

ROOKSDOWN REPORTER

Autumn 2008



Brought to you by Rooksdowm Parish Council

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the first edition of the
Rooksdown Reporter.

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CONTACT US

Do you have any issues
or stories you would like
to be covered in the next
Rooksdown Reporter?

If so, please get in touch:

Email
editor@rooksdn.co.uk

EVENTS

Rooksdown Community Association Quiz Night

At
Weybrook Park Golf Club,
Rooksdown Lane
on
Friday 17th October 2008
7.30pm

Tickets £7.00 each
(supper included)
Chicken Curry & Rice,
Chicken & Chips,
Vegetarian Option

Tickets available from:
Rooksdown Pharmacy
Or Tel: 0771 759 9819 or
01256 811016
or email:
[rooksdwn.community@hotmail.
co.uk](mailto:rooksdwn.community@hotmail.co.uk)

Golf Club Dress code: no jeans, t shirts
or trainers

DON'T FORGET THAT THE
DOCTORS AND PHARMACY HAVE
MOVED

Rooksdown 2009 Events we would like to do

Spring Quiz Night

Table Top Sale

Woodland Walk

Summer Fayre

Summer Play Scheme

Summer Work Out

Story Tome for Toddlers

Teddy Bears Picnic

Football
(we need some volunteers)

Autumn Quiz Night

Do you have any ideas or
could you help we would love
to hear from you. Please
contact Rooksdown
Community Association.

COUNCILLORS' PAGE

Rooksdown's County Councillor Stephen Reid reports:

The proposals for over 300 flats on the Aldermaston Road triangle have been refused planning permission. I successfully argued that the plans represented an over development of the site and breached Borough Council policy. Borough Council policy allows for only up to 50% of a site to be allocated to small dwellings and as the site proposed 100% of the homes as being one or two bed-roomed flats it could be viewed as an over-development of the site. I also argued that one parking space per property was insufficient and would lead to social tensions over an already hot issue of parking capacity. This point had also been made by Parish and Borough Council colleagues through the planning consultation round. Thoughts will now have to turn to what the site can be used for as it remains ear-marked for future development.

I am pleased to report that at long last Mill Road, Part of Rooksdown Avenue, Domitian Gardens, Vitellius Gardens, Vespasian Gardens and Julius Close have been formally adopted by the County Council. It took a lot of chasing on the part of Karen Cherrett and myself to get to this

point. We are now embarked on asking for the next lot of adoptions.

I have used part of my County Council devolved budget to help the Community Association purchase a gazebo and equipment to help with Rooksdown fund-raising events. Their work is a very important part of making Rooksdown a great place to live, and I look forward to seeing the new Community Centre plans.

I am also looking at whether a Speed Indicator Device (SID) could be purchased out of my devolved budget. In all fairness I would have to let this be used in Winklebury and Buckskin as well, but I am conscious of the increased amount of rat-running through Rooksdown while the A340 roundabout roadworks are taking place.

Borough Councillor, Karen Cherrett, reports:

Community Centre Plans progress

Two bits of good news about community centres:

Firstly the threshold of 500 homes occupied has been passed which means that the release of developer funds to build a community centre can now be progressed. To avoid further delays the Borough Council has agreed to release advance funding in order that initial design works can be

COUNCILLORS' PAGE

prepared ready for autumn consultation. This is a really positive step forward and recognition of the hard work put in by the Community Association. The housing market has slowed and that may mean further delays completing the Rooksdown site but we hope that this will not impact the community facilities. Talks are under way with the landowners, developers, Council and other interested parties to set a realistic timeline for facilities including the parade of shops.#

- Secondly the feedback from the community consultation clearly showed there is room for Wessex Christian Fellowship's plans to convert the old Park Prewett Main Hall into a community church and hall. The design plans are well under way and initial estimates are that conversion work can start early next year.

