

DrewsNews

The Newsletter of Drews Park Village Association - Spring 2006 Issue 16

MEET THE HEAD GARDENER

A couple of months ago we caught up with the man who was Head Gardener at the old Roundway Hospital, now Drews Park. He reminisced about the days when the orchard produced twenty tonnes of apples annually - 'there was more than enough for the hospital' said Mike Underwood, now retired and living in Devizes. We didn't mind if local people helped themselves (providing they didn't strip the trees!) They used to be planted in alternate rows



of Bramleys and Grenadiers'. What we now know as the meadow was more of a lawn, and the cricket pitch had a turf as smooth as a pool table. In the hospital's heyday there were up to eight gardeners keeping things in order, growing produce for the kitchen and bringing on new flowering plants and shrubs in their greenhouses. Some still exist in the green space near the Pans Lane entrance.

DEAR RESIDENTS OF DREWS PARK



Well, more than the three months have gone past since our Christmas issue and here we are officially in spring according to the Met Office, but we do have the first signs of real spring with snowdrops in the woods and crocuses appearing in many pots about the park. The woodpeckers in the woods are also very busy by the sound they are making and every morning is welcomed by a burst of birdsong.

🍏 Touching on a few items following a meeting we held with our Managing Agents, Sarsen Housing Association, on the 14th February, 2006 our service charge has been agreed at £290 for a single unit, which when added to the Sinking Fund and Ground Rent amounts to £465 per unit which is an increase of only 2.2% from 2005. Within that figure the gardening budget has been agreed with more colour to be added, especially to Thurnham Court.

🍏 As far as creating a safe environment in Drews Park is concerned, you will notice that additional rumble strips to reduce speed have been installed and after consultation with residents and Sarsen, a further two sets of strips will be laid between Speer Court and Thomas Wyatt Road on the west side of Drews Park. A safety sign has also been installed on the approach to Bowes Court which will hopefully slow down traffic on the potentially dangerous bend there.

🍏 Some repair work to gutters has been carried out but general checking and clearance of gutters has yet to be completed with access from Sarsen's own cherry-picker. We have had some success in removing abandoned cars but would appreciate continued vigilance by all residents in this respect.

🍏 Painting of existing railings is planned as part of the general painting programme which will recommence very shortly, subject only to the weather, and additional railings to entrance steps (funded from the sinking fund) will be installed where required for Health & Safety purposes.

🍏 The Committee is talking to Sarsen about how we adapt Kennet's new green recycling plans that are based on a fortnightly collection. *See article on page 5*

🍏 Finally, our democratic consultation on the Drews Park signage has been completed and the detail are given separately on page 3.

May I take this opportunity of wishing all residents a Happy Easter and a well earned break.

Peter Benns
Chairman DPVA



RESULT OF THE DREWS PARK NAME SIGN VOTE



About half of the permanent residents voted and the majority were for the metal signs at £1,031 each including fitting. A group of members of the association will meet soon to find the best

placement for the signs at both entrances. We hope they will be erected in the next few months. Many people we have spoken to believe we have already achieved an identity as our development, with its listed building and parkland setting, is so different from the usual housing estate. The signs, we hope, will further define our address and continue to provide what the planners call 'a sense of place'.

* * * * *

NEIL GERAGHTY

Painting & Decorating
Apprenticeship served
Ex Rendalls
20 Years Experience
FREE Estimates

2 Thurnham Court
Thomas Wyatt road
Devizes Wiltshire
SN10 5FL
Tel: 01380 729382

Email: neil.geraghty@btinternet.com

Long term residents will know that there was an upgrade of the aerial service carried out last Spring



What was the purpose of the upgrade?

Many residents had problems with the reception of Freeview, and those with SKY satellite services found they could not get the full range of programmes. Further-more, the supply was not enabled for digital changeover which is due to happen in a few years.

Who did this affect?

Most of Cooke Court, 50% of Wyatt Court and 25% of Thurnham Court.

Has the work been completed?

Telstar's wiring has been completed but there are still a few houses whose occupants have not been available, wanted to ask their landlords, or who did not feel it was necessary for them.

Is it necessary to connect these last few properties?

Yes. While you may get reception now, it only needs the wiring to develop a fault for your reception to be interrupted. It cannot be repaired as (in their wisdom) the original contractor's had the wiring put into the attics, then didn't provide access to the wiring with a hatch into the roof space.

