



PRARA NEWSLETTER

Volume No. Three

Issue No. 12

April 2004

AGM

The **Annual General Meeting of PRARA** will be held on **Monday 7 June 2004 at 6.30 pm at The Ashville Surgery, Swan House, Parsons Green Lane**, (between nos 24 & 22, just beyond the tube station).

Local Councillors **Nick Botterill** (Parsons Green & Walham Ward) and **Brendan Bird** (Sands End Ward) will attend and answer questions from members. It would be helpful if you could send your questions in advance by email, phone or post to the Hon. Sec. Ann Rosenberg. If leaving a message on the answer machine, please leave your name and street together with your question. Getting *both* local councillors to one of our meetings is a coup as they are usually busy, so please put the date in your diary and attend if at all possible. Refreshments will be served at a very low cost, (£1 for wine; 50p fruit juice), and there will be the opportunity to meet other PRARA members.

NEW CO-ORDINATOR NEEDED

After extending her term of office at the Standing Committee's request, PRARA's founder, Patricia Hicks, has finally had to step down as she can no longer continue in the role of Coordinator, due to her husband's recent ill health.

Her unstinting hard work, commitment and indomitable leadership has placed PRARA in an excellent position to continue its work looking after the interests of its members. We would like to thank Patricia for all she has done over the past two years, (although she started campaigning on her own for the installation of the bollard the previous year), and we all wish her and Roly well

We now need a new Coordinator. The role requires a degree of commitment and leadership but is fully and actively supported by members of the Standing Committee, who each have a specific portfolio, as well as other members with specialist skills.

All PRARA members are eligible to stand, so if you are interested, or know someone who would be, or want to know more, please contact Hon. Sec. Ann Rosenberg for more information before 19 April when the Standing Committee is holding a special meeting to discuss the matter.

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OPEN MEETING

PRARA'S first open meeting this year took place on Monday March 29 at the Ashville Surgery, Parsons Green Lane, which was kindly made available by PRARA member Dr Stephen Aras. It was chaired for the last time by Patricia Hicks, and was attended by 25 members and 3 new members who responded to the flyer distributed to residents in the PRARA area.

Patricia Hicks welcomed all those present, and introduced the two guests, **PC Nick Jackson**, of the newly formed Fulham Problem Solving Team and **Mr. Phil Nicholls**, currently the Deputy Borough Engineer. He will become Head of Highways and Engineering, Hammersmith & Fulham Council, at the end of April.

Patricia emphasized PRARA's non-political status and briefly outlined PRARA's achievements in the two years since it was formed, originally to deal with the increase of heavy traffic using Peterborough Road as a rat-run. The installation of the first rising bollard in London was the result, which has provided endless interest in its erratic performance since. Other achievements are the establishment of a Neighbourhood Watch, the tidying-up and regular maintenance of our neglected South Park, and the planting of a tree last November by PRARA to commemorate the Park's centenary in May this year. PRARA is currently involved in curbing the use of Daisy Lane by heavy vehicles.

POLICE MATTERS

PC Nick Jackson said that in Fulham there were four teams of 30 police officers, so they could draw on a pool of 120 police officers for street patrol. He also explained the new arrangements which replace the community police function in the borough. A new Problem Solving Team has been established from 1 March. This is headed by Inspector Julia Jaeger and a Sergeant, (no name given as he is seconded away until May), both of whom are permanent Problem Solving Team members. The team currently comprises six PCs: two who are permanently posted to the team and four who are regularly replaced with new postings every three months. There should be in total eight officers; four permanent and four temporary. Also included are two Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). There is only one PCSO at present, but a second one is due to join at the end of the month.

The pros and cons of this new arrangement are that they will be able to respond more quickly to incidents, but as half the personnel will change regularly, there won't be as close a relationship between all the individual policemen in the Problem Solving Team and the community. As Parsons Green and Walham Ward has been identified as having a greater need, it will be having one of the new style community Teams in June/July.

It emerged from the questions put to PC Jackson, that the gathering of youths in the evening, racing noisy scooters in Peterborough and Clancarty Roads, was proving to be a nuisance to residents as well as being a potential danger to pedestrians, parked cars and the youths themselves. PC Jackson explained that this was a problem in the borough as a whole, as it was almost impossible for the police to gather evidence for a prosecution as the youths would disperse at the sight of a uniform. The wearing of helmets and swapping of scooters meant that even having a registration number was no guarantee of apprehending the

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miscreants. This, combined with the lack of power of the courts to effectively punish the youths, meant that it was difficult to contain the problem. The police are now no longer allowed to give chase, owing to a previous incident involving a police car and a scooter rider which resulted in a serious accident.

The police have new powers to confiscate bikes and destroy them, but as they are likely to be stolen in the first place, this may not be the most effective deterrent.

