

DIFFICULT TIMES FOR THE GPCA

It never rains but it pours, so they say, and that is the situation we find ourselves in at the GPCA.

You will all know about the arson attack on Goldwater Lodge which has closed our Hall until further notice. The latest news from Woking Borough Council, which is project managing the rebuild/repair, is that the structural steel work is safe and rebuilding can proceed. The Council is seeking consultants to manage the design and implementation of the repair work. At the moment, we do not have any indication of when we will be able to re-occupy the Hall, only that it will be some months away, and until then, our income is severely restricted.

The next difficulty occurred when the source of funding for printing Goldsworth News dried up without notice. While the printers, Knaphill Print,

are being as helpful as they can, we still have no sure source of funding for the future. With restricted income, the GPCA cannot fund the magazine on a permanent basis. We hope to be able to continue to publish Goldsworth News but it may be quarterly or every other month at best. Please continue to let us have material for publication and we will do our best.

This happened at the time when Amanda Coulson, our Editor, started her maternity leave and Linda Hill, our Distributor, was about to have an operation. I am pleased to say that Linda is home and recovering well; there are no problems with distribution.

I am sorry to tell you all that Ian Rickard, GPCA Chairman, is seriously ill in hospital and, while he is out of immediate danger, he will not be able to continue in this role in the near future,

if at all. As his wife, GPCA Secretary and Assistant Editor of Goldsworth News, I am finding time at a bit of a premium at the moment, as you can imagine!

However, the GPCA is still in operation and will continue to represent the residents of Goldsworth Park. I will continue as Secretary as long as I am needed and Peter Hill will continue as Treasurer. We could do with some help at the moment so, if you have some time available, we would like to hear from you.

Please come along to the next meeting of the GPCA at 7.00pm on Thursday, 14th March 2013 in the Dianthus Building and meet us there.

Irene Watson

Secretary to the GPCA and Assistant Editor of Goldsworth News



FROM THE LAKESIDE – MARCH 2013

Community Matters comes up Trumps

Roger Westcott is one of the voluntary fishing bailiffs appointed by Woking Borough Council to oversee fishing, monitor fish stocks and other wildlife, and keep the area generally clean and tidy.

In January, we were able to take part in the Waitrose Community Matters "green token" scheme and, with excellent support from customers in the store, have amassed a fantastic figure of £416 towards the Kingfisher Bank fund. THANK YOU – thank you for your support and thank you Waitrose for running such a wonderful scheme that has helped so many local organisations over the past few years.

Also in January, the Goldsworth Park Community Association (which produces this magazine) presented us with a donation of £500. Thank you Ian (Chairman), Irene (Secretary) and Peter (Treasurer); this, along with other donations, means that we can now get cracking on what I see as the icing on the cake of the lake restoration project. We had hoped to build the Kingfisher Bank last autumn but funds did not permit it. However, it is better late than never, as they say, so with spring just around the corner, I'm hoping to start work within the next few



Mick Atkinson handing over the cheque to Roger Westcott

weeks, before the wildlife move into breeding mode, thus causing as little disturbance as possible.



For those of you not familiar with the proposed site, the Kingfisher Bank will be situated at the eastern end of the lake within the fenced Wildlife Area, although once it is built, it will only be visible from the opposite bank to give any potential breeding birds plenty of space and privacy. With one or possibly two pairs of Kingfishers already using the area for feeding on a regular

basis, you never know – they may well breed here too. That would be truly fantastic.

So, how's the fishing been this winter? In a word, SLOW! Even some of our carp anglers have struggled to get a bite. Perhaps all the fish have gone to the Caribbean for a holiday; at times it seems that there are no fish in the lake at all. Of course, there are and plenty of them too. It is just that, when the winter temperature drops to 40°F or below, most will either stop feeding or feed only for short periods during the days to conserve energy. Over the coming weeks, as the water warms (weather permitting), the fish will begin to

feed heavily in preparation for spawning. The first to spawn will be Pike and, as a consequence, the Pike fishing season ends on 31st March, leaving them in peace to breed.

This date also marks the expiry of both Rod Licences and Season Permits so please ensure that you have renewed your Environment Agency Rod Licences before fishing from 1st April onwards; Permits and Day Tickets can be purchased on the bank as usual.