What will happen if one of the houses due for the upgrade loses reception?

The new wire (which you will see outside your house (or if in Thurnham, outside the back window) will have to be attached for you to get a picture. This will take a few minutes, but you would have to wait for a visit from Telstar which would have to take its turn in their work schedule.

Why is it important for all the last houses to be connected?

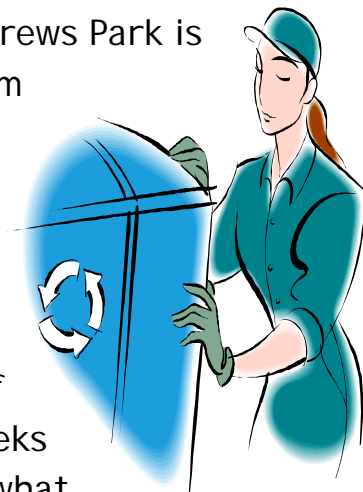
Telstar wants to switch off the wiring that goes through the attics of all the houses affected.

What do I do?

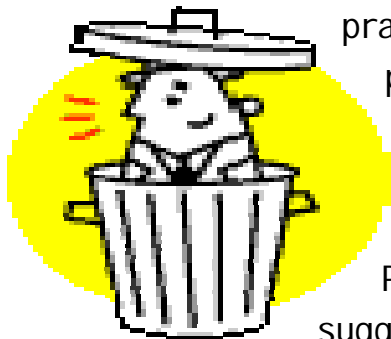
Contact Paul Crovella and arrange for a visit - 01380 735435.

It appears that our bins will only be emptied fortnightly with effect from July this year. Arrangements are not yet clear as far as Drews Park is concerned as we already have a different arrangement from other households in the area, but it seems that there will be alternate collections of refuse and paper. We are awaiting full details but we believe we are to be spared a wheelie bin outside every front door.

There is a suggestion that we will be provided with extra bins for the recyclable rubbish but it remains to be seen if there will be room in the bin stores. Over the next few weeks we will liaise with Aster Property Management to find out what the arrangements will be. Kitchen waste in summer will need to be carefully bagged and bins closed to avoid animals attacking the bags and to try to keep the smell to a minimum. If anyone sees any rodents around when the new regime starts please let a member of the committee know about it.



The new system, according to Kennet Environmental Services, is part of 'best practice' carried out by other district councils, and while people we have spoken to have their doubts as to whether this will progress smoothly, it's worth giving it a try, even if just to keep our council taxes as low as possible.



Please pass any comments or problems on to us, or suggestions you may have to make this work.

* * * * *



Need to brush up on your Maths?

Private tuition from Lisa Mather.

KS2-GCSE. Phone 0777 909 3036 - or email lisamather@hotmail.com

We hope to bring you an update on the bats in the next issue!

THE PROBLEM OF PIETY

A sermon on a molehill!

Michael Murphy asks lots of questions and attempts to answer them for himself.....

A country that loses its sense of humour is in grave danger of losing its freedom, its sanity and ultimately its humanity. It is not so long ago that a chance joke at a Moscow bus stop could have you frozen in Siberia for thirty years. And the way it looks now, it will not be long before the wise seek to avoid bus stops altogether in this land, which once vaunted its freedoms.



Does it matter that Norwich City Council have cut down all the chestnut trees to prevent conkers dropping on the citizens?

Does it matter that the Welsh authorities have clamped down on school children kissing in amateur dramatics at school?

Does it matter that A Tesco label says:
Sterilised Pasteurised Homogenised Milk – Warning:
CONTAINS MILK?

Does it matter that there has not been a watchable programme on television this past ten years? Or a memorable speech in Parliament?

Does it matter that 99% of schoolchildren are geniuses and that nobody can lose a race any more?

Does it matter that all religions have equal verity and that their Gods miraculously dead heat for acceptability?

Does it matter that you have to produce your Gas Bill when attending Buckingham Palace to collect your knighthood?

Does it matter if children have been taught to be terrified of all strangers?

Does it matter if your life is polluted by the moronic standards of civilisation epitomised by 'callcentredom'?

I tell you it does matter, for the missionaries of modern pieties relish the thought that everything in the world can ultimately be reduced to the tyrannies of Guantanamo Bay and the glutinous treacle of blind bureaucratic fundamentalism.

