

# **WEST PARK RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION**

## **NEWSLETTER Summer 2006**



Welcome to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Newsletter for the Association.

The AGM held in April at the United Reformed Church on Spen Lane, was very well attended. It provided the opportunity for the discussion of many local issues, and for contributions from the community police officer, council officials and the Local MP Greg Mulholland. Unfortunately the AGM coincided with a full Council meeting so that the local councillors were unable to attend. Next year we will ensure that the local councillors are available for the AGM.

Currently this year, association membership is approaching 300 residents and still growing. Thankfully there are no major issues facing the area at present, but there are at least two contentious planning proposals currently on the go. These involve demolishing existing detached houses and replacing them with flat developments. Association members have been very forthright in making objections to these planning applications, and useful comments from the Community Planning advisor have provided sound reasons for opposing these developments. The Association has found the e-mail member's list a most useful communication channel to inform residents on these matters. Thank you to all those members who have been both vigilant and vocal in making the effort to ensure that the West Park area remains a pleasant suburb.

The Association is not against developments per se. It acts to inform residents on any matters - planning developments or anything else - which affects the character and life of the community. Visitors to the suburbs of London will probably have seen with communities where almost every other house has been converted into flats or even demolished and replaced with flats; despoiling once green suburbs, into anonymous brick and concrete areas with little community feeling - all too often rental property can mean unkempt gardens and poorly maintained buildings.

West Park is lucky to have the quality of surroundings with lots of trees and green spaces; it is important that we, as residents, do our bit to conserve these amenities. Proposals are in hand to designate part of the West Park area as a Conservation area. This builds on the work of the Headingley, Weetwood and West Park Neighbourhood Design Statement; a very thorough and useful document which has been accepted by the Council, and is used in reviewing any planning proposals. The Conservation area document is currently being drafted, with (hopefully) things progressing by the end of the year leading to the original Edwardian area of West Park being designated a conservation area.

### **WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT**



Many community associations have established websites, for instance [www.HealHeadingley.org.uk](http://www.HealHeadingley.org.uk). These can act as useful information sources and discussion forums. The Association is currently examining the feasibility and usefulness of setting up a website – so watch this “cyber-space”.

## **S.T.E.P. (Supporting The Elderly People)**

S.T.E.P. is one of the latest of the Leeds Neighbourhood Network Schemes. These originate from the Belle Isle Elderly Winter Aid established in the early 1980's. These schemes provide a range of activities that promote health, well-being and independence of their members including advice and information services, help around the home, healthy living activities and opportunities for recreation. Schemes are managed and run by older people for older people.



STEP is for people over 60 who live in the West Park, Far Headingley, Kirkstall and some of the Meanwood areas.

Wendy Moore, the coordinator is based at St Andrew's

Church, Butcher Hill, Leeds LS16 5BG (telephone 0113 2757988).

If you would like to join (membership is free), or to participate in the arranged activities, or volunteer Wendy would be pleased to hear from you. The work of volunteers include acting as escorts on day trips, befrienders, personal shoppers, helpers at events or parties, assisting with admin work. Various day trips have already taken place, and more are planned. A coffee morning every Thursday between 10 – 12 is held each week at St Andrew's church. If you would like to make an appointment for a home visit to find out how S.T.E.P. may be able to help you please give Wendy a call.

## **LAWNSWOOD SCHOOL**

It was clear from the AGM that the litter and occasional bad behaviour of the school children affects many residents, especially at lunchtimes. A further meeting involving the School and residents organised through the Community police officer PC Morris is expected to take place at the beginning of the coming new school year. The Association asked the School to submit a brief article for this Newsletter, which is printed here in its unedited form:



## **SCHOOL REPORT**

Lawnswood School is well settled in our new building and many of the curriculum opportunities it presents are really taking off. The PE department, to take just one example, struggled for years in our old building but is now able to expand courses and transform teaching and learning methods so that it is now regarded as a leading department in the subject. Many other subjects are thriving too - ICT has gone from no certification a few years ago to a position where every student will leave Lawnswood with at least one GCSE in ICT. Music is the top performing department for adding value to boys' musical education in the entire country. These are just a very few of the many successes in this thriving school. Specialist Status as a Mathematics and Computing College is adding a particular flavour to education across the school. For example, the school has staff employed full time on producing exciting interactive materials for use on electronic whiteboards and in the computer suites.

It does remain true that the new building and PFI arrangements continue to present challenges. For example, the diner is too small to allow all pupils to eat within lunchtime - which is one

reason why older pupils are allowed to leave the site to buy lunch elsewhere. This was not lack of foresight on the school's part. Instead the floor area had to be kept to a size that simply didn't allow a larger diner to be built. New schools being built today are allowed to be at least 10% bigger overall than we were.