Finally, over the coming weeks, thousands of frogs and toads will be

making their annual journey to the lake to spawn so, if you are a regular walker or cyclist round the lake path, please be extra careful, particularly on damp evenings after dark, as their only way to the water is across the path. If you keep vigilant, they can make their way safely and produce the next generation.

STOP PRESS: our beginners' fishing event LET'S GO FISHING will be on Saturday, 27th JULY 2013. Keep an eye out for details on how to book up.

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Councillors' Surgeries

The Goldsworth Park Councillors hold a surgery from 10am-11am on the first Saturday of every month (except August) at Strollers, accessed from the path between the shops and the lake.

Goldsworth News distribution

Distribution of Goldsworth News is arranged by Mrs Linda Hill. Her details are:
 Linda Hill, 5, Newsham Road, Goldsworth Park
 Tel: 01483 835183

Email: hilllinda5@googlemail.com

The G.P.C.A. is always looking for people who can spend a little time each month to distribute copies of Goldsworth News to areas around the park not already covered.



Lakers Latest

On Sunday 17 March 2013, Lakers will be celebrating its 20th Birthday. We are marking this event with a community open day and would like to ask everyone to support us in whatever way they can. You could donate some funding to support the day or just come along and enjoy yourself.

There will be a Table Top Sale (£8 for large table, £5 for small table), a Bouncy Castle, Face Painting, Lucky Dip, guess the weight of the cake and the number of sweets in the jar, and a raffle. Outside, there will be graffiti in the basket ball court and Beat the Goalie. Refreshments - hot dogs, burgers, cakes and tuck shop - will be available and a large birthday cake for all to enjoy made by the young people.

GOLDSWORTH LETTERS

A number of letters have been received in response to the editorial on Parking Madness, the Police article and the letter in the February issue:

Goldsworth Park won awards for its diversity of housing with 4, 3 and 2 bedroom houses and 1, 2 and 3 bedroom bungalows for when people wanted to downsize when their families grew up. Over the years, Woking Borough Council's planners have allowed the garages in the bungalows to be made into living spaces and the hard standing to be turned in conservatories or extensions, which means more cars parked in the roads.

Eventually, it won't be possible to downsize and release houses for families.

Name and address supplied.

First of, I want to thank the team at the Goldsworth News for taking the time each month to put together a very informative issue - always enjoy reading it.

I have only just had the chance to read through the February issue and 'Parking' seems to be the main theme for a few articles. In your 'From the Editor' piece, you are asking people to let you know their opinions and so here is mine.....if it helps then great.

As per the piece under Parking Madness, you clearly state what actually is the crux of the issue with regard to resident parking - we live in an estate that was built at a time when we had 'One-car' families yet these have now grown to 2, 3 and even 4 car families. When I first moved here 10 years ago, I rarely had an issue finding a parking space. Maybe not in a space right by my door but a parking space nevertheless. Since then the children have grown up and most have their own cars and generally mum and dad have one each.

So we now have at least double the cars than there are parking spaces. This means that people start parking at the kerbs and on grass verges, making it a) a challenge not to play bumper cars as you enter or leave, b) hard to spot children who venture into the road and c) make the general neighbourhood look untidy. If I arrive home any time after 8pm in the evening, then I more than likely have to 'abandon' my car in a not so clever place or I end up having to park a fair way away from my house. If this is late at night, then I must say I feel rather uncomfortable as a woman walking alone through some rather dark spots to get to my front door.

I'm all for green living - great to have trees, bushes and grass verges but I think the

time has come to start looking at converting some of this space into parking spaces. Just converting one area of bushes and a grass verge in Everest Court will add at least 7 spaces which will go a long way to making life easier and will improve the general look of the area as there won't be any 'abandoned' cars. Plus, it will no doubt make it easier for the bin collection men to manoeuvre their trucks.

That is my two-pennorth worth to this subject, as I said, if it helps then great.

Name and address supplied

While I agree with some of the points made by your correspondent last month, there are others with which I disagree. The real issue in this case is parking and the dangers created by the bad parking outside Sythwood School - the danger involved in trying to cross Sythwood outside the school when the sightlines are obscured by parked cars; the danger experienced when trying to turn out of Willowmead Close when there are cars parked close to the junction in both Willowmead Close and opposite in Sythwood. The pedestrian controlled traffic lights will help to reduce the first of these dangers but only education and, perhaps, frequent warnings and penalty notices may go some way to reduce the second. Your correspondent said that people should be warned before they are given a penalty notices for illegal parking but I have seen the Police outside the school on numerous occasions giving warnings only to see the illegal parking resume when the Police have gone.

