



# Mottingham Residents' Association Newsletter – Autumn 2020 Special Covid-ition

Under normal circumstances, this is intended as a means of distributing information and matters of interest to members. However, we have not yet established the new normal. As usual, much of our information distribution is via the website ([www.yourMRA.org](http://www.yourMRA.org)) but we acknowledge that a number of us may not have computer access. In view of the current circumstances this newsletter is being distributed to all residences covered by the MRA, and not only to those who have paid a membership fee.

**2020 AGM OF THE MRA** – Scheduled for Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2020 had to be cancelled due to the Covid Lockdown.

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

*The principal issues faced by the MRA during 2019/20 were the threat and subsequent closure of Dorset Road School and the ongoing planning matter of The Porcupine. Sadly, Dorset Road School has now been closed permanently by The Spring Partnership Trust resulting in the loss of a much loved and excellent school. The Porcupine planning application rumbles on and we now expect a decision at a LBB Development Control Committee on 20<sup>th</sup> October. This remains hugely opposed by the local community with objections submitted to LBB outweighing support by 10 to 1, with continuing concerns about road traffic volumes and safety.*

*Your Executive has continued to meet by virtual meetings and my thanks go to all the Executive for their continued support and contribution along with all our local Councillors.*

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Audited accounts to 31/3/20 show that this year's income (£2,172) mainly from subscriptions covers expenditure (£1,439). Given the current Covid situation our Fund position allows the Treasurer to recommend waiver of the subscriptions for the current year 2020/21. However the ongoing slight decline in membership prompts the Treasurer and Executive Committee to recommend an increase of subscription from £2.50 to £3 for 2021/22. The waiver and increase would normally be voted on at the AGM but as this cannot happen at the moment, we would be glad to hear the views of members. These views may be expressed in response to the e-mail from the membership secretary. As Members often find they don't have cash available, the use of an alternative payment method is also being investigated.

## **CURRENT OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (approved from 2019 AGM)**

**Chairman & Treasurer**

**Laurie Bell**

**Deputy Chairman & Membership Sec.** **Richard Mainwaring-Burton**

**Secretary**

**Robert Blanks**

**Auditor**

**Bernie Hawes**

**Committee Members :**

**Sally Bettesworth**

**Carol Borhani Jane Cornish**

MRA Members and residents are always welcome to attend Committee meetings by prior arrangement with the Secretary.

## **Liz Keable – Retirement**

After 16 years of diligent service to the MRA, Liz Keable has decided to retire from the Committee. During this time, she has served in every capacity apart from treasurer, and during her time as Chair, she seemed to be covering several posts simultaneously. We all owe her a huge vote of thanks for her unstinting support to the MRA and the Community at large, noting her particular efforts and achievements in support of Dorset Rd School and the Library when they were under threat, and her contributions to the ACV application for

the Porcupine site. Her knowledge and understanding of planning and education issues have been invaluable, not only to the MRA, but also to many individual residents who have sought her advice or opinion. **LB**

### ***MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT***

We do not have a complete or up-to-date list of member's e-mail addresses. We will send an e-circular to the e-mails we have on 23<sup>rd</sup> October. If you do not receive an e-mail by 31<sup>st</sup> October, please e-mail [membsec@yourmra.org](mailto:membsec@yourmra.org) to be registered but check your junk mail folder first and identify the MRA as a secure sender to avoid messages being diverted there in the future. If we have up-to-date e-mail addresses, we are able to send invitations to meetings and communicate electronically.

We are also in need of some volunteers to act as Road representatives for a few areas. The duties are not onerous and involve distribution of papers and newsletters two or three times (?) a year and Collection of member's details and subscriptions which offers a great chance to meet and greet your community.

Beaconsfield Road and parts of Mottingham Road need representatives, but we are also keen to lighten the load of some existing reps. **RM-B**

### **Rebecca Young (1955-2019)**

It is with great sadness that we report the loss of Rebecca who has died of cancer at the age of 64 years. Rebecca lived in the centre of Mottingham for many years and brought up her family here.

She enjoyed a successful career in Children's Services, taking a leading role in the London Borough of Southwark. Rebecca was totally committed to the welfare and education of young people. Following her retirement, Rebecca became a familiar figure in the village walking her small dog Barney, several times each day; latterly at a pace respectful of Barney's age and ability. She was always friendly, caring and happy to help anyone.

Rebecca joined the MRA Executive in 2015. She made a valuable contribution to activities, in particular,

education debates. She was an effective Treasurer of the Mottingham Festive Lights Committee for a short period until her death. Many Mottingham Road residents may also remember her as a diligent collector of MRA subscriptions.

Everyone on the MRA Executive appreciated Rebecca's positive, can-do attitude and willingness to lend a hand. She is very much missed by us all.

**Liz Keable**

### **Dorset Road School**

Following permanent closure of the school, the site is inevitably deteriorating. It is understood that formal amalgamation of Dorset Rd pupils into Castlecombe is under consideration by the Regional Schools Commissioner and Head Teachers Board. The site will revert to Bromley Council who have indicated that the proceeds of any sale will most likely be passed to the Academy Trust although LBB will be free to use the site or the proceeds of sale as they please. Concern has been raised as to what might happen to the site and the MRA have requested that we have some input into any decisions.