- CRIME UPDATE AND PARSONS GREEN WARNING

PC Jackson also informed members that the Eel Brook Common crime black spot has now spread to include Parsons Green. He advised anyone using the tube station after dark to walk along the road where the street lighting was better, and not across the green where the lighting was poor. However although the crime statistics for the PRARA area were very low, car theft and burglary were on the increase and with the coming of warm weather, he cautioned everyone to make sure doors and windows were securely locked when the house was unoccupied. Also if householders were going to be absent for any length of time, neighbours should be alerted and asked to keep an eye on the property. He also advised against using a mobile phone in the street if feeling uneasy about others nearby - there is more of a likelihood of an attack. Also the increasing incidence of violent robbery of people carrying laptops means that the use of laptop bags is inadvisable, as they are a giveaway.

He advised all members to dial 999 if they are concerned by any incidents, especially the scooter racing because of the potential dangers to all concerned. He also gave the following number for the Problem Solving Team office: **020 8246 2909**. Keep this number by your phone and if you have a mobile phone, please programme this number into it as it could prove useful when walking in the local streets.

- OTHER MATTERS

Other matters raised by PRARA members included the congestion caused by the fans of Chelsea Football Club on match days; cyclists using pavements rather than the road; and the disruption in the streets caused by pupils of Hurlingham & Chelsea School leaving in the early afternoon.

PC Jackson said that the problems regarding football fans on match days is a fact of life in the borough and it will soon be worse when Fulham Football Club returns to Craven Cottage later in the year. Cyclists riding on the pavement are breaking the law and if caught, end up in court, but are usually let off with a reprimand. Regarding the unruly behaviour in the streets of pupils of Hurlingham & Chelsea school, residents should be aware that they begin school very early in the morning, hence the early end to the school day. There is nothing to be done about that, but if there are problems concerning the pupils, residents are advised to call the police. On the positive side however, Fulham does not have the drug problem that affects other parts of the borough, but does suffer from the fact that it is surrounded by problem areas, and anti-social problems have a tendency to spread.

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BOROUGH COUNCIL INFORMATION UPDATE

Mr. Phil Nicholls explained his new role of Head of Highways and Engineering for Hammersmith & Fulham Council, a post which reflected the new structure of Highways and Engineering services. He is responsible for all roads in the borough except the A4 and Westway. This means making sure that footways are safe and clean; that road and information signs are serviceable; trees in streets are safe; as well as all road works involving the utility companies. He is not personally responsible for residents' specific concerns or complaints, but will refer them to the appropriate person for action.

Once the Traffic Management Bill becomes law later this year, his department will become responsible for managing road works, and moving traffic offences.

The questions from Clancarty Road members related to fly-tipping, (the council try to identify the offenders and prosecute them if caught); and the burning of plastic rubbish bins, (replacing them with metal ones are under consideration); commercial heavy traffic, (consideration will be given to erection of a barrier).

One member suggested that if the road humps were made wider it may deter the scooter racing youths. It was explained that the road humps in Peterborough Road have to remain as they are, because they are of the optimum size to ensure smooth transit of emergency vehicles, particularly ambulances, and making them any bigger and wider will not deter the scooter gangs.

Residents' parking was also a concern to PRARA members, especially as the residents' bays in Peterborough Road and surrounding area are occupied by football fans during match days. The council is considering imposing additional parking restriction times in zones Q & R for an experimental period, similar those restrictions currently operating in zones F & S which are near the football ground.

The problems with the rising bollard which functions erratically came up for discussion. There is a suspicion that someone is illegally lowering the bollard, having obtained a key which is meant for use by the emergency services only.

Mr. Nicholls said that it is possible they will consider the use of CCTV cameras to catch anyone responsible for the illegal use of the key.

PROPOSED CONGESTION CHARGE IN KENSINGTON & CHELSEA

Ann Rosenberg and Anthony Williams attended the West London Residents' Association meeting in Fulham Town Hall regarding the proposed extension of the congestion charge to Kensington & Chelsea. Notes of the meeting taken by Anthony Williams are attached to this newsletter.

In response to a letter from Anthony Williams, the Leader of Hammersmith & Fulham Council, Andrew Slaughter, has stated that the council will be guided primarily by the views of residents on the merits of extending the charging zone. If the extension does go ahead, they will demand that the views of the residents most affected are considered in designating the boundaries and that traffic must be given a route round the zone which does not impact

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on Hammersmith & Fulham's streets. From what was written in his letter, it appears that Councilor Slaughter thinks that there may be some benefits in extending the central London scheme but they appear marginal and it may be that the disruption caused by the extension outweighs any benefit.

Anthony Williams also wrote to Ian Coleman, MP for Hammersmith & Fulham. The reply he received indicated that Ian Coleman supports the aims and principles of congestion charging but believes that more information is needed before he can make a judgement on whether the benefits of the proposed extension outweigh the costs. However he says that he wants to ensure that his constituents do not suffer from any disadvantage as a result of such an extension and will be working closely with the Council to decide on an appropriate response to the Mayor. (Anthony Williams has a watching brief on this and will report back to PRARA members).

If the scheme does go ahead Ian Coleman says he would favour the boundary being the proposed Earls Court one-way system rather than the West London railway line suggested by Kensington & Chelsea, as the latter would lead to more traffic using roads in Hammersmith & Fulham. He also supports the principle of residents of the part of Hammersmith & Fulham to the east of the proposed boundary being able to choose whether they are in the zone or not.