Your correspondent also believes that speed humps are the answer to the problems in Sythwood. Before the traffic islands and bollards were introduced, there was a consultation exercise at which the Police and Traffic Engineers said that the main problem occurred when people tried to cross the road. After discussion, it was agreed that the refuges would be of most benefit to people crossing the road and would also have the effect of slowing the traffic as the road would be narrower. I believe that the refuges have had the desired effect. The last thing we need in Sythwood is a row of speed humps which, while they might slow the traffic, would also cause problems for road users, especially emergency vehicles. I drive slowly over speed humps but I still find that the tracking of my front wheels needs correcting every few months!

Name and address supplied.

NEW COUNCIL TAX SCHEME FOR WOKING

As part of its agenda to reduce welfare costs by £500 million, the Coalition Government has changed the way in which people receive help with their Council Tax. From 1 April 2013, a new local scheme, known as Council Tax Support, will replace the current national Council Tax Benefit scheme. Woking Borough Council approved its Council Tax Support scheme at the full Council meeting held on Thursday 24 January 2013.

Under the new scheme, pensioners (people who have reached the qualification age for pension credits) have been protected by the Coalition Government, leaving the financial burden to fall on working-age claimants.

Woking has worked with other Surrey authorities to develop the Surrey Framework. The Council's scheme is based on incorporating the Surrey Framework criteria into the Government's Council Tax reduction scheme, resulting in:

- The second adult rebate has been removed – if living alone, you can claim a 25% discount off your Council Tax bill regardless of your income. This will remain. However, if a second adult moves in with you, they will not be able to claim the second adult rebate.
- The maximum award is restricted to the level of a Band D property – if you live in a Council Tax Band E to H property, you will now receive support equivalent to a Band D property.

- No award of less than £5 will be made – if your assessed weekly Council Tax Support entitlement is less than £5, support will no longer be given.
- Maximum capital limit of £10,000 – Council Tax Support will not be provided if you and/or your partner have more than £10,000 in capital.

Woking Borough Council has also approved technical changes to its Council Tax exemption and the following changes will also apply from 1 April 2013.

- Abolition of the second home discount – properties classed as second homes will no longer receive a 10% discount off their Council Tax bill.
- Reduce unoccupied or unfurnished property exemptions (Class C exemptions) to one month – properties receiving Class C exemption will receive one month exemption rather than the current six month exemption period.
- End the 12 month exemption for uninhabited properties that are in need of structural repair (Class A exemption) – properties in Class A will no longer receive Council Tax exemption. Charge 150% Council Tax premium on properties left empty for two years or more.

Between 15 October and 7 December 2012, the Council carried out an eight-week consultation

with residents and key stakeholders on both proposals. In total, the Council received 1,097 responses to the consultation which were used to help shape the scheme

In addition to the changes, a discretionary Council Tax Hardship Fund will also be created to assist those suffering financial hardship following the introduction of the support scheme.

LOCAL RESIDENTS COUNT COST OF LITTERING

Woking Borough Council has successfully prosecuted two people for littering in Woking's Jubilee Square after being witnessed dropping cigarette butts by Council Officers. They were offered the opportunity to pay a Fixed Penalty but did not do so the matter went to court where they were both found guilty ordered to pay £75 plus costs.

Litter enforcement patrols are carried out regularly across the Borough and fully trained Council Officers have powers to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to anyone caught littering. This offence carries an on the spot £75 penalty or prosecution through the court with a fine of up to £2,500. 15 fixed penalty notices have been issued for the dropping of cigarette butts since the beginning of 2012.

For further information on litter enforcement, please visit www.woking.gov.uk/litter or call **01483 755855**



Goldsworth Care LIFE AFTER PETERBUS

Good Neighbour group Goldsworth Care says that it will face extra demand for its service following the closure of the Peterbus service to St Peter's Hospital.

The Peterbus - the only commercial bus service in the country run by an NHS Trust - is ceasing on 29 March after almost 30 years. The Ashford St Peter's NHS Trust says that the buses have been carrying an average of five passengers per journey, some of them just on local shopping trips. The service runs at a loss and the cost to the trust will be better spent on medical services.

