Newsletter
Summer 2023



West Wickham
Residents' Association

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Newsletter Number 288 Published by the West Wickham Residents' Association.
Annual subscription : £2 per household. Membership 4,800 Households
Printed by Printrite, 316 Pickhurst Lane, West Wickham, BR4 0HT
Tel:020 8464 5087
Front Cover: Village Day 2023—see page 17

Advertising rates from March 1st 2023

Back page (A5)	£700	Four issues only
Full page (A5) inside	£173	(£652 Four issues with discount)
Three quarter page	£130	(£490 Four issues with discount)
Half page	£ 87	(£328 Four issues with discount)
Quarter page	£ 44	

Publication dates are early March, June, September and December

Deadline dates are January 20th, April 20th, July 20th and October 20th

Please contact the Editor for more information

Mike East

It was with great sadness we learned in April of the death of Mike East. Mike joined the committee in 2008 and served as Chairman and contributed much work on the planning sub-committee. His previous links to Council practices and procedures were particularly helpful when dealing with the council on diversity of shops and resisting overdevelopment in the Town. Sadly, his health deteriorated, and he left the committee in 2019 after 11 years valuable service. Our thoughts and condolences are with his wife and friends.

Direct Debit subscription scheme is off to a great start

The WWRA Direct Debit subscription scheme, launched at the beginning of March, is off to a great start with some 500 members signing up in the first few weeks. It really does make a difference to the lives of our Road Stewards who willingly deliver newsletters but often struggle with collecting subscriptions when members are not home or have no cash on them. So, please visit our website at, westwickhamresidents.com and sign up using the 'Direct Debit Scheme' option or alternatively scan the QR code below. The scheme is operated by 'GoCardless', a UK regulated financial services provider. The only personal information given to the Association is your address so that we can advise your Road Steward not to call because you have already paid your subscription. The subscription of £2 per annum will be taken from your account on 1st June each year. If you didn't sign-up before the end of May this year, your Steward will still need to collect this year's cash subscription.

Another defibrillator site

One of our advertisers, The Artemis Clinic (page 5) has added the defibrillator they have to the list of available machines which can be used by members of the public in an emergency. It is available during clinic opening hours, 9am to 5pm mid-week and 9am to 1pm on Saturdays and is located in their premises on the 1st floor, 106 – 108 High Street, West Wickham, BR4 0ND (above Lakewood pharmacy).

Thanks to committee members who have left

From just before and during lockdown, several long-serving members left the committee after making significant contributions on one or more sub-committees and many as Chair. Mary Knott (Social Activities/Transport & Highways), Janet Pickering (Social Activities/Environment & Leisure), Peter Morton (Publicity/Membership), Johnny Cleary (Website/Education/Publicity), Val Polydorou (High Street/Publicity/ Corporation of London) and, most recently, Peter Leigh at this year's AGM. Peter served on the committee for more than 40 years, also on several sub-committees, and as Secretary and Chair. Several continue to help out by proofreading, assisting at events and as a Road Steward. The Association could not have survived without these people and we are grateful for their dedication and effort.

AGM Report

The Association's Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held at Wickham Hall on Friday 14th April. There were about 35 residents, committee members and Councillors in attendance and the formal part of the meeting was chaired by the Treasurer, Richard Douglas. He presented a summary of the audited accounts for 2022 and presided over the re-election of committee officials and half of the committee members all of whom were re-elected unopposed. Following a break for refreshments, Christopher Burgess took over the chair for Councillor's questions which were fielded by Councillor Nicholas Bennett and Councillor Mark Brock.

The first few questions sparked a lively session about the removal of the cash machines from Bromley Borough car parks and streets. The first question asked why all machines had to be removed and why machines accepting credit or debit cards are not being provided. Councillor Bennett, who is the Executive Member for Transport, Highways and Road Safety, said that on-street and car park cash machines had been removed because they were 25 years old and obsolete due to the closure of the 3G network. They were a liability because of break downs and thefts from break-ins making them uneconomic to maintain. He also explained the budget deficit that Bromley was facing if it did not take such actions as this and selling the Civic Centre. Several questioners raised the difficulties in accessing the Ringo app and information on how to use the system. Councillor Bennett said that a smartphone is not necessary to pay for parking and even landlines from home can be used. Not all questioners were convinced by the answers and there remained some disquiet about ease of use of the system.

