



# **Beechwood** Community Hall **Newsletter - August 2009**

## *Welcome to the Beechwood Hall Newsletter*

*As you have probably noticed work is being done around the Hall and the site has been progressing with the area around the Play area being prepared for grass and the installation of seven tree planters. There are still minor niggling things to be completed before the site can be handed over to the council (MBC). As usual Persimmon have been dragging their feet in completing everything and at a council meeting held recently it was decided that action needed to be taken to resolve these issues with the possibility of take legal action.*

*All these wrangles have of course meant that the Hall cannot be handed over to the committee and then made available for use. We will get there one day I'm assured but let's hope it's not that much longer.*

*Interest in using the Hall continues and the mailing list for this Newsletter continues to grow.*

*Well that's all there is to report this month but Linda Sinclair, the local Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator has once again provided a comprehensive update for this issue.*

*If you have any queries regarding the Hall please do not hesitate to contact me on the email address below.*

*Kind Regards*

*Nic Jefferys*  
[n.jefferys@beechwoodhall.org.uk](mailto:n.jefferys@beechwoodhall.org.uk)



## ***Neighbourhood Watch Newsletter***

May I take this opportunity to welcome new residents to the area and to advise that if you have any comments, concerns or queries regarding the development, please do not hesitate to contact me at [lindasinclair@beechwoodnw.co.uk](mailto:lindasinclair@beechwoodnw.co.uk) or telephone (eves) 01622 721258 or 07929 268288 anytime.

### **Play Area**

As you are now aware, this has 'unofficially' opened and is in regular use. You will also notice that a bin has now been placed in the area, and a weekly rubbish collection has been agreed with Maidstone Borough Council (MBC), thanks to Cllr. Julia Batt. (See also "**Messages from Maidstone Police**").

### **Community Hall**

Unfortunately, we are still awaiting the handover. So nothing new to report. Just to remind everyone though that WHEN this does happen, the Hall will then need to be fitted-out with necessary equipment (cups and saucers, chairs, tables, fridge etc) before it can be let. There is strong interest from potential bookers and residents will no doubt be relieved to hear the Committee have decided they will not pursue an alcohol licence for the building. Also they will not accept bookings for wedding receptions, birthday parties etc. (Maybe toddlers parties?)

### **Adoption of the Area**

The Community Hall update leads us nicely onto the latest news re the Persimmon/MBC continuing saga.

As you may be aware, MBC have been working to get both the St Andrews area and the Persimmon section of the development adopted. However, there have been numerous obstacles along the way.

As a result of the delays caused by Persimmon, Cllr. Julia Batt called a "Councillors Call for Action" meeting. (Full details can be viewed on the Beechwood Hall website at: [www.beechwoodhall.org.uk/links.htm](http://www.beechwoodhall.org.uk/links.htm))

To summarise, at the end of the meeting, committee's recommendations were:

- 1) The Licensing Department be made aware of the issues around the theft of alcohol from Oakwood Park Tesco Express on the Oakwood Hospital Site and the lack of action by Tesco on this;

- 2) Linden Homes repair the lights around the St Andrew's park and pavilion and consider replacing vandalised lights with hardwearing and CCTV compliant lighting;
- 3) The evidence provided to the council on anti social behaviour around all areas of the Oakwood Hospital site development be provided to the Borough Commander to support a request for an alcohol restriction zone on this site;
- 4) The council start emptying the bin on the playground prior to the adoption of the Persimmons section of the Oakwood Hospital site;
- 5) The issue of the St Andrews Park Pavilions be raised again with English Heritage in light of the anti social behaviour issues and evidence of this;
- 6) If Persimmon Homes has not completed all works within their section of the Oakwood Hospital site to an acceptable standard by 24 July 2009 and paid the commuted sums owed by 29 July 2009, the deadline set by Linden Homes, the council begin legal action to bring the Section 106 Agreement to its completion;
- 7) Bonds be applied to Persimmon Homes developments in the future;
- 8) The council initiate a three way liaison team comprising of Maidstone Borough Council, Linden Homes and the Police to tackle the issues of anti social behaviour relating to the Oakwood Hospital site, including immediate action on the environmental health issues;
- 9) Maidstone Borough Council create a single point of contact for resident's concerns to be made to with regard to the Oakwood Hospital Section 106 Agreement;
- 10) The Local Government Association be lobbied with regard to highlighting the difficulties, across the Country, Councils are experiencing in getting developers to comply with existing S106 planning agreements, and to request the assistances of the LGA in addressing this issue. The committee's recommendations, including the question of legal action, will now be considered by council officers and cabinet members for appropriate action.