Goldsworth Care Volunteer Co-ordinator Pat Checksfield says that St Peter's has always been a main destination for clients wanting car lifts. "I expect we will have a few more trips to the hospital now," she adds. "Unlike the bus, we turn up at clients' front door at an agreed time. At St Peter's, our volunteers will help the client get to where they're supposed to be, and wait for them and take them home."

Chairman of the group, Marian Alden, comments, "We'll be doing our best to meet additional demand, but our service is provided by volunteers, and this emphasises our need for more people to come forward to assist us."

The group has a telephone helpline, which receives requests for service and arranges for a volunteer to do the job concerned. Most jobs are car lifts - to a hospital, a surgery, the hairdresser, shopping or even to visit a friend - but Goldsworth Care also helps with things like

shopping, minor jobs about the house, form filling and dog walking. Clients have only to ask and the group will see what it can do. The group doesn't charge fixed fees, but clients donate towards its costs.

Volunteers have no set times when they must be available; the group knows their general availability and the sort of jobs they like to do, but individuals can accept or reject any job request as they like. "This means", says Marian Alden, "that volunteers can give as much or as little time as they like. We have some volunteers who do jobs on two or three days a week and some who help less frequently. They are all valued by us and our clients." Volunteers' expenses are reimbursed.

Goldsworth Care serves the Goldsworth Park, Goldsworth Road and Kingsway areas, covering some 5,800 residences. It is one of 11 Good Neighbour groups in Woking. If you want to find out about volunteering with Goldsworth Care, ring Pat Checksfield on 01483 837448 for more information. And if you want to find out how they can help you, ring the helpline, any weekday morning, on 07751 801587.

Note: After Peterbus ceases, buses from Woking to St Peter's Hospital will be from Cawsey Way and the Rail Station (services 446 and 557, except on Sundays). In the evening, the Heathrow coach from Woking Station, South Side, also serves St Peter's Hospital.



Information and advice to help you make the right choices

If you're looking for information and advice on benefits, social networks, health issues or support for carers, we can help. By simply offering you a variety of ways to access free advice and information, we're making it easier for you to make the right choices about the care and support options available to you, helping you or your loved ones stay independent for longer.

Here are just some of the questions we're often asked;

- What benefits am I eligible for?
- How can I find out about local support groups?
- What do I do if I have to go into hospital but I look after someone at home?
- How can I find a good home care agency close to where I live?
- My mum is showing signs of memory loss. What should I do?

By telephone

Prefer to talk to someone? Call the Adult Social Care helpline on 0300 200 1005. Our friendly advisors will be on-hand to provide free information and advice to all Surrey residents. They can also put you in touch with other relevant organisations or arrange for social care support if you're eligible.

Online

If you have access to the internet, visit www.surreyinformationpoint.org.uk. This website is a free online directory, packed full of essential information to help you or people you care for, find reliable care, community and health information.

In person

Pop along to one of the "hubs" run by a group of volunteers who may have a disability or be a carer. These local centres will provide information and support to help disabled people, older people and carers stay independent. For more information visit www.surreyhubs.org.uk.

Local Policing News

PCSO 15004
Adam WorsellPC 40190
Emma BarrettPC 404432
Matt HartPCSO 14849
Sarah Wentworth

The Goldsworth Park Team has been made aware of several incidents within the last week in Goldsworth Park and Horsell where garden sheds have been targeted by thieves. Items taken appear to be mountain bikes, lawn mowers and other garden machinery such as leaf blowers. Our investigation so far has revealed that, in some cases, those responsible have tried every house along a particular road looking for the ones with more lax security.

The Goldsworth Park Team would like to remind all residents of the importance of keeping their property secured. By taking simple security measures, you can make your home a far less appetizing target for thieves. Things to consider include:

- Get a shed alarm padlock
- Use good quality fixings to secure your shed
- Use anti-tamper screws or smear hard setting glue on the screw-heads or door hinges

- Mark and register your property

Further security advice is available at www.surrey.police.uk and click on the "Keeping safe" tab at the top of the web page. If you need further advice, please contact your local Team on 101

Property Marking

Following on from the successful property marking days over the Christmas period, the Goldsworth Park Team will be holding further property marking events. Keep an eye out on the Surrey Police website for dates and locations.

The Next Property Marking Event is on Saturday, 9th March 2013 at 11am until 3pm outside Waitrose off Denton Way. Bring your property along and get it registered onto the immobilise database.