In response to a question about the status of the current planning application for a car wash in the High Street car park, Councillor Brock confirmed that no decision has yet been reached and that when it is brought before the committee our Councillors will speak against it. Following a question about the number of potholes in the local roads, Councillor Bennett admitted that he is very embarrassed by this situation. Very little of the funding given by the Government to Transport for London (TfL) for this purpose

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had been given to Bromley, so the Council is using its own budget to make up the shortfall. Repair teams, which are in demand by all Boroughs for the same purpose, were due to stop work at the end of April but will now work through the summer.

A resident questioned what can be done about the state of the land at the rear of the shops which back on to the High Street car park where bins from the shops as well as rubbish dumped by others is an eyesore, and possibly a health hazard. The Councillors said that the land is mainly private but they can take action if there is a health hazard so residents should make a report if they see signs of this, for example, rats. A resident also mentioned the state of some pavements where tree roots have caused the slabs to lift and the difficulties this causes for wheelchairs, prams and walkers. Councillor Bennett said many of the trees were 80 years old and cannot be removed but that new plantings use trees that do not spread their roots the same way and are installed with a membrane which forces the roots downwards. Committee member Richard Barnes, said that there is a rubber crumb surface, used by some other Boroughs, that can be applied which helps to prevent roots from becoming a problem and he promised to pass this information on to the Council.

Another question called for an update on the ULEZ expansion situation. Councillor Bennett explained that two of the five points submitted for judicial review by 5 Boroughs and Surrey County Council, have been allowed forward to the High Court. This will be heard in July but he rated the Council's chance of success at no more than 50-50. The High Street and A21 are controlled by TfL so they can erect ULEZ signs on those roads. However, the Council are arguing against installation of signs on other Borough roads.

In response to a question about whether parts of the Borough were going to be split off to form a new Borough, Councillor Bennett said that this is not happening. He warned against confusing Parliamentary and Ward boundaries which do change with population changes, and Borough boundaries which generally do not change.

There was a question regarding the status of the Leisure Centre development. Councillor Brock said that stakeholder focus groups are meeting soon to discuss what decisions are being made, current proposals and what users would like from the new facility. The Association will be represented on this group. (*Editor – see item in Planning section*)

Richard Barnes (WWRA committee) asked if voter ID would cause problems in the forthcoming elections in 2024. Councillor Bennett made the point that Bromley was used as a test Borough for the 2018 elections and performed well with no problems. He added that this experience successfully showed that in practice there were many alternative ways of proving identity.

The Chairman closed the meeting and thanked the members for their attendance.

Editor

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PLANNING

Leisure Centre latest

Things are moving forward regarding the redevelopment of the Leisure Centre. Bromley Council have conducted an online survey to seek resident's views on the proposed redevelopment as well as holding several focus group meetings comprising representatives of regular users, stakeholder groups and residents. Over 2,500 West Wickham residents have completed the survey. On behalf of WW residents and along with Ward Councillor Mark Brock, I attended a focus group in April where we were able to put forward what users would want from the development, what they would not want to lose and what they would want to avoid. Also represented at this particular group was Beckenham water polo club, Bromley canoe club, Bromley swimming club, West Wickham sub-aqua club plus a local MyTime swimming co-ordinator and a representative of MyTime Active.

It was also established that the new Leisure Centre will be built on the site of the existing Leisure Centre and that there are no plans for residential buildings on the site, just community resources. The provisional timetable has the Council deciding on a design by this Autumn following which there would have to be at least 12 months before any closure of facilities while a contractor for the works is appointed. The plan is to keep the facilities open until the work is ready to begin. The building work is expected to take 12-18 months.

