westminster, on 23rd March, when we shall be opposed by the brewers, Courage, part of the Imperial Group.

PARKING ON VERGES AND FOOTWAYS

We have received a letter from the Borough Engineer and Surveyor stating, 'Numerous complaints are being received regarding the indiscriminate parking on footways and verges. Apart from the high expenditure of carrying out constant repairs, many residents express concern over the destruction of verges laid out to improve the amenities of the Borough. I must appeal to the social conscience of the residents of this Borough in trying to reduce this problem. To this end, I am seeking the kind co-operation of all the Residents' Associations in the Borough by drawing the attention of all the residents in their areas to the high cost of repairs to this unnecessary damage.'

We endorse this appeal very readily and trust that our members will report to the Borough Engineer cases where a driver is repeatedly guilty of parking on a verge or footway, having been asked not to do so. Habitual offenders will be prosecuted.

PARKING IN ROADS

A Road Steward has written to us, asking if something can be done to alleviate parking problems in narrow roads. His concern is the frequent parking of cars in such roads, opposite or nearly opposite each other, thus causing obstruction in the event of a fire engine or an ambulance having to pass. He also refers to the dangerous practice of parking near junctions, thus obstructing the view of other road users. As he points out, many car owners could park their cars on their runway or in their garage even if it does mean driving round to their rear lane if the garage is at the bottom of a garden. In any case every effort should be made to leave cars lined up on one side of the road only so that a lane is clear in the event of an emergency. Again, we give ready support to these comments and appeal to all residents concerned to apply consideration and care.

ROAD SAFETY

Our Road Safety representative on the Orpington and Chislehurst Panel has been asked to raise the matter of a pedestrian crossing being provided in the vicinity of the pop-in parlour. Now that the parlour is open it is vital that a safe crossing point be established in the interest of our senior residents. With cars being parked outside the super-market at times, the line of sight along the High Street for those wishing to cross from the super-market side to the other side is obstructed. The danger is increased by inconsiderate drivers who increase speed on arriving at the wider part of the High Street. If our past endeavours on road safety are anything to go by, it could well be some time before the authorities will act.

FLOOD LIAISON COMMITTEE

Mr. A. R. Turner, who is on the CRA Executive, is also Chairman of the Chislehurst area of the Kyd Brook Flood Liaison Committee. He reports here on recent activities.

Cromlix site

Outline planning permission to build 22 houses was granted a few days before the serious flooding along the Kyd Brook valley in August 1977. Representations were made to the LBB to withhold full permission for development on this site until major improvement works to the Kyd Brook watercourse had been carried out, as further building developments would seriously exacerbate existing flooding problems. This resulted in the developers (Wates Built Homes Ltd.) lodging an appeal to the D o E against the LBB's deferment of detailed planning permission within the prescribed period.

Following the Public Inquiry in February 1979, judgement was given in favour of the developers on a legal point of procedure. However, the Inquiry Inspector recorded in his findings;

'The risk of flooding in the catchment of the Kyd Brook is so severe and its occurrence does such great harm to its victims and their properties that it would be wholly wrong to permit the development of the site until adequate precautions have been taken to remove the additional risk that it would create'.

The Flood Liaison Committee pressed the case with the developers and the LBB. Arising from this and

subsequent discussions it was proposed that surface water run-off from this development be drained into a constructed 'balancing pond' within the adjoining land owned by the National Trust who agreed to this proposal. The outlet from the pond to a nearby watercourse, which connects to the Kyd Brook, is to be at a controlled rate. The Thames Water Authority has agreed to be responsible for the sewer-line but not the pond.

The Flood Liaison Committee is satisfied that in the circumstances this solution will, during heavy rain, control what otherwise would be an excessive volume of water adding to the high flows of the Kyd Brook. However, this 'balancing pond' for the Cromlix site is not to be confused with the large scale Kyd Brook Flood Storage Area proposed to the GLC following the 1977 floods, for which it is understood feasibility and economic investigations are still being undertaken.

Coed-Bel site, Lubbock Road

In view of its close proximity to the high flood risk area at the junction of Lubbock Road and Lower Camden, the Flood Liaison Committee asked the LBB not to agree to the sale of this 4 acre site for intensive development until major improvements to the Kyd Brook water course have been carried out.

However, in view of the fact that the GLC has now postponed this flood alleviation work for 15-20 years, it was recognised that the LBB could not refuse the proposed development of the site indefinitely.