Helping Others

On **20th April 2013** the local team in partnership with Woking Borough Council are holding a fundraising event to raise money for victims of the arson at Goldwater Lodge and Toad Hall Nursery. We are looking for volunteers to get involved with running stalls, games and events on the day to raise as much money as possible.

Please contact Sarah Wentworth on wentworth14849@surrey.pnn.police.uk or telephone 101 and ask for extension 31279 for more information.

If you wish to contact your local safer neighbourhood team; our email address is sntworking@surrey.pnn.police.uk.

Alternatively you can telephone us on 101 or speak with one of us when you see us on patrol. In an emergency please dial 999

County Council Report

Diana Smith, County Councillor for Knaphill and Goldsworth West



This will be my last column for the Goldsworth Park News, since I will not be standing for re-election as a County Councillor this May. We moved into a new house on Goldsworth Park 27 years ago, and it has been a good place to live and bring up a family. But now my husband (and County Report proof reader) has retired, and we have decided to leave Surrey.

First of all, thank you for supporting me over my nine years as a County Councillor representing first West Woking and then Knaphill and Goldsworth West. It has been interesting, worthwhile and genuinely an honour to represent your interests as residents both in trying to get the best services for our area, and at County Hall when policy decision are being made.

I've been lucky to have worked with some amazing editors on the Goldsworth Park News: Trevor Collyer and Andy Jones, John Green, Amanda Coulson and Irene Watson. I'm very grateful for the opportunity it's given me to report back to you on what's been happening locally and at County level, and hope it will go from strength to strength in its new form.

In the my nine years as a Councillor there have been battles – to keep Knaphill Library open and moved into larger, better premises; for road safety improvements; and at

County Hall to keep Youth Centres open and to improve Surrey's failing Children's Services. I'm optimistic that Lakers, the Youth Centre on Goldsworth Park, may at last be better used, but it's early days. It has taken years to get Lockfield Drive resurfaced. The challenge around Government cuts is immense.

Council tax

Council Tax in Surrey is going up by 1.99%. David Hodge, the Conservative Leader, said at the Budget meeting of the Council it would be 'easy to park the problem [of raising Council Tax] to after the election', but this would plant a 'time bomb' in planning the County's services.

No-one likes the idea of paying more tax. However inflation at more than 2%, reduces the Council's spending power, while demand for services the Council has to provide keeps going up.

Efficiencies, savings and outright cuts are already built into the Medium Term Financial Plan. But this assumes an annual rise of 2.5% in Council Tax a year. Less than that threatens vital services.

Eric Pickles, Minister for Communities and Local Government, has brought a stick-and-carrot approach to making Councils keep tax down. The stick

threatens Councils with holding a local referendum if they approve a rise of 2% or above. The carrot is a government grant equal to a two-year 1% increase in Council Tax for freezing or reducing Council Tax this year.

The problem with taking the money is not knowing what happens when the grant runs out. This is the time-bomb David Hodge is talking about.

As an opposition Councillor I find myself in uneasy agreement with Eric Pickles, arguing that Surrey County Council is sitting on large reserves which could be used to smooth over the difference between the money needed by the Council this year and the government grant.

In going against the Government, Surrey's present administration has made a 'brave' decision. I suspect Council Tax will be a hot topic on the doorstep during the election campaign.

Boats on the Basingstoke Canal

I will miss being one of Surrey County Council's representatives on the Basingstoke Canal Joint Management Committee.

Surrey and Hampshire County Councils are joint owners of the canal, responsible for stopping it from collapsing, letting it provide drainage for a wide area, and

maintaining it as a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

A few years ago there was a huge backlog of repairs and a real threat that the canal would be permanently closed to navigation. Fortunately the Councils got a full survey done and sensibly recognised that the cheapest course in the long term was to spend a considerable sum of money making the canal fully navigable, thus increasing traffic and the charges that can be made for navigation and mooring.

Fees are accordingly set to go up to the point where they cover the cost of keeping the locks running and contribute more fully to long-term costs. The intention is for charges to be comparable with the Wey, though in the transitional phase with concessions for current users. And look out this Easter for boats travelling the length of the canal up to King John's Castle, near Odiham.

Until May Diana Smith can be contacted by e-mail on diana.smith@surreycc.gov.uk, telephone 07971 665037, through her website <http://dianasmith.mycouncillor.org.uk> or on Twitter@CllrDiS