Boy, that was fun writing this! But they will be reading it down at the nanny state manufacturing facility and planning to get their own back:

PLEASE KEEP THIS LITTER BIN CLEAN & TIDY

And so on until we don't notice any more that we have lost our lives to the sick piety of the new missionaries, who believe that brute stupidity is the new ideal and that the mentality of the mob is the highest form of civilisation.

I did not think, forty years ago, that Private Eye would turn out to be the stalwart defender of our sanity that it is now. But watch out, it can easily be sued to death. For our sense of humour is no laughing matter any more. We can no longer laugh it all off.
michaelmurphy@moleend.vispa.com

* * * * *

Book Club News

As previously published in our Last issue the recent books have been I shiguro's *Never let me go* in February and Banville's *The Sea* in March. This April we will be reading the P.D.James' best seller *The Lighthouse* and the following are the books for subsequent months:

May	David Lodge's <i>Thinks</i>
June	Niall Williams' <i>Four Letters of Love</i>
July	William Maxwell <i>They Came Like Swallows</i>
August	Amitav Ghosh's <i>The Glass Palace</i>
September	Clare Tomalin's <i>Samuel Pepys - The Unequalled Self</i>

Please note, we now have a small Cinema Group that visits either Devizes or Swindon (Shaw Ridge) to see films, usually for the afternoon performances.
Contact committee members for details.

Action notes of a Meeting at Sarsen on 14th February 2006

Attended by Paul Crovella, Peter Bennis, Clive Rowland and Lisa Penington
(Updated in April)



Hatching at Bowes Court To start by end February.
Completed

Speed sign (10 mph) at entrance to site to be removed, and 20mph signs on the road to be elongated.

Rumble Strips Two sets of strips to rear of site to be installed just before Clock Tower (starting

from the Elliot Court end), and another at the approach to Bowes Court. Others installed when trial complete if required. Existing strips to be reinforced by end February. *(Not yet done)*

New Sign for pedestrians on the approach to Cooke/Bowes installed.

Thurnham Court Levelling Still needs further checking after rain. (To be redone at no cost to residents as it was not successful). Lines to be marked when we are sure work is satisfactory.

Gutters Repairs carried out.

Clearing of Gutters As of end March general clearing has not been done.

Cars Abandoned cars have been removed. Registration number of remaining untaxed car emailed to PC.

Bin Stores Specification has been passed to PC. Slats to continue to be painted but sills to be rubbed down and stained. Some repairs have taken place.

Handrails To be installed shortly.

Rail Painting Not necessary to wait for handrails to be installed - when Darren is available this can progress. He is already contracted to paint exterior wall at Wyatt and some other items.

Telstar. It was agreed that this is the year when we should move to another provider. LP has arranged for some of the last wires to be installed and there are a few more that need to be completed before the present loft wiring can be shut off. This is urgent as if residents lose their signal the attic wiring cannot be accessed and people would have to wait for the new wires to be fitted.

Cont'd

Street Lamps LP to notify PC of 2 lamps out approaching Bowes Court. (4 & 6 – now repaired)

Landscaping Nora Ingleby's plan for work this year at £1,200 agreed. More colour to Thurnham the main project as no other requests received.

Gardeners PB to check the quotes for other work apart from cutting, but it is confirmed we only pay for work actually done, not which quoted for.

Drews Park Name Sign It was agreed these will be installed and paid for out of sinking fund. Metal signs in two positions to be agreed by committee at site meeting.

LP to pass contact details to PC.

Damaged kerbs etc. A walk around to be done later in the spring to assess and minor works needed on site.

Charges for 2006/7 The charges were checked and it seems the increase can be kept at about 10 per house (£5 per halfyear). PC to complete the figures and send to PB and LP.

No date was fixed for a further meeting at this point

Committee members – contact numbers

Peter Bennis Chairman 18, Bowes Court

739419 pjb.midas@virgin.net

Lisa Penington Vice Chair 6 Wyatt Court

739588 lisa@drewspark.co.uk

Gail Mumford Treasurer 19 Bowes Court

736415 Mumford@burbage24.fsnet.co.uk

Gail Nugent Member 9 Wyatt Court

730118 gailofarabia@yahoo.co.uk

Neil Geraghty Member 2 Thurnham Court

729382 neil.geraghty@btinternet.com

Clive Rowland (*recently appointed*) Member 8 Wyatt Court

722526 chrisrow@tesco.net

Co-opted Members

Nora Ingleby Gardens 7 Wyatt Court

723316 nora@drewspark.co.uk

Ralph Meyer Webmaster

Webmaster@drewspark.co.uk

If you are a paid up member of the Residents' Association and didn't get a colour front page copy of Drews News, let us know and we'll get one to you

