

The WEST PARK CHRONICLE

The Community Newspaper for West Park

April 2008

Reporting on the Recent AGM (2.4.08)

This issue of the Chronicle focuses on matters raised at the AGM. It was a very well-attended meeting, with over 120 residents, local councillors from the Weetwood and Kirkstall wards, local police, together with guests and representatives from other local residents associations. Over 20 apologies were received, including one from the local MP Greg Mulholland (parliament was still in session).

The elected committee for the coming year is Doug Kemp (Chair), Hazel Purse (Treasurer), Marie Glover (Secretary) together with Nina Foster, Terry Jacques, Joan Peters, Steve Taylor, David Tong, and Ken Torode.

Any local resident would be welcome to join the committee on a trial basis. The committee meets typically 5 times during the year in the West Park Centre. You could then see whether it was something that you wished to continue with. If you are interested please get in touch with any committee member.



Parking

A major issue at present is the parking problem caused in neighbouring streets by over-flow from the Beckett Park campus of the Metropolitan University.



Andy Merckel, the senior traffic engineer from the Council responsible for implementing traffic management measures in this area, kindly agreed to address the meeting about the measures he and his team are taking to address these issues.

During a lengthy question and answer session the following points were established:

- Andy and his team are following the Leeds tailoring industry principle: *measure twice, cut once*. The many legal aspects to setting up traffic schemes include the requirement that ample time is allowed for consultation by all relevant parties. The resulting 'overhead' in time and effort means that it makes sense to be thorough and to get it right the first time.
- The problem affects not just West Park,



but Glen Road/Weetwood Lane and streets off Queenswood Drive. It was triggered mainly by the university deciding to clear traffic from its own campus onto the surrounding streets.

- Despite what residents and others may feel about these actions, the university authorities have, apparently, acted within their legal obligations.
- Since the university's so-called traffic management scheme was introduced, bus usage associated with the university has increased, and so has cycle use.
- About £30k has been contributed by the university to set up any residents parking scheme.
- New restrictions have been introduced to help assess how far parking might spread.
- Parking surveys are being carried out to identify types of parkers (residents, all-day parkers, short-term parkers, students).
- For the surveys to be meaningful the university has to be in session, so the start to a scheme will be pushed beyond the Summer term and probably beyond the start of the

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new university year.

- Some streets are obviously more suitable for parking than others because they are fairly wide (eg. Ancaster Road between Harrowby and Otley Road). Other streets might need to accommodate time-limited parking, where they are close to shops.
- Public roads allow public parking. Resident parking schemes try to balance the needs of residents with other road users. They also have their downside, such as leaving residents open to fines if they forget to display a permit.
- At present in Leeds parking permits are free to residents, which is not the case in many other cities.
- WPRA will continue to keep in regular contact with Andy Merkel and his team. If and when it seems appropriate we will arrange another open meeting. WPRA is also liaising on this issue with GRR (Glen Road Residents).

Butcher Hill Fields

Peter Owen and Toby Smith, representing the Spen Hill Residents Association (SHRA) brought the meeting up to date with the possible development, in association with Abbey Grange school, of a commercial sports centre on the Butcher Hill fields.



The facilities available to the school until 16:30 each school week-day, consist of changing rooms (which occupy a minor part of the pavilion, the rest being given over to a bar and social area), together with a range of floodlit pitches for rugby, soccer and hockey, and a junior grass football pitch.

The commercial focus involves ten floodlit all-weather football pitches open until 22:30 on weekdays, the bar, and 168 parking spaces. Subject to licensing, the bar would be open until 23:00 on weekdays, 24:00 on Saturdays, and 22:00 on Sundays.

WPRA, SHRA and the Moor Grange Action Group are working together to oppose this development for the following reasons:

- The development would be on fields

classified as "N1 designated green space" and which form part of a 'designated green corridor (N8)'.

- If this development is allowed it could set a precedent for similar developments on the West Park fields.
- The development would cause serious noise nuisance to the residents who live adjacent to the fields.
- The ten five-a-side football pitches would cause a significant increase in traffic on the approach roads, including roads such as Spen Lane or West Park Drive.

To date it is estimated that over 400 letters of objection have been sent to the School.

A report from the Chief Officers of Planning, Recreation and Asset Management, which was sent to the Kirkstall councillors, identifies a range of planning objections and issues associated with possible land contamination, noise pollution, increased traffic, loss of valuable and scarce amenity space. These arguments suggest that there would be strong grounds for denying planning permission for such a development.

A meeting has been arranged between Abbey Grange school and the Kirkstall councillors for mid-April. It is hoped to identify alternative ways of enhancing the school sports facilities that would be less detrimental to the green space and amenity of this area.