The key demands were very similar for all groups represented:

- Adequate car parking particularly following the loss of the Croft Avenue car park and limited on-street parking in Hawes Lane.

- Maintaining the length of the pool and particularly the depth at the deep end.

- Keeping and improving the training pool and facilities.

- Extending the Gym area and increasing the number of studios including one for 'spin' sessions.

- Maintenance and improvement of the pump room (Weights)

- Inclusion of community meeting and refreshment facilities and making the place look more welcoming.

The Council also needs to tackle the redevelopment of the facilities at the Walnuts in Orpington and, at this point, it is unknown which site will be developed first. The intention is that both sites will not be closed at the same time. The cost will be borne by the Council with the hope that they can also secure some grants towards the work. The Autumn Newsletter is due out in September where we should be able to report on a final design decision and when the work will start.

Editor

TRAFFIC & TRANSPORT

New road safety measures

The council has been successful in getting Transport for London (TfL) Local Implementation Plan funding for improvements to the Pickhurst Lane junction with The Avenue and Mead Way, where a no right hand turn from the Avenue into Pickhurst Lane will be introduced following numerous collisions at the junction.

Similarly, improvements at the roundabout at South Eden Park Road and Monks Orchard Road have been approved for funding.

In his capacity as Executive Member for Transport, Highways and Road Safety, Councillor Bennett has approved a light-controlled pedestrian crossing on Beckenham Road/ South Eden Park Road near to the junction with St David's Close, which will help residents, children and parents of Oak Lodge and St David's Schools.

20mph in the High Street

Just a reminder that, as detailed in the Winter 2022 edition of the Newsletter, the High Street is to have a speed limit of 20mph, and this is scheduled to be implemented from July 2023.

Superloop

Transport for London (TfL) has announced a major expansion of outer London's bus network, the Superloop, which would comprise limited-stop express bus routes around outer London. The objective is to provide quicker links across outer London thus encouraging less car use in these areas.

Superloop is proposed to be introduced in stages with some routes that would become part of the Superloop already in operation providing quick links across outer London. This includes the X140 connecting Heathrow and Harrow, and a more frequent route X26 connecting Heathrow and West Croydon. The next new part of the outer London bus network will be the route linking Harrow with North Finchley, subject to consultation. TfL is working with the relevant boroughs on initial proposals for this next section and will consult on the route in the coming months.

Following that, views will be sought on future sections of the orbital network. These proposed future sections include a limited-stop express link between North Finchley and Walthamstow and between Walthamstow and the Royal Docks via Ilford. Links are also proposed between Bexleyheath, Bromley and Croydon. If you go to the TfL website, tfl.gov.uk, and search for 'Superloop' you will access the latest information about the scheme. Looking at the Superloop map on this site leads to the belief that the 119 route between Bromley and Croydon via West Wickham will become wholly or partly involved in this scheme.

TfL say that the Superloop brand is designed to work with the iconic London Buses brand by using a new Roundel and bus livery to ensure clear identification of the new service, but still recognisable as part of the London Buses network. The new branding will also feature on maps, timetables and other pieces of customer information.

We will continue to monitor developments and provide updates on our website, Facebook account and this Newsletter.

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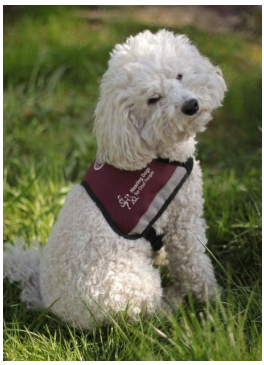


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"Hearing Dogs"

A talk by Melanie Woodgate

Wednesday 12th July 2023 @

August 2023

It's summer!

There is no meeting this month, enjoy the break





"It shouldn't happen to an Equine Vet"

A talk by Emily Bishop

Wednesday 13th September 2023 @ 2.30pm

At **Emmanuel Church Hall**, The Grove, West Wickham

Doors open from 2pm

Entry: £2 members (£3 for couples) & £3 for non-members

Meetings may be subject to alteration without notice.