Park Prewett Pavilions

The Council conservation and planning officers held a site meeting at the Pavilions last month following complaints from residents about them being vandalised. A number of suggestions have been made to the developers including a change of fencing and recommendations on types of safety glass which can be used without breaking the conservation

rules. It is hoped that the developers will respond to make these changes and to complete the placement of lighting around the Pavilions.

A339 bridge opens

As you will all have seen the new footbridge is now open and provides easier access to Wellington Terrace and the shops at Winklebury. There are no plans to close the old footbridge either both bridges appear to be getting good use.

Rat running through hospital

Hampshire Hospital, who own the roads and land through the hospital site, English Partnerships and developers are considering undertaking remedial works on the road surfaces which are breaking up across the hospital site. Repairs are expensive to undertake and the hospital are quick to point out that there is no public right of access across the hospital site. If the hospital authorities do undertake repair it is likely that they will also seek to reintroduce restrictions on access across the site over and above the signage in place. This will reduce rat running and ensure that the hospital can only be accessed from the A340 whilst Rooksdown will be accessible via A339.

USEFUL ADVICE

Tell Us

If you have difficulty with any Borough Council services e.g. missed bin collections, noisy neighbours or have enquiries about services such as planning and re-cycling you can find the answers to them all by using the Council Contact Centre number: 01256 844844.

Alternatively if you are a keen computer user why not go to the Borough Council website www.basingstoke.gov.uk and register for My Council profile. You only have to register once and then can report any faults or enquiries online.

For faulty street lights and road problems, you can contact the County Council just as easily via www.hants.gov.uk or 0800 50 60 60
Leave a message stating the name of the town, road and street light number and the type of fault that you are reporting. If you require someone to call you back, please leave your contact details.

Of course you can also contact your local Councillors who will be happy to help but bear in mind they work full time so it may be a day or two before they respond to your messages.

Borough Councillor: cllr.Karen.Cherrett@basingstoke.gov.uk

County Councillor: cllr.stephen.reid@hants.gov.uk

USEFUL TIP

Put ICE on your mobile

This is a serious suggestion and will help you out if ever you get into difficulty. With more people of all ages carrying mobile phones, the emergency services have come up with this as a way to help them contact loved ones In Case of Emergency (I.C.E.). Simply add ICE and the name of a loved one to your mobile phone address book with the full contact number. Then should anything ever happen the emergency services know who to contact. It also helps if your phone gets lost as a well meaning finder can return it.

ROOKSDOWN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

July 19th saw the third annual Rooksdow Community Association Summer Fayre. After a dreadful week for weather, the day brightened considerably as the opening hour of 1 pm approached. After a slow start, attendance picked up during the afternoon and a large crowd of both adults and children enjoyed attractions including two bouncy castles and a set of stocks provided by Headway, where selected unfortunates were pelted with wet sponges.

The event was visited by a number of local dignitaries including Cllr Brian Gurden, Deputy Mayor of Basingstoke and Deane, who was accompanied by his wife. Member of Parliament for Basingstoke Maria Miller; and County Councillor for North West Basingstoke, Stephen Reid also came along to enjoy the fun.

Everyone who came was able to browse round a selection of stalls, both inside and outside the marquee, which included a tombola, raffle, stalls selling books both second-hand and new, and lucky dip buckets for boys, girls and adults. Other stalls provided games of chance and skill, including the popular "Splat the Rat". The children were kept entertained by a puppet show, a sack race, and by the Association's collection of equipment including a football goal and basketball nets.

The committee would like to thank everyone who helped on the day, including the Community Wardens, Cllr Rob Golding from Winklebury, the team from Headway and all the keen volunteers who turned up on the day.

Planning for next years event has already started, with a discussion at the recent committee meeting; so here's to an even better event in 2009.

BY: CHARLES MILLER

The Community Association is always looking for new volunteers and also ideas for events and ways in bringing the community of Rooksdow together. If you want to join us or have any ideas please ring Jayne on 01256 811016 or email on rooksdow.community@hotmail.co.uk

Rooksdown Beat

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the Beat Officer for Rooksdown and the North Hampshire Hospital. I have been the Rooksdown Beat Officer for over 2 years. My role is to provide a visible presence on my Beat either on my bike or occasionally on foot. I am responsible for dealing with Anti – Social Behaviour, Neighbourhood Issues and working in a Multi – Agency approach to problem solving.