Lawnswood School

At the AGM last year a motion from the floor required the Association to lodge a complaint with the School regarding pupil behaviour, especially during lunchtimes.



Accordingly, WPRA wrote to both the Head and the Chair of the Governing Body, and as a result the School introduced measures to try and improve the situation.

Matters were brought before the Governing Body, and meetings between WPRA and the School took place in July, January and March. The next meeting is scheduled for June.

Measures introduced by the School include:

- Manning of the Spen Lane gate by school staff to ensure that only authorised pupils are allowed to leave the school premises during lunchtimes.
- A system of lunchtime detentions.
- Having school staff present in the community at lunchtimes.
- Regular truancy sweeps.

Welcome news is that, apparently, plans are at an advanced stage to expand the school dining area by 50%. This would help reduce the need for pupils to leave the school site at lunchtimes.



WPRA feels that there is now a genuine concern by both the Governing Body and the Head, to address the issues which gave rise to the original complaints.

The Head and WPRA both agree that it is still important that residents report incidents to the school. The text in the box spells out how to do this.

How to Report an Incident

Phone Lawnswood School on 0113 2844020 and describe:

- What happened
- When and where it took place
- Appearance of the individuals, apparent age, type and colour of clothing, anything distinctive.

If you've already reported it to the police, give the School the police log number or incident number.

Ask the School for their reference number for your complaint.

Ring 077 60112395 to inform WPRA.

WPRA will continue liaising with the School. The Governing Body includes three local residents and our local councillor, Sue Bentley, who joined the Governing Body this last year.

Guest Speakers—Extended Services

The AGM was addressed by Sue Warwick and Pat Spedding, who are based at St Chad's primary school. Their role is to coordinate Extended Services for schools in the

North West area, which include St Chad's and Lawnswood. Services could include such things as Breakfast Clubs, and essentially require schools to be available for use between 8 am and 6 pm.

The services offered by a particular school will be determined by the needs of parents, children and the community. Future AGM's, for instance, could be held at a school. However this may present difficulties for PFI schools where the school management have less immediate control of their premises.

No doubt we'll hear more about these services as they are introduced over the coming years.

Community Compost

Richard from Leeds Organic Growers (LOGS) talked about a garden waste collection service which is being tried out as a pilot scheme in the Kirkstall and Weetwood wards.

Residents living in Kirkstall or Weetwood wards can opt to have LOGS collect their garden waste for £23.50 a year. The waste is turned into compost to be sold locally, and subscribers can buy the compost at a discount.

The *green garden waste kerbside collection and composting service*, will target 20,000 households in Kirkstall and Weetwood. It will be managed by four LOGS staff and a minimum of four volunteers from the Station Allotments. The group aims to train and employ those who would otherwise be unemployed.

The scheme will collect, grass cuttings, hedge trimmings, weeds, dead flowers, small prunings, house plants, leaves, roots and turf (with as much soil as possible removed). If it grew in your garden and fits inside the collection bag, then LOGS can usually take it away.

Up to 1,500 tonnes of green waste will be processed annually, producing sieved, graded and bagged compost for sale to scheme members and the general public. Other products will include soil improver, mulch and recycled garden furniture.

When green waste decomposes in a landfill it produces the 'greenhouse' gas methane plus chemicals that can leach out and pollute the local land and water. To control this the EU has set limits on the amount of green waste sent to landfill. Every tonne over the limit will

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cost the Council £150 in fines.

Initial funding for the scheme has come from the Community Recycling and Economic Development (CRED) Programme, working as programme Award Partner with the Big Lottery Fund through the Transforming Waste initiative.

LOGS is seeking the support of residents to lobby the Council for financial assistance. This would remove the need for residents to pay the £23.50 a year fee.

Estimates suggest that it costs £200 for every tonne of garden waste collected using brown bins, but saves only £32 per tonne in landfill charges. LOGS maintain that their service will be more cost-efficient and hence cheaper for the Council, but they do need Council support.

If you agree, you should contact your local councillor. You can also email your comments to: leedsorganicgrowers@phonecoop.coop.

STEP

(Supporting The Elderly People).

Wendy Moore (0113 2757988) reminded the meeting of STEP and its activities.

STEP would be pleased to hear from any local residents who would be prepared to work as a volunteer, and so support the work of this growing neighbourhood network scheme.

STEP host a 'coffee morning' at St Andrews Church (at the top of Butcher Hill) 10-12 every Thursday.

The WPRA Website

The website has been live for a year and has had over 7000 visits (over 23000 if you count accesses to all the photographs).