Programme correct at time of printing

ENVIRONMENT

Healthy rivers – how you can help

Following the pollution incident on the Beck (through High Broom Wood) reported in the Winter 2022 Newsletter, I contacted the "Ravensbourne Riverfly" volunteers, who monitor the health of our local rivers by collecting monthly data on the freshwater invertebrates in the Ravensbourne catchment. They have recently started monitoring High Broom Wood and I can thankfully report that the Beck remains healthy there. Ravensbourne Riverfly is run by and for volunteers who are passionate about the condition of our rivers, and they would welcome anyone wishing to get involved in this citizen science project. Training for new volunteers interested in joining this project was held in late April/early May and was run by Thames21 and the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) – see poster opposite. Another training session will be held in High Broom Woods in late July/August, so please register your interest by emailing philippa.nicholls@thames21.org.uk

Further Information

The monitoring method used is "kick-sampling", which is placing a hand-held net downstream of the boot while the boot disturbs the riverbed, thus releasing any insects hiding under stones, or within silt, into the net. The net is then upended onto a water-filled tray, and you count the variety of species. A score is then allocated to that site for that particular month, and the data is sent to ZSL (who oversee the London side of a national Riverfly Monitoring Initiative www.riverflies.org), Thames21 (a river charity) and Cartographer (an online collection point for environmental data). Ravensbourne Riverfly was set up in 2016 with six sites running in the lower catchment and is now setting up six more in the upper catchment, with High Broom Wood being one of those (Keston, Hawkwood Estate, Kangley Bridge, Chinbrook and Capel Manor the others). The additional six sites will give greater insight into pollution incidents and impacts, seasonal changes to both the rivers and species and essentially water quality. This local citizen science project is run by Julia Grollman and Lawrence Beale Collins. *Richard Barnes (WWRA Committee Member)*

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Registration closes on 16th May!





Ravensbourne Catchment Improvement Group

Environment Agency

Thames21 Thames21 @thames21



Cheyne Hospital and Spring Park Woods

Spring Park Woods were owned by the Lord of the Manor until 1927 when Sir Henry Lennard gave 52 acres of woodland into the care of the City of London for the benefit of the residents. It was part of a much larger area of woodland that formed a deer park hunted by Henry VIII from his hunting lodge in the grounds of what is now Addington Palace Golf Course. Even as late as the 1920's it stretched from just west of High Field to Shirley Church Road and north almost to Wickham Road and there was a gate into it opposite where Tudor Gardens is today. There may therefore be some substance to the tale that Henry VIII courted Anne Boleyn while she stayed with her aunt at Wickham Court.

In the late 19th century the Lennards sold about 10 acres and a fine house called Stramshall Lodge was built together with an entrance lodge on Woodland Way. In 1926 it was bought by the Ancient Order of Froth Blowers, a charitable group founded by Sir Alfred Fripp, an eminent surgeon, and turned into a children's heart hospital called Hearts Ease and, as his wife was a District Commissioner for the girl guides, he gave 2 acres for use as a camp. In 1957 Cheyne Hospital which had been bombed out of Chelsea during the war took it over but a change in policy meant that children were no longer referred there from 1987 and the existing long term patients were transferred into the former staff bungalows. New houses were built on half the site while the remainder was amalgamated into Spring Park Woods.

Peter Leigh


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The Self-Build project of the Hawes Lane Bungalows

My name is John Halligan and my father, Bert Halligan, was one of the 25 men who took part in the self-building of the bungalows at the top of Hawes Lane in West Wickham. After my father's death we found news cuttings, original plans, documents and photographs relating to the project.



Bert Halligan & Bob Maynard with a model of the bungalow

Reginald Cross started the project by advertising in the local press in 1952 for people interested in building their own houses in their spare time in the Beckenham area. Over a period of time about a hundred people expressed their interest in the project. By the time they had identified a plot of land in West Wickham and were ready to start building, there were 25 men. How the number was whittled down, I do not know. They became the Beckenham Housing Association Ltd and they eventually managed to secure a section of land, comprising 3.5 acres, which had been allotments in Hawes Lane. Despite securing approval from Beckenham Council, planning permission was refused by Kent County Council because they wanted to retain the land as a Green Wedge as recommended in the Greater London Plan. An appeal was lodged and following a public enquiry, approval for the project was finally given by Harold MacMillan, Minister of Housing and Local Government at the time, in July 1954.