DAISY LANE

Since the report in Newsletter 11 (March 2004) on the traffic problems experienced by residents of Daisy Lane, which has been taken up by Guy Nicolson, (Daisy Lane representative), there has been no official response from the Council. However in response to a phone call to the Traffic Group office, PRARA learns that moves are afoot to install a bollards on the walkways at the junction of Daisy Lane and Broomhouse Lane to prevent cars damaging the grass verges. The petition to prevent the use of Daisy Lane as a short cut by commercial traffic continues.

FULHAM SOCIETY

The Fulham Society has a programme of lively events planned from 15-24 May. This year it is celebrating some important birthdays: 1,400 years of the Diocese of London, 1,300 years of the Manor of Fulham, (the Bishops of London were Lords of the Manor of Fulham from 704 to 1869), as well as the centenary of South Park, (17 May), and the 50th anniversary of the development of Hurlingham Park. Many of the activities will be centered around All Saints' Parish Church, Fulham Palace and the local parks. Details of all the event including visits to local artists' studios are in their booklet available from the Hon. Sec. Tel: 020 7736 0717, the local library and local shops. Their website is www.fulhamsociety.org.

Founded in 1971, the Fulham Society's aim is to keep Fulham as an agreeable place to live and work both now and in the future, and improve its amenities. The Society is non-political, a registered charity and affiliated to the Civic Trust.

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NEW MEMBERS.

We are always trying to increase our membership, especially in Settrington Road - the newest street in our membership area. More members give PRARA the weight needed to oppose unfavourable plans, deal with local traffic & parking problems, put forward ideas and suggestions to improve the quality of life in our part of the Borough, and strengthen Neighbourhood Watch. Our membership tends to increase when problems arise, but we would like residents to join us as a matter of course, so existing members are asked to recruit neighbours if they can.

PRARA FINANCES

When PRARA was first formed two years ago, we asked for a voluntary donation of £1 from members. The money funded the cost of paper, printing, postage and phone calls (the 4 Ps).

As our newsletter grew, so did the costs and an Hon. Treasurer was appointed last year. We are now asking for a voluntary annual donation of up to £5 from members.

We decided that the date of the AGM will mark the start of PRARA's financial year. So this is a gentle reminder that Hon. Treasurer Chrissy Stenning will be delighted to receive the 2004/05 donations from existing members. New members - thank you for your donations already received. She will be getting in touch with the absent minded in due course. *Please give your donations in cash as PRARA has no bank account.*

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NOTES TAKEN BY ANTHONY WILLIAMS

AT THE KENSINGTON & CHELSEA MEETING IN FULHAM TOWN HALL - 9 MARCH 2004

Proposed congestion charge extension

1. The Mayor of London is currently undertaking a public consultation exercise - which he is legally required to do - seeking views on extending the central London congestion charging area to the west and encompassing most but not all of the Borough of Kensington & Chelsea.
2. The questionnaire is totally biased and unobjective and clearly designed to deliver support for the proposed extension. (I have submitted my own response and registered my protest and objections.)
3. The questionnaire has been delivered to buildings all over London and not just in those areas most likely to be affected.
4. The covering letter has been addressed to the Occupier and only one copy has been sent to each building - whether this is a single household or a block of flats. This means that many people have not received a copy of the booklet and questionnaire.
5. Kensington & Chelsea Council are formally objecting to the extension.
6. Hammersmith & Fulham Council (at the date of this note) has not reached a decision.
7. An organisation called the West London Residents Association (WLRA) is martialling opposition to the extension in the Royal Borough and in the surrounding areas which would be affected. They have arranged public meetings - Fulham Town Hall on Monday, 8th march; Hammersmith Town Hall on 22nd March and Battersea Town Hall on 5th April.
8. Speakers at the Fulham meeting included Steve Norris and Simon Hughes - who are both Mayoral candidates and partly used the meeting to canvas support - and two K&C ladies who argued strongly against because of the impact it would have on low paid workers and craftsmen and tradesmen who live in outer London but work in or around the centre.
9. One of the ladies has a shop in Walton Street where business has dropped by 30% because out of town customers no longer visit because of uncertainty and confusion over the existing congestion charge zone and its operation.
10. Figures were quoted - see leaflets - which made the case against the extension and Steve Norris (who spoke extremely well and from a position of knowledge) claimed that Transport for London's own figures showed the extension would not be cash generative and would not cover its costs for 10 years.
11. Ken Livingstone and Ian Coleman MP were both invited to speak at the meeting but did not attend.
12. Individual action requested by the Chairman of the WLRA was to tell people about the questionnaire, encourage them to submit it, and write letters of objection to Ken Livingstone, the Leader of Hammersmith & Fulham Council and Ian Coleman. The deadline for comments is Friday, 23rd April.
13. Ann has copies of the handout with address details.
14. I have written to the Chairman asking for information about the WLRA.

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