That said, I have heard today from Julia Batt that to-date the legal action discussed has not taken place. However, the threat of legal action is to be sent out on 10<sup>th</sup> August (when Ian Trueman – Senior Solicitor, MBC) returns from holiday. This will state that the matter will be going to the high court on 24<sup>th</sup> August should they not have completed.

Also, despite what was previously thought it is the Planning Committee that we should all now be lobbying and so in this regard we need your help!

Julia Batt explains:

*"Whilst the above were the committee's recommendations, unfortunately it does not mean that the council **must** action these points. At the time of writing, all the above points are being progressed - although action point 6 is not being progressed in the exact manner stated above.*

*Instead, under "delegated powers" officers have made the decision to instead threaten legal action on the 10th August clearly stating that on the 24th August a case will be opened with the high court.*

*Whilst this is not exactly what was asked for and obviously not what I was aiming for, I can see the council's logic in this decision. However, I have grave concerns that by the 24th August, for whatever reason, there could be yet another delay in pursuing the developers.*

*For this reason, I have raised this as an agenda item at the next planning committee (6:30pm, 13th August at the town hall), where I will be asking councillors to vote to ensure legal action does commence on the 24th August if the developers have still not fulfilled all that is required for adoption to commence. The planning committee have the power to make this decision and set it in stone.*

There is no need for anyone to attend the planning meeting, but there is a lot of benefit in lobbying each of the councillors (and their substitutes) to state your case.

The email addresses you need are below:

[richardash@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:richardash@maidstone.gov.uk); [allanbradshaw@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:allanbradshaw@maidstone.gov.uk);  
[ianchittenden@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:ianchittenden@maidstone.gov.uk); [derekbutler@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:derekbutler@maidstone.gov.uk);  
[cliveenglish@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:cliveenglish@maidstone.gov.uk); [christophergarland@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:christophergarland@maidstone.gov.uk);  
[faygooch@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:faygooch@maidstone.gov.uk); [malcolmgreer@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:malcolmgreer@maidstone.gov.uk);  
[tonyharwood@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:tonyharwood@maidstone.gov.uk); [richardlusty@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:richardlusty@maidstone.gov.uk);  
[davidmarchant@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:davidmarchant@maidstone.gov.uk); [patmarshal@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:patmarshal@maidstone.gov.uk);  
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[richardthick@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:richardthick@maidstone.gov.uk); [bryanvizzard@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:bryanvizzard@maidstone.gov.uk);  
[johnawilson@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:johnawilson@maidstone.gov.uk); [franwilson@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:franwilson@maidstone.gov.uk);

Please do not leave it to someone else to write to the councillors, send your e-mail as soon as you can. You need to explain that enough is enough! E-mails do not have to be lengthy. See below as an example:

*Dear .....*

*Following the meeting on Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> July 2009 at St Simon Stock School and Julia Batt's Councillor Call for Action with regard to the Oakwood Hospital development and Persimmon Homes, I would urge you to support the committee's recommendations.*

*It is extremely important that Persimmon meet their commitments so that the development can be adopted by Maidstone Borough Council and we can move forward.*

*We look forward to a positive outcome of the CCfA.*

### **Kent Messenger article (24<sup>th</sup> July)**

For those who read this article, which was written following the "Councillor Call for Action" meeting, just to advise there was quite a response to the article itself and as a result the KM will be publishing a follow-up in this week's issue! Out now – Page 10 - do buy a copy!

### **Litter-pick – Saturday, 8<sup>th</sup> August**

For those who remember, the litter-pick, organised by Julia Batt was a great success and the development looked all the better for it. I think I feel another one coming on...

Yes, it is next **Saturday, 8<sup>th</sup> August (next week!)**.

So please do join us – men, women, children – the more the merrier. We will have enough equipment for 30 helpers. Please meet at Julia's house "Princess House", 4 Tarragon Road between

9-9:30am (finish by 12:00). Hope to see as many as possible there. Thank you in advance.

