



# St Peter's Residents' Association

Newsletter for September and October 2016

2016-2017: Issue 3

5 October 2016

**This newsletter is published six times a year.  
The next issue will be published on or about 1 December.**

## Solly's Orchard unlocked at night

The news that the gates were being left unlocked at night came just too late for the last newsletter. You will know by now that this a trial being conducted by the Council to try to save money, though since the Serco employee who used to do the locking and unlocking still has to clean the orchard (and still locks the Westgate Parks) it is hard to believe that much money is being saved. Several members wrote to us at the end of August with their experiences: we thank them for these and would ask everyone to keep a record of antisocial behaviour. Some living in St Peter's Lane have noticed little difference, but it is a very different story for those who live in Blackfriars Street and Mill Lane, whose properties back on to the river and who are therefore much closer to the orchard than anyone else. They have experienced a lot of antisocial behaviour from drunken and noisy people during the night, and there has been damage to property. Most of us know the unsettling effect of being in our homes while noisy strangers are outside.

We have passed on some of the written evidence to the council officer who appears to be in charge of this trial, and have asked him to stop the trial now, since we believe we have presented enough evidence to show already that leaving the gates unlocked will not work. We have asked that our letter and the evidence should be put before the (so far unnamed) councillors who were involved in making the decision, but have so far had no reply. We shall of course be pressing for an answer.

We mentioned other considerations

1. The danger to anyone (drunk or sober) negotiating the bridges and unfenced areas near the river after dark
2. The effect on the city's reputation for visitors (from cities and towns which do not have Canterbury's social problems) who come across rough sleepers in the orchard, sometimes as late as 11 a.m.
3. The Council is shifting the costs to residents (who have to repair property) and to the Police, who with limited resources could be better used elsewhere.

It seems incontrovertible that leaving the orchard unlocked at night gives rise to a quite unnecessary opportunity not only for disorderliness but also for serious crime (as we have been reminded by the distressing incident at Toddlers Cove about a fortnight ago).

## The Quiz Night (8 October)

We regret to say that we have had to cancel the quiz night, as there were very few members wishing to take part.

## The Treasurer

Gary Edelman, who has been Treasurer for the past three years, wishes to retire from this post and from the committee at the end of the year. We therefore need a member to volunteer to take on this role. Gary writes:

For the Treasurer's job, familiarity with very basic accounting principles would be helpful, but not necessary. The main requirements, really, are to be able to add up a few columns of numbers accurately and to be able to think reasonably logically. In other words, just about all of our members would probably qualify. The tasks involved are:

- keep a documented record of all cash receipts and expenditures
- collect money at association events
- deposit at the bank event receipts and membership dues collected by Niall McKernan, the membership secretary
- pay invoices and other expenses
- produce a very simple set of accounts (actually just a summary of all cash receipts and expenditures) at the end of the year for presentation to the AGM
- attend committee meetings (every four or five weeks).

Total time involved is about an hour per month. Preparing the annual accounts takes only an hour or two if one has kept good records along the way.

Please consider offering your services: Gary would be willing to discuss the post with you.

## Licensing Act 2003

As a residents' association we received an invitation to submit our views on this Act to a House of Lords Select Committee. The Act set out to provide greater freedom to the hospitality and leisure industry, as well as giving consumers more choice. It also granted authorities the appropriate powers to deal with misuse of these freedoms.

There isn't space to set out all we wrote, but some of the points we made were:

- As we live near the city centre with its concentration of pubs, bars and clubs we are inevitably disturbed by late-night footfall as people leave for home or car parks
- Although some establishments have closing times of 23