The CRA supported the Flood Liaison Committee representations to the LBB that any developments should be restricted to a low density one. This the LBB agreed, and subsequently selected tenders with both organizations, and a proposal for ten 5-bedroom houses was accepted.

Flood Emergency Leaflet

Another joint effort of the Flood Liaison Committee and the LBB is the compilation of the Flood Emergency Leaflet which has been distributed by this committee to all residents at risk from flooding, either by the Kyd Brook or from surface water run-off. The purpose of the leaflet is to alert residents to the ever-present danger, advise on the basic precautions or action to be taken before and during a flood, and measures necessary in the aftermath, e.g. drying-out with reference to silt and sewage, and reporting signs of rodent infestation, etc.

The leaflet contains a concise list of GLC and local council emergency telephone numbers, as well as those for gas, electricity, and telephone services.

The timing of this leaflet is now most appropriate as the GLC has at last openly announced its intention not to proceed with the up-stream flood storage area (on National Trust land), which the KFLC had proposed after the 1977 floods.

A further account will be given in the next issue of 'The Cockpit'.

ARBORICULTURIST WANTED

Our recently formed Tree Preservation sub-committee wants to extend its advisory capacity, and would like to have the assistance of any member with expert knowledge of trees. If you are able to contribute expertise and would be able to help in the preservation of our beautiful tree heritage, then please contact your Road Steward, or our Chairman.

THE VILLAGE SIGN

As we go to print we are assured that the Village Sign will be back in place in March. We join with the Commons Conservators and the Chamber of Commerce in thanking residents who responded so readily to the restoration appeal. Mrs. Newport-Gwilt and Mr. Robin Browne deserve special thanks for their efforts in raising so much money. £1,400 has been contributed; another £100 is needed to cover the complete cost.

5th CHISLEHURST SCOUT GROUP

If members have not already contributed to the fund for the restoration of The Old Stables which will become the new headquarters of the 5th Chislehurst we invite them to do so. This imaginative worthwhile project deserves the support of all who wish to see part of the old Hawkwood Estate preserved. This group is to be congratulated on its enterprise. Contributions should be sent to Appeals Secretary, Little Grange, Orpington Road, Chislehurst.

Whilst on the subject of Scouts' initiative we congratulate members of the 8th Chislehurst Scout Group on the first-class effort they made in cleaning up the station approach road in early December. They, together with their parents, on a wet and dismal Sunday gave a thorough springclean to the area, including builders' rubble, domestic rubbish and the graffiti on the embankment walls. Unfortunately, these hallmarks of the philistines are appearing once more in the approach. Was it a Chislehurst resident who, during the cleaning-up operation, was seen slowing down in his Mercedes with its boot full of rubbish, probably with the intent of depositing it in the road? On seeing our industrious residents he speedily drove away.

We thank the Rotary Club for sponsoring this project.

HEALTH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Public meetings of Bromley Community Health Council for the following months will take place in the Lecture Room, School of Midwifery, Masons Hill, Bromley, starting at 7.30 p.m.: 6th April, 11th June, 7th July, 1st September, 8th October, 11th November, and 14th December, 1981.

BROMLEY IN BLOOM LBB's 1981 Competition

The competition is run by the Department of Recreation for the purpose of promoting the use of flowering plants throughout the borough. There are six classes of entry so that all residents can take part in one or more.

Information leaflets with entry forms will be available at the beginning of April from the Department of Recreation, Public Libraries, Council Offices, and at the Gardening Exhibition (Beckenham Public Halls 7th April).

The final date for entry is 30th June.

MAY QUEEN

This year's ceremony will be held on Saturday, 2nd May, at the traditional place on the Common. Entrants for the children's fancy dress competition should report to Red Hill School at 1.45 p.m. The procession leaves the school at 2.45 p.m. to arrive at the Common by 3.00 p.m.

There are vacancies for the May Queen's retinue. Applicants must be five years old at the time of joining. Please write to Mrs. J. Peacock, Secretary, Chislehurst May Queen Society, 5 Alexander Road, Chislehurst.

Costs involved in mounting the ceremony continue to escalate and the Society is very much dependent upon the generosity of the public. Those wishing to make donations should contact either the Secretary or the Chairman, Mr A T C Jones, 10 Thistlemead, Chislehurst.