## **Car Parking**

We do appreciate parking is an ongoing issue on the development, however, can we please remind everyone to park considerately at all times and to ensure vehicles are not parked, for example, so near to corners that it obstructs a drivers view! Also please remember to keep your speed down whilst driving through the development, especially when approaching the children's play area. Thank you.

## **Discarding cigarette ends**

If you remember in the last newsletter I did mention that I had received some complaints about residents who do not wish to smoke in their own homes but felt it was acceptable to flick cigarette ends out onto the street? I am pleased to say that I have received e-mails saying this has improved, so thank you to all those who made the change. As I said last time, let's keep the neighbourhood looking nice, because it does look nice most of the time.

## **Messages from Maidstone Police:**

Only one this time, but a very important one.

It would appear that in regard to the play area in particular, where there have been some nuisance youngsters from time-to-time, one or two residents are calling the police and exaggerating the extent of the problem. The message from the police is very clear:

**“Do not exaggerate the nature of the problem to get a better response!”**

It would appear the police have attended one or more calls in this regard, only to arrive and find out the problem was not as accurate or urgent as was reported, hence causing understandable annoyance to police officers. Remember the 'Boy who cried wolf story'? Mm... Please keep to the facts when reporting any kind of anti-social behaviour.

## **Shumi – Hair & Beauty Salon (last remaining retail outlet)**

At last some news! I have spoken to the new manager who tells me that “hopefully” the salon is due to commence fitting out works around the second week of September. The facilities available will include, hair dressers, usual beauty treatments including massage (yes!), spray tanning, sun beds, reflexology, nail bar and men will have their own section which will also offer them “clean shaves/cut throat” They also hope to open a small coffee bar (I'm struggling to know how they may fit all this in, but I am assured it is possible).

## **Hyde Housing update (Update provided by Carole Chapman, Housing Officer)**

*“Re Marigold Way –*

*Received an update after the partnership meeting regarding the camera for above to be aimed at the play area. As the roads are not yet adopted Kent Police had to ask Persimmion Homes' permission to wire up a lamp post. He has now got approval and the camera should be in place shortly”.*

Also, due to the number of complaints received from residents relating to broken pavements, litter problems, broken railings etc by the shops, Carole writes:

*"If you want to put in the newsletter that I will be trying to set up a site meeting with the management company shortly and for any residents to voice their concerns. I will ask him if he will be prepared to allow a representative as well as yourself to attend the meeting, or to voice their "constructive" concerns through us in advance?"*

### **Maidstone & District Neighbourhood Watch Association – Autumn Raffle**

In order for us to carry on our Community Projects, the Association has arranged for an Autumn Raffle to be drawn at the Annual General Meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2009 at the Kent Police Training Centre, Sutton Road, Maidstone.

We would very much appreciate your support by purchasing 1 (or more!) of the raffle tickets currently on sale. They are £1 each and there are currently over 20 donated prizes to be won. The 1<sup>st</sup> prize is a Hewlett Packard Laptop Computer and other prizes include: a round of Golf for 4 people at the Weald of Kent Golf Club and Sunday Lunch for 2 at the Hilton Maidstone Hotel.

Thank you to those who have already purchased tickets, but I still have a few left so if you e-mail me and let me know when you will be home, I will pop round. Thank you for your support!

### **Clean Kent Watch – Help make a difference in your area and prevent environmental crime**

Clean Kent in association with Neighbourhood Watch are recruiting volunteers to the Clean Kent Watch to help observe and report illegal environmental activities.

"If you have a keen interest in the cleanliness and safety of your local area, this could be a volunteering opportunity for you.

'Eyes and ears' reporting plays a valuable role for the Clean Kent Campaign, which seeks to improve and enhance the quality of the local street scene by reducing fly tipping, abandoned vehicles and associated fires.

As a Clean Kent Watch volunteer you will be provided with an information pack which includes a unique identification number, enabling you to report information to trained staff 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Your reporting will be used to inform clean-up activity through to enforcement action and help prevent and deter these environmental offences"

For more information please go to: [www.cleankent.com](http://www.cleankent.com)

### **Tesco Express**

Please continue to advise me if you see any discarded Tesco baskets on the development or if you return one to them yourself, I would still like to know please where it was found. Also, if you witness any incidents of shoplifting, again please let me know as soon as possible.