It doesn't appear that it was a pre-requisite for acceptance into the project to have experience in the building trade. In fact, my father was an office worker in London. But within the group there were about five people with the necessary skills –a bricklayer, a plumber, an electrician and a plasterer, and it was their role in the early days to train others in their particular skills. This training took place in a large hut on the site. The cost was met by weekly contributions.

There was an expectation that each man would contribute hours to the build and in my Dad's case, it was often evenings and weekends. The first house to be completed, in just under a year, was number 232 Hawes Lane and it was occupied in 1955 by the Maynard family. The second house was number 230 and was taken by Mr Cross. My family, the Halligans, moved into the third house, number 228. The last house out of the 25 was 222. The reason for this was because the site of this house was used as the access route for the remainder of the self-build houses in High Mead.

As a child, because our house was one of the earliest to be occupied, I can remember using the building site as a playground with the other children when the men weren't around. No health and safety rules to abide by in those days! After the houses were all built, I seem to recall that it was necessary to build the road and pavements in High Mead.

I have lodged the documents & photographs kept by my father at Bromley Local History Library with reference number 20232 so anyone interested can have access. If you would like to get in touch with me, I can be contacted at jhalligan2000@aol.com.

John Halligan



Some of the builders at the start of the project



The first three bungalows were nearing completion

COMMUNITY

Village Day 2023

On May 1st, the Friends of Blake Park held their 7th annual Village Day event in Blake Park. With stalls, displays, street food, inflatables and live music, the day attracted xx visitors. There were more than 50 stalls from local and community organisations and more than 20 food and refreshment outlets.

Angela Walters, one of the event's organisers, said, "Massive thanks to everyone who came along to support the day. The final figures are not yet to hand but we're hoping to have made good profits on the cake stall, the bar (shared with Walk & Talk 999) and from donation buckets. However, we have struggled to meet the costs of running the event and we don't have reserves to fund the event in future. Over the years, we have raised fantastic amounts that have paid for new benches and picnic tables, plants and more. We have also raised £10,000 towards our "Blake's Bugs" play and picnic project and are close to securing an additional £20,000 that will enable the project to (finally!) be installed. A combination of rising costs and lack of volunteers means we can't continue as things are. If you're interested in supporting the Friends generally or helping keep the show on the road specifically, please do get in touch by email to angela.walters@yahoo.co.uk), come to a meeting, follow us on facebook (@BlakeParkFriends) or sign up as a park Friend (it's free!) here: http://eepurl.com/iaqJKP."

. When the Friends held their first event in 2015 their vision was of a day to 'bring all the community together in Blake Park, filled with fun and opportunity.' As Angela hinted at above, sadly, this year could be the last time the event can be held but it doesn't have to be. Increasing costs and lack of volunteers is making it unsustainable in its current format and increasing pitch fees to meet costs and ensure the event is staffed properly might mean that it is no longer affordable for small local traders, charities and community groups to take part.

They want to keep things local, so they are working on a plan to save Village Day 2024 and ensure an affordable way for everyone to be part of the day. If you can help in any way, please contact Angela at angela.walters@yahoo.co.uk.

WWRA Stall

We had an enjoyable and profitable day manning the Association's stall at the Village Day. Our chocolate tombola attracted many children and an unusually large number of adults to pick winning tickets for the 200 prizes of various chocolate products. Another popular attraction was our money tree which was draped with envelopes containing chocolate gold coins or pound coins. Alongside several pictures showing some of the projects and developments within the Town with which we have been involved, was information about our Direct Debit subscription scheme (see page 3) which several existing members signed-up to on the spot.