In comparison to other areas in Basingstoke, Rooksdown has a very low crime rate. The Pavilions that are situated off of Canadian Way have recently suffered an increase in Criminal Damage. Sadly they have been targeted by an element of children/youths that appear intent on causing vandalism/graffiti and anti – social behaviour. These children/youths are very likely to be residents of Rooksdown. I therefore ask that parents ensure that they know where their children are at all times and what they are doing. The offences committed are criminal ones and they will be dealt with as such. I am working closely with Taylor/Wimpey and Basingstoke and Deane Council in order to find a long term

resolution to the vandalism and anti – social behaviour that the Pavilions have attracted. If you have any information regarding this matter then please contact me.

I do meet a lot of residents whilst out on patrol in Rooksdown so if you see me then please feel free to flag me down and speak to me.

PC 2521 Ian Hoile

Theft from vans has been a problem over the last few months. If you have a van then please ensure that the vehicle is locked and secured. Remove as much equipment/tools from the vehicle if it is to be left unattended overnight. This includes securing any external equipment, ladders etc. If possible try to reverse the vehicle up against your property to block access to the rear doors.

Please ensure that you do not leave valuables in your vehicle. Thieves will not hesitate in smashing a car window if they see any property left in an unattended vehicle. Even an old coat or bag could attract attention from a thief. To a thief it could contain cash, a mobile phone, a wallet or keys. Petty cash for car parking left on view could be an incentive for an opportunist to try their luck.

Composting for Results – The Questions and Answers? By Alan Bell

With the pressure to go green here are some tips on getting started with home composting.....

Q. Now you've got your compost bin, where do you put it?

A. Ideally place it in open ground and preferably in the hottest spot in the garden – direct sunlight will produce quicker, more efficient composting results. If this is not convenient for your garden, out of sight works too - mine is in full shade and completely hidden but works wonderfully.

The bin is best placed on soil where worms are already established and can gain ready access to help break material down. Loosely forking the ground first and sitting the bin on top helps stimulate work activity.

Q. With your bin in place, what do you put into it?

A. When you get your bin you should also have an advice leaflet suggesting what to compost and what not to compost. Basically there are two groups of materials:

- **Greens** – vegetable peelings, fruit scraps, weeds, old bedding plants, tea bags, coffee grounds and grass cuttings*
- **Browns** – garden pruning, dry leaves, hedge clippings, egg boxes, egg shells, toilet and kitchen roll centres, shredded paper, straw, hay, corn on the cob, cereal boxes (best roughly

torn up before composting – tearing up boxes and newspapers is a great way to get the children involved and uses some of that excess energy)

Use a mixture of greens and browns if you can. This will help to create a better balanced mixture for re-use in the garden.

*One word of caution about grass cuttings – cuttings can quickly mould and net together to create a messy yellow pulp. If using them in your compost bin it is best to layer them (in layers about 1-2inches deep) with alternate layers of other waste materials and fork them over from time to time to mix and aerate the compost.

Q. How to manage your compost bin?

A. When you have a balanced mix of materials composting in layers, you should keep the mixture moist. I also use a liquid accelerator which you can buy from any garden centre or DIY store – about 10ml liquid to 2 gallons water – but you can also get a granular type which you simply add to the layers as you compost or when you fork it through from time to time.

Finally - **do not** add cooked foods, raw meat or bones to the composting mixture, this will contaminate the mix and attract vermin.