**LB**

### **Porcupine Update**

The saga drags on into its 8<sup>th</sup> year. Currently vacant and boarded up behind hoardings along the frontage to Mottingham Road the Porcupine Inn closed in March 2013 and the site was acquired by Lidl for £1.1 m (plus vat), without being put on the open market. Since then, Lidl have been attempting to obtain planning permission to demolish the Porcupine and build one of their "shed" design supermarkets. Their first attempt was refused by Bromley Council on 20 February 2014, and Lidl's appeal was dismissed by the Government Planning Inspectorate on 16 December 2014. Lidl resubmitted plans, earlier this year, and Bromley's Development Control Committee were not satisfied in aspects regarding access to the site by Lidl's 40 tonne articulated vehicles. The DCC agreed that an independent report be commissioned to address this. Lidl are proposing that the footway outside the library opposite the Porcupine is reduced in size by the removal of a

large crescent shaped portion of the footway (possibly in breach of current Covid guidelines). The published Glanville Consultants report contains much information obtained from Lidl's own agents, thus invalidating its "independent" nature. In addition, Glanville (with the agreement of the Planning Department) conducted traffic surveys on Mottingham Road in the middle of the COVID19 lockdown, when there was hardly any traffic on the road!

There have been many comments lodged on the Bromley Planning website. Of those lodged since 1<sup>st</sup> August there have been 81 objections, with 9 expressions of support for Lidl's proposals. We hope that the Development Control Committee, which is due to consider the application on 20<sup>th</sup> October, will recognise this, and finally throw out Lidl's unpopular proposal. We have been advised that there is a purchaser waiting in the side-lines who wishes to develop the site for mixed housing, and possibly a micro pub (there is a local pub operator interested in managing this). Do look at the objections on the Bromley Council website, there are some well thought out objections there.

**Ted Rowlands**

(Links to applications and comments via MRA website – <http://www.yourmra.org/the-porcupine/> ed)

### **West Hallowes**

Information obtained from Greenwich Council reveals that the cost of installation of the 20-mph speed restriction and humps in West Hallowes totalled some £45000 for 10 humps. Cllr Tester agrees that they seem to be proving totally ineffective and is trying to persuade RGB Council to revisit the issue. The West Park pavement now continues unchanged across the road junction at the south entrance to West Hallowes. We have expressed severe safety concerns for partially sighted pedestrians with no tactile surface to indicate the crossing. We have been informed by the traffic department that pedestrians have priority on the 'designated footway' at this junction according to rule 170 of the Highway code, but no officially prescribed signage exists for such a junction. Many satnav devices seem to prefer West Hallowes to West Park. Cllr Tester has observed the situation and agrees that the resolution has to be more than a few extra bollards.

### **Village Sign (Court Road Junction)**

We are arranging for the repair and reinstatement of the sign which fell down in a gale, fortunately without causing injury or worse.



### **War Memorial**

We are grateful to Bromley council for the cleaning and road repairs. National and Local guidance dictates that we are not able to hold the usual Remembrance Service on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> November.

### ***FESTIVE LIGHTS REPORT***

#### **Report on Mottingham Village Lighting, 2019 and Hopes for 2020.**

The dismal weather and, in particular the storms, wreaked havoc on the last of the Tree Lights and blacked out a couple of Motifs and Strings last year. However, Mottingham fared better than many other local displays for which we are grateful. Despite this setback a number of residents commented that 2019 was “The best ever display”!



Since then Mottingham Village seems to have slept, undisturbed. Many businesses and residents have suffered financially from the effects of Covid19 and everything is very quiet. It is as though we could all do with a good shake out, dust down and a point in the right direction! Let’s start with the Mottingham Festive Lights! A good display should cheer us all up.

An appeal for donations to the Festive Lights Appeal accompanies this Autumn Newsletter.

The annual cost of mounting the display is around £3000 and the organisers are grateful to all those who

contribute. We are also particularly grateful the local traders listed below who donated last year and would encourage residents to show their appreciation by supporting the local shops.

**Autospares      Cockburns Estate Agents      Jarman & Dixon Pharmacy**  
**Mottingham Fish and Chip Bar,   Oakwood Estates      Rooms Kitchens**

### **Mottingham Horticultural Society**

As with everyone, this has been a challenging year for Mottingham Horticultural Society. On one hand, we have all been spending more time in our gardens and allotments which have been proving a godsend during the lockdown period and many never looking better. On the other hand, it has caused the cancellation of our regular visits, AGM, plant sales and our Autumn Show.

Although we have been unable to meet up in person as a society, we have been keeping in touch through email. As affiliates of the RHS, we have received weekly bulletins giving best advice on the 'jobs for the week'. We have been sharing these bulletin with members, running Gardeners' Question Time and sharing seeds and plants – all whilst strictly observing social distancing! This regular communication has helped us all feel part of the community during this difficult time.

Although our Autumn Show was sadly cancelled, instead we ran an on-line photo competition for the best horticultural themed photograph – congratulations to Anne Clark for the winning photograph of a magnificent indoor succulent flower. Covid guidelines permitting we are hoping to hold a Christmas Gathering in December and when we propose to have a quiz and mince pies – more details will be shared nearer the time. If you are interesting in becoming a member please email [elizabethwalker114@hotmail.com](mailto:elizabethwalker114@hotmail.com) and you will be most welcome.

**Elizabeth Walker**