As always, we had support from local businesses and people in our wonderful community who donated money, products, chocolates, services and freshly baked brownies! Special thanks to Cook on West Wickham High Street who always show support to community events, Karma Studios on Surrey Road for their generous cash donation. Also Anne Fortin who runs a small local business creating natural skincare products and Jan's Cakes of Beckenham, for the amazing brownie tower which enticed so many people to the stall. Last but not least, thanks to Karen from Ironed with Love, who kindly gave a voucher.

We were supporting two charities: the 'Friends of Blake Park' and 'Bromley Brighter Beginnings.' The aim of the Bromley Better Beginnings campaign is to raise funds to provide basic kitchen appliances for families in need, living in Bromley Borough. We made £262 profit on the day with half going to each charity. None of this would have been possible without the efforts of committee member Charlie del Guerico who created and collected the items and prizes and, the other committee members who helped assist with the stall on the day.





The Mayor, Hannah Gray, and Councillors Mark Brock and Nicholas Bennett visit our stall

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Opening of new Sports Centre at Norman Park

I was privileged to be invited to the opening of Blackheath & Bromley Harriers Athletic Club's (B&BHAC) new Community Sports Centre at Norman Park, which was officially opened on Saturday, 18th March, 2023 by the Mayor of Bromley, West Wickham Ward Councillor, Hannah Gray. This marks the culmination of a project that has its roots in 2013 discussions with the Borough concerning the possibility of the Club taking over responsibility for the operation and management of the existing track on a long lease. The Club agreed to move their Hayes Clubhouse and develop a new sports centre at the track to underpin the long term future of the facility.

With the ribbon cutting ceremony appropriately conducted by the Mayor, the symbolic transfer from the Council was concluded and a new era for the Club and the local community has begun.





Mayor of Bromley, Hannah Gray, opens the new Sports Centre

Also in attendance were local Members of Parliament, Bob Stewart and Gareth Bacon; London Assembly Member, Peter Fortune; representatives of England Athletics, the Project Team and the Jack Sims Trust; significant benefactors; and many of the Club's Olympians and Past Presidents, together with the Club Trustees and Management Committee.

President of the Club, David Appleton, said: 'Today has seen another landmark in the 150 year history of our fantastic Club which will secure our new home at the centre of the local community for the next 120 years. We look forward now to working with the community to improve further the sporting and recreational opportunities for all at our new Centre.'

Trustee and parent, Julie Asher-Smith, said: 'Runners, jumpers and throwers come from here! Road runners, rugby internationals – male and female – and even bobsleighers. It starts here with the care and attention of the dedicated people that give their time freely, as coaches, officials, mentors and volunteers. Welcome to Norman Park Community Sports Centre. All are very welcome here.'

B&BHAC is a long established and successful athletics club with a proud history stretching back to 1869. The thriving south London club has over 850 members, including World Champion sprinters Dina Asher-Smith and Adam Gemili; Red Roses World Cup finalist (and former international hammer thrower) Shaunagh Brown and Beijing summer and winter Olympian (100m and bobsleigh), Montell Douglas. The Club's Junior and Young Athlete track & field teams are reigning National champions and the Juniors finished second in last year's European Clubs competition in Spain in September. The Club's Senior men's and women's team were runners-up in last year's National Athletics League.





The Centre comprises, in addition to changing and toilet facilities, an indoor training area/sportshall, a strength and conditioning room, three multi-purpose rooms (available for yoga, pilates and other fitness activities), a meeting room, a physio suite and a large café and bar area. Enquiries relating to bookings and scheduled activities should be made to info@npcsc.co.uk .

For further information, please contact any of:

David Appleton (dlappleton@mac.com), Chris Hilditch (hilditch517@gmail.com) and Tim Soutar (timsoutar55@gmail.com)

Editor

Get the Feel Good Factor with Social Singing

I spoke to Suzanne Morant about the Wickham Singers which is a Community Choir singing for local people. Suzanne said, "We keep our sessions enjoyable and lighthearted, and we always stop for a coffee and chat mid-evening so that we get to know each other. Singing is a learnt skill and thanks to the professional direction of experienced voice coach, Janet Haney, we get to master a variety of songs including those from shows, popular folk songs, and seasonal music. Janet's energy and enthusiasm is infectious and, just as she has enjoyed singing all her life, she wants others to enjoy it too. We organise visits to retirement homes and restaurants where we sing and enjoy a nice meal with the diners and each other. It isn't just the wine and food that improves our mood, it's proven that singing with other people releases oxytocin and

endorphins, those feel good hormones which trigger happiness. I guarantee you will go home feeling happier from every Monday evening session, than when you arrived!