DOCTORS AND PHARMACY

Rooksdown Doctors Surgery

Park Prewett Road
Rooksdown
Basingstoke, RG24 9RG

Tel:01256 399710

OPENING HOURS:

Mondays 7.30am until 7.30pm
Tuesday to Fridays 8.00 until 6pm

Rooksdown Pharmacy

Park Prewett Road
Rooksdown
Basingstoke RG24 9RG

Tel: 01256 320303

OPENING HOURS:

Mondays 7.30am until 7.30pm
Tuesday to Fridays 8.00 until 6pm
Saturdays 9.00am until 12.00

Rooksdown Pharmacy is a family run business, a husband and wife team that provide a friendly, efficient service to the local community with a personal touch.

Some of the new services that they provide are:

- Blood Pressure screening
- Diabetes screening
- Cholesterol screening
- Stop Smoking Clinic

Basingstoke Play Ltd

Basingstoke Play Ltd (Play Council) offer after school and holiday care for school age children

For more information ring:
01256 844847

We would like to thank Basingstoke Play Ltd for providing the weekly play scheme during the summer holidays. Hopefully it won't rain next year.

Several Neighbourhood Watch Schemes have recently been set up in Rooksdown and it is hoped that more schemes will follow if there is enough interest. If you wish to join a scheme or set one up then please contact me on 0845 0454545 or email me via the link on the Hampshire Constabulary Website (www.hampshire.police.uk).

SAFETY IN THE HOME

How safe is your gas meter?

Recently, many of you will have received letters from GTC or their contractors PH Jones. The letters inform you of a pending visit by the companies to inspect your gas meter. The letters and visits are legitimate. GTC operate and transport gas to the estate (regardless of who you buy your gas off) and they are in the process of doing 10 year maintenance checks of gas meters and meter boxes across Rooksdown.

As a result of enquires and concerns from a number of residents I have been in touch with GTC and subsequently gas regulatory bodies including Health and Safety Executive, Corgi and Energy Watch to find out exactly what it's all about. This short note is to inform you of what is happening. It is not safety advice and, if you remain concerned about your property you should seek the advice of an independent Corgi registered engineer or contact Corgi or your supplier directly.

Firstly do not panic! I am aware that a number of households have been served with gas safety warning notices as a result of the GTC maintenance checks. The safety notices effectively prohibit the use of supply until maintenance work is undertaken to remedy an

installation defect – see below. Do not worry unnecessarily; I am assured by the gas industry regulators that the installations are safe as long as they have been properly maintained. The operators are obliged to issue the notices but they are also acting responsibly if they advise you that you can still use the supply but at your own risk. This sounds confusing I know.

So what exactly is this all about?

Firstly do you have a problem? Take a look at your gas meter box on your outside wall. If there is a gas pipe leading from the bottom of the box and into the house wall, then the following guidance does not apply to you.

If however there is no pipe out of the bottom of the box, open the meter box. If, the gas pipe leads from the meter through into the house wall – read on.

The houses on the estate are fitted with medium pressure gas regulator valves. When the houses were built medium pressure valves were not as common in domestic use as low pressure valves. The regulations governing their installation were still in development. However, the gas meters we have were installed according to guidance current at the time.

SAFETY IN THE HOME

This is purely a change in regulation as a result of better guidance however it does not mean the meters are inherently unsafe. What it does mean is that they need checking – hence the current round of visits.

Having spoken at length to Corgi and HSE they advise me of the following:

The current gas safety standard for medium pressure regulators is under review as a result of research commissioned by Corgi. The review may lead to a further change in guidance at the end of the year.

In light of this they advise that householders either:

- Do nothing at present but await the new guidance which may conclude current installations are safe and need no modification (as long as regularly maintained) or that they require some modification.

In the past 10 years the regulations have changed and now recommend that gas meters using medium pressure regulator valves should be fitted with the gas pipe leading from the meter out of the box and then into the house. It is now advisable under current standards - BS6400 Part 2 - that the gas pipe should not go through the back of the meter box.

I intend to follow up on the progress of regulations later this year and will send out another note when I know more.

- Undertake remedial works now to re-route the pipe-work out of the meter box and plug the hole left behind. This work will require the supply to be disconnected and re-connected and the work to be undertaken by a Corgi registered engineer.