Popular sections are the Stop Press, the information on the Conservation Area and the Planning process. Also many people go to the Local Information section in Useful Links to get contact information for councillors, the police, and local organisations such as STEP (mentioned earlier).

The website has recently been updated to

provide a Forum facility. This is a discussion area for members to talk about matters that concern them.

Major sections include the Environment (parking issues), Local Educational Establishments, and sections for you to give recommendations or sell/trade things. There is also a catch-all Discussion section so you can say anything you want which is not covered by the others.

Anyone can read the Forum postings but to make one you need to register. The system will ask you for a username, a password, your email address, and a security code that you read off the screen. It then sends you an email and requests that you click a link in the email. After that you are registered and can post your own messages.

All you have to do is log in to the forum and get talking! It's also possible to send messages between members.

There is a Frequently Asked Questions section on the main website which explains in more detail how to input messages and how to reply to messages, and the Forum itself has a comprehensive Help section.

This could be a valuable way of getting information across quickly when things happen – so please use it – WPRA will be using it to post information when things happen.

Here's the address: www.westparkresidents.org.uk. Why not try it now?

Conservation Area

Despite raised hopes in previous years, there are now good reasons to hope that the West Park conservation area will become a reality during the coming year.

Post Office Closure

Under its present energetic management Far Headingley Post Office has become a real asset to the district. However it is now under threat of closure in June 2008 as part of a general closure program which is currently in the news.



There will be no discussion about it until after the local elections in May. But once the proposals for an area are known, customers

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have six weeks to respond with their thoughts to Post Office Ltd..

The closure of this particular office would have quite an impact in the surrounding area, and especially on elderly residents who might find the nearest alternative in the Arndale Centre in Headingley out of comfortable walking distance.

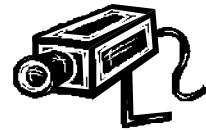
Aspects that make Headingley Post Office an unattractive alternative include the fact that a visit there already involves long queues, parking spaces are scarce, and heavy traffic on Otley Road make it hard to reach by car.

If you support the continuation of the Far Headingley post office, please keep an eye open for developments and be prepared to write in. To date nothing has been heard regarding the future of the Butcher Hill post office.

CCTV System Available

WPRA now has a portable CCTV system which members can borrow should they have

concerns about their premises. To inquire about the system, please contact Doug Kemp on 2758808.



Subscriptions

A resident suggested increasing the annual subscription to £5, after a brief debate and another suggestion of £4, the meeting voted to retain the £3 subscription. However please feel free to subscribe more than this if you wish, as indeed many do already.

WineWalk

The Wine Walk was run by the Association last year, with four residents opening up their houses and gardens for drinks and light refreshments. Despite heavy rain on the day, the event went very well and proved to be a great social success.

It is hoped to repeat the Walk again this year, probably at the beginning of June. Further details will be announced in early May.

Please Help Save Our Grass Verges

Here we pass on a heart-felt request from a local resident at the AGM – please, try

not to park on the many grass verges in West Park.

As you can see from these recent examples, the resulting muddy mess looks awful!



Update — Butcher Hill Fields

Kirkstall councillors met with the Head and Chair of the Governing Body of Abbey Grange on the 10th April.

The school is not withdrawing the proposal, but will allow Powerleague to decide whether to proceed with the planning application. The many letters written to the school have been copied to Powerleague.

If a planning application is submitted, the Association will suggest that members resist the development. The Association has no objection at all to the school improving their sports facilities, but the proposed commercial development would damage the West Park area, and could have a knock-on affect on West Park fields.

Thank You From WPRA

WPRA thanks the local councillors of all parties, and the local community police for their service to residents.

Also the WPRA committee wish to thank the members for their continuing support and their personal contributions to the local community.



You are the eyes and ears capable of alerting the local community via the Association to any matters which might affect the West Park area. Even more important, you are the ones who make things happen in the community, by writing to appropriate officials, turning up at planning appeal visits, or whatever.

Please keep up the good work!

How to Join the West Park Residents Association

The fee is £3.00 per household. Anyone joining now will be paid-up until April 2009. (The subscription year runs from one AGM to the next—effectively April to April). Just fill in the form below or send the equivalent information together with the fee to: WPRA Treasurer, 26 Ring Road, West Park, Leeds, LS16 6EJ.

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I / We enclose £3, being my / our subscription to the West Park Residents Association for the year 2008. If you require a receipt, please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

Please make cheques payable to: *Spen Lane and West Park Residents Association.*

NAME:

ADDRESS:

POSTCODE :

TELEPHONE:

EMAIL ADDRESS :