The choir performing at Corza Restaurant just before Christmas

There are no auditions and no need to read music, although several of us do. If you're hesitant do come along to our, 'Try-the-Choir' date on Saturday, August 19th, between 10:30 and 12:30. where you will meet other newbies and can try without commitment. The seats are comfortable, the hall is warm, the company's great so what are you waiting for?

The cost is £5 but if, as a result, you are interested in coming to the choir, the first three Monday evenings are free of charge."

You can contact Suzanne on 07733 291399 to find out more about their August Saturday workshop, which will be held in their usual Monday meeting place of Medhurst Hall, Sussex Road, BR4 0JX.



Linda with Janet Haney at the piano

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Councillor's Corner

It's been a very busy start to the year for all of us. We thought in this edition of the newsletter it would give us an opportunity to update on a few of the bigger projects that have now started to move forward.

West Wickham Library & Croft Avenue car park

Work on the new West Wickham Library has now started and we are very excited, like residents, to see this take shape over the coming months. We were very lucky that 77 Addington Road will house the temporary Library while the works are ongoing and thoroughly recommend a visit to the Art Deco building. The staff have done an amazing job in packing up and moving the library in such a short space of time and we thank them for showing us around and explaining that changes that have been put in place to minimise and disruption to their excellent services on offer. The Croft Avenue Car Park has now closed as part of these improvements and will now be developed into much needed housing for the Borough. We are fortunate in West Wickham to have various other off street car parks along with plenty of unrestricted on street parking.

Leisure Centre

Two leisure centres, West Wickham and the Walnuts in Orpington are at the end of their lives. Following the current consultation, we are pressing for the building of a brand new centre for West Wickham to proceed as quickly as possible. It would mean that for around 12-18 months users would have to travel to another centre, but the condition of the centre is such that the alternative could be closure on health and safety grounds and a boarded up building. The online survey was run to gather information from residents to see what they would like to see in any future leisure centre. Focus groups have also started to take place to gain further information on a face-to-face basis with residents and interested parties. *(Editor – see Planning section for a full report)*

New road safety measures

The council has been successful in getting funding and approval for several road safety measures in the Town. Please see the Traffic and Transport section for details.

Please remember that we are available for contact via our details on page 2.

Nicholas, Hannah & Mark



I spoke to Oak Lodge Primary School Chair of Governors, James Ashforth, who is looking for local people to join the school's governing body. The school is situated on Chamberlain Crescent, a short walk from West Wickham High Street, and has three classes per year for children aged 5 to 11. The school prides itself on being a friendly, inclusive, caring and diverse community with the highest aspirations for everyone. Like me, many of you will have been parents of children who attended the school or may even be ex-pupils yourselves. In which case, you will already know what a vital contribution this lovely school makes to the local area, and effective governance is essential for this to continue. To see more of the school there is a video tour available on the school's website (www.oaklodgeprimary-compass.org).

Being a school governor is a rewarding role that helps shape the education for children within the local community and they are seeking passionate individuals to join their team. You will work closely with the school to ensure that every child receives the best possible education, alongside providing scrutiny of standards and supporting the headteacher. It is a voluntary role in which you will know you're making a real difference to the lives of children in your community, together with gaining valuable experience. No qualifications or experience are needed - just a genuine interest in primary education and a desire to get involved. Oak Lodge welcomes applications from people of all backgrounds and walks of life. If you'd like to apply or know more then please email governance@compassacademytrust.org – they'd love to hear from you.

Editor

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West Wickham safer community advisory panel

Would you like to have a say in how West Wickham is policed ?