I appreciate that this note does not give all the answers but it is intended to respond to a number of current enquiries and forewarn of what is happening.

Karen Cherrett

Key points

The responsibility and costs of undertaking any remedial work to the meter rests in law with you the householder

The meters were installed correctly according to then current guidance so the likelihood of redress against the installers or developers is minimal – it may be worth checking your NHBC cover or household insurance however

You can be fined for ignoring the gas safety notice but HSE and Corgi assure me that they are unaware of such prosecutions – this may be different for landlords who have different suites of care to tenants

Householders and landlords are responsible for ensuring that gas supply and appliances are regularly maintained and for allowing access for engineers to undertake checks – as in the case of the current maintenance visits

COMMUNITY WARDENS

Hello to all of you in this first edition of the Rooksdwn Reporter. For those of you who have never met us, we are Stephen and Chris, your Community Wardens. We work for Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council and we're responsible for helping to reduce crime, the fear of crime, anti-social behaviour, environmental improvement, and contributing to community development.

Rooksdwn in a unique area with a different set of issues than other areas. Most of these issues arise from different developments meeting each other, building sites, development and regeneration. These issues are in addition Rooksdwn not having the community facilities it will do in the future. This all possibly contributes to Rooksdwn not yet feeling like a truly established community.

This is, of course, all going to change over the next couple of years as there are some really exciting plans for Rooksdwn and the Park Prewett areas. In the meantime, we want to help with any issues you may have whether they are to do with the physical environment, anti-social behaviour, or indeed any community related issue you may

have. We want to get as involved as possible with the Rooksdwn Community Association, and help to build a strong, vibrant and fun community here.

We have just finished a four week series of sporting events for young people called the *Wednesday Workout*. Over 40 young people attended these events and had a great time and show that they have been a good way of the young people of Rooksdwn to get to know us and each other, and have hopefully kept them out of mischief!

Please feel free to approach us if you see us out and about (we wear a green uniform displaying the Community Warden logo).

If you have any issues of concerns you'd like to share with us, call 01256 845508, or email community.wardens@basingstoke.gov.uk.

Take care, and we'll see you out and about

Stephen and Chris

We would like to thank the Community Wardens for all their hard work with the Wednesday Workout during the Summer Holidays, and also to Sentinel for providing the food for the BBQ at the final summer workout session of 2008.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Rooksdown Parish Council

Website: www.rooksdown.org.uk

Email: council@rooksdown.org.uk or rooksdownclerk@thedarleys.co.uk

Telephone: 01256 356701

Neighbourhood Watch

PC Paul Green

Email: Paul.green@basingstoke.gov.uk

Rooksdown Community Association

Email: rooksdown.community@hotmail.co.uk

Telephone: 0771 759 9819

Rooksdown Borough Councillor

Karen Cherrett

Email:

CLlr.karen.cherrett@basingstoke.gov.uk

Rooksdown County Councillor

Email: stephen.reid@hants.gov.uk

Tel: 01256 320860

Graffiti & fly tipping

Tel: 01256 844844 (please also email Parish Council & Borough Councillor if possible)

Police

PC Ian Hoile

Telephone: 0845 045 4545 and report any trouble in Rooksdown.

If you don't report it how will the Police know what is going on? Don't rely on someone else to report it, please phone. The more people that phone the greater the chance of the problem being sorted out.

Rooksdown Reporter

Email: editor@rooksdown.org.uk

Contact us above if you would like to help with the next issue of the Rooksdown Reporter or if you would like to place an advert in our next issue.

ROOKSDOWN PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

AT SAXON WOOD SCHOOL

27 OCTOBER 2008

24 NOVEMBER 2008

26 JANUARY 2009

23 FEBRUARY 2009

23 MARCH 2009

27 APRIL 2009

24 JUNE 2009

ROOKSDOWN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

AT SAXONWOOD SCHOOL

13 OCTOBER 2008

10 NOVEMBER 2008