We continue to work closely with many agencies such as First Bus and the police to help avoid problems in the community and resolve them when they do occur. First Bus, for example, recently wrote to thank the school "for all the help you have given First in recent years in helping to make your pupils' journeys to and from school a trouble free experience". Unlike many schools, we have staff at both ends of the site at the end of the day, supervising the bus stops and exits and monitoring the immediate vicinity of the school.

We have worked with the council on litter issues which we are very aware are a significant issue locally. The Litter Enforcement Officer has visited the school to make absolutely clear the responsibilities both of the school and of our PFI partners. It is fair to say that although not perfect the school site itself is considerably tidier and cleaner than it has been in the past. This obviously benefits our neighbours since there is then less litter to blow from us to them.



Although we only have extremely limited resources, particularly at lunchtime, we have frequently positioned staff in areas where litter or other problems have occurred. This is not an easy thing to do - there are issues of legal authority away from the school site. Nonetheless, the fact we have done this demonstrates our commitment to good relationships locally. We have supported this work with Citizenship and Drama education - bringing in, for example, a theatre group to present a day's theatre and workshops to Year 7 on the theme of litter and its effect on the community.

The school is extremely keen to maintain good relationships with our neighbours and regularly communicates with the neighbourhood forum. The pupils in Lawnswood School are not solely Lawnswood's young people – they are the children of our shared community and the more we can work together to help them grow up into responsible adults then the more we are all fulfilling our responsibilities. We are therefore keen to know about problems or issues as they arise. Calls that come in to the school are logged and passed to a senior member of staff for action. If it is a specific issue on a particular day then identification information can be really helpful - a distinctive bag or haircut can be enough to identify a group of pupils. If there is a more general issue then we will again do everything we can - given our limited resources - to resolve any problems.

Finally, although it is a truism, it is so very worthwhile remembering that the vast majority of this community's children behave perfectly when in Lawnswood School and when travelling to and from school. They work hard, have a happy and productive time and are a credit to the school, themselves, their parents and the community. When we are spending time on the small minority who do misbehave, it is easy to forget the positive attitudes of the vast majority of young people at Lawnswood School.

## TRAFFIC ISSUES



The Association is represented on the NorthWest Inner Area Transport Group, which is chaired by the local councillor Brian Jennings. The group includes the areas from Hyde Park, Headingley and up to West Park. It shares information on transport issues affecting local communities and on transport policies which might affect the area. It also seeks to identify local areas of need such as highway improvements and public transport issues.

Current issues of which the Association is aware, include a well used rat-run down Moor Grange View, extremely heavy traffic using West Park Drive ( the scene of a several recent accidents) and the “cut-through” roads of West Parade, Arncliffe Road and Spen Road. There is also a steady build-up of commuter parking on Kepstorn Road and Ancaster Road – commuters parking their cars and taking the buses into Leeds centre. There is also the potential for spill-over parking from the Beckett Park Campus of Leeds Metropolitan University at the Harrowby Road / Ancaster Road area of West Park.

Parking management schemes for the area north of the old filter beds will be reviewed for consideration in the financial year 2008/2009. Nothing definite is being proposed but budget provision has been allowed for any proposals.

As regards work being undertaken by Highway Services, the zebra crossing at Butcher Hill should soon be completed, and North Parade / West Park Drive are to be resurfaced in September / October.

In the future there may be a need to explore the potential for Traffic Regulation Orders to limit traffic speed, rat-run traffic and commercial vehicles on roads in the West Park area.

For the present West Park has nothing like the parking and traffic flow problems of Headingley. However, if there are any traffic matters, which concern residents, please contact the Association.



## And FINALLY ....

If there are any local matters to which you think the Association may be able to make a contribution, please contact us.

REMEMBER the eyes and ears of the community are those of the local residents, so please help to ensure that the community’s interests are best served through you and the Association.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

If you wish to contact the Residents Association:

To email the Association on any matters [westpark.residents@ntlworld.com](mailto:westpark.residents@ntlworld.com)

To join the email circulation list please send an email to [westpra@btinternet.com](mailto:westpra@btinternet.com)

Emergencies 999

Graffiti removal contact Streetscene 3984760

For S.T.E.P. please ring Mrs Wendy Moore Leeds 2757988

## MEMBERSHIP

Current membership is fast approaching 300 residents, covering the area from Ancaster Road, West Park Fields, Lawnswood School, Moor Grange View and the area adjacent to and north of the Ring Road.

If you have not renewed your subscription for this year, or have recently moved into the area, please take this opportunity to join

## **WEST PARK RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION**

### **( SPEN LANE and WEST PARK RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION )**

I / We enclose £3, being my / our subscription to the West Park Residents Association for the year 2006/7. 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 No. \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this payment slip to **The Treasurer, 26 Ring Road, West Park, LEEDS LS16 6EJ**