The West Wickham Safer Community Advisory Panel is a focal point where local people meet with our Community Police Team to discuss local crime matters and consider ways in which to tackle them. This is a very informal process in which anyone over the age of 18, who either lives, works or goes to school in West Wickham, is very welcome to participate. The Panel usually meets at 7.30pm in one of the meeting rooms at St. Francis Church in Ravenswood Avenue, West Wickham (opposite the Sainsbury's car park) The meetings are usually held once every two or three months depending on the availability of the room and the duties of the officers.

You are unlikely to receive this before the meeting scheduled for Tuesday 6th June at 7.30pm but keep an eye on our website for the dates, times and locations of future meetings. If you are interested in joining the Panel or just observing one of the meetings please contact our local Police Team via WestWickhamSNT@met.police.uk.

Why the Police don't strike

At the time of writing, the Government is looking at bringing in legislation to limit possible strike action by essential services whereby they will be required to provide a minimum standard of cover if a strike takes place. Included in these essential services are the railway and postal workers and "blue light" services such as Fire, Ambulance Services and NHS workers. Have you ever wondered why no mention has been made of the Police Service in this respect? Surely, the Police Service is a "blue light" service?

The reason for this is that Police Officers are already prohibited by law from going on strike or even belonging to a trade union. These are rights that many people regard as essential freedoms in a democratic society such as ours, so how did such legislation come about?

At the turn of the last century police officers were very poorly paid. Most officers were single men and they had to live in barracks or section houses. If an officer wanted to get married, he had to seek the permission of his senior officer to do so, and this permission was often not forthcoming. Working hours were extremely long and there were very few days off in their shift rotas. As a consequence, morale was very low, and drunkenness was a real problem. If an officer was found to be drunk, he was instantly dismissed. Officers began to agitate for better pay and conditions. Some began to join a newly formed group called The National Union of Police and Prison Officers (NUPPO). This union had no official recognition but support for it grew.

Strikes took place in 1918 and again in 1919. The Government became increasingly alarmed for national security, especially as the strikes had received considerable support in the Metropolitan Police in London. As a consequence of this, the Government improved Police pay and conditions but also passed the Police Act of 1919. This act

banned officers from striking and becoming members of a trade union. It did set up the Police Federation of England and Wales which is still in existence today. This is not a trade union but a staff association which represents constables, sergeants and Inspectors in matters of welfare and efficiency.

The Police Act 1919 was ratified by the Police Act 1996.

John Amos (WWRA Committee Member)

Rotary West Wickham

We continue to be busy in the local community and a taste of what we got involved with in the first few months of the year is given below.

Our local environment matters, and in January and February, we partnered the Friends of Blakes Park with coppicing some of the trees in the park that required attention (all done under expert guidance) and also litter picking.

To assist those of the local community who are suffering with the cost of living crisis we extended our support for two local foodbanks until June 2023, but if necessary we will continue to do what we can to help. We collected nearly £700 for the victims of the Turkish/Syrian Earthquake in one morning in February (thank you for your kind support) and we began to raise money to provide generators for families in the Ukraine. In March our members held a sponsored walk which raised over £500 for children in the South East with special needs to enjoy their own Skiing Olympics.

After Easter we worked with our friends from Rotary in Addiscombe and Shirley organising a Quiz Evening and an Afternoon Tea with "King Henry V111" at Addington Palace Golf Club. The proceeds raised from these two events will be used to purchase and install a defibrillator for public use at the West Wickham and Shirley Baptist Church in Wickham Road.

As you can see our activities are varied. To find out more about Rotary West Wickham, and how you can get involved, contact Barry Fenton on 0751 4358364 or email fentonbarryrotary@gmail.com.

Ian Leach

Don't forget to help us and your Road Steward by signing-up for our Direct Debit subscription scheme so that your £2 a year can be collected automatically. This can be done via our website using the 'Direct Debit Scheme' option or alternatively scan the QR code on the right. See page 3 for full details of objectives and the security of the scheme.

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