Report of the Independent Auditors to the Residents of Drews Park

*Sarsen (Aster Property Management) has asked us to
provide this report in this issue of Drews News.*

<u>Income:</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2004</u>
Service charges receivable	39,045	37,412
Insurance	17,036	17,378
	<u>56,081</u>	<u>54,790</u>
<u>Expenditure:</u>		
Insurance	<u>17,130</u>	<u>17,473</u>
Upkeep of common areas	-	-
Grass Cutting	-	66
Water	143	127
Electricity	1,756	851
	<u>1,899</u>	<u>1,044</u>
<u>Maintenance:</u>		
Groundsman	15,055	15,353
Repairs	12,694	11,998
	<u>27,749</u>	<u>27,351</u>
<u>Sundry costs:</u>		
Audit fee	367	353
Management charge	6,600	6,600
	<u>6,967</u>	<u>8,340</u>
Total expenditure	<u>53,745</u>	<u>54,208</u>
<u>Surplus for year</u>	<u>2,336</u>	<u>582</u>
<u>Accruals</u>		
Audit fee		£367
Total		<u>£367</u>
<u>Sinking Fund</u>		
Balance as at March 2004		£57,506
Interest		1,292
Expenditure		(8,983)
Contribution		£13,150
Balance as at March 2005		<u>£62,965</u>

NOTICE BOARD

Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator

We are still lacking a Co-ordinator for our Neighbourhood watch members. Each Court has a representative, We are still looking for someone to look after 1-22 Thurnham, Cooke and Chapel. It's not particularly onerous; just look out for new residents and put a Welcome Pack through their door. As for the Co-ordinator, we need someone who is computer literate, able to communicate electronically with the local Watch organization, and who will send warnings and general information from time to time. Phone any committee member to sign on!

(May also lead to 10% contents insurance reduction)

Area Co-ordinator - Vacant

COURT	NO	REPRESENTATIVE	PHONE
Bowes	18	Peter Bennis	739419
Burnham	6	Sue Chick	724774
Chapel	5	<i>Representative required</i>	
Clock Tower	5	Christine O'Sullivan	725588
Cooke	5	<i>Representative required</i>	
Elliot	11	Edward Lockwood	730709
Speer	5	Alan Shaw	730284
Thurnham (1-22)	16	<i>Representative required</i>	
Thurnham (23-41)	30	J Burt-Andrews Fax only	727418
Wyatt	7	Gordon Ingleby	723316

* * * * *

IDENTITY THEFT - TAKE CARE!

New residents may not know that we have seen people in the early hours of the morning, going through the bin stores. We have no doubt that they are looking for un-shredded mail, hoping to find a bank statement, a credit card bill or just your full name and address. All these things if they are not carefully disposed of can lead to identity theft - so take note and dispose of your papers safely!

THEFT FROM CARS

There have been a number of reports of theft from cars parked in Drews Park the last couple of months. If you have an alarm, do use it, otherwise put valuables out of sight if possible.

* * * * *

THEATRE NEWS with Mary Stevens



On 2nd March 2006 theatre goers saw *Equus*, the Peter Shaffer play which was filmed by Sidney Lumet in 1977 with Richard Burton and was performed in on the stage in 1973 and ran for 1000 performances.

This was possibly one of the very best productions we have seen (and many have been excellent) at the

Wharf, beautifully acted by all the cast and with outstanding performances from the young man who played Alan Strang and also by the actor who played Martin Dysart.

We are booked for 6th April's performance of *Billy Liar* and on 11th May we were due to see *Rebecca* but this has been cancelled as it is being performed at that time by a professional company. It will be replaced by an Agatha Christie play "*The Hollow*". A new play will premiere at the Wharf in July, called "*A Battle of no Importance*" about Roundway Down. Our visit will be on Thursday 13th July.



* * * * *

As those who have access to the Drews Park Web site will know, the allotment gardens in Green Lane will be producing fresh organic fruit and vegetables this spring.

Large boxes of vegetables will be available for £10 and smaller boxes for £5.

Alternatively, you can phone Mrs Lee Ruddle on 01380 724 833 to find out what is available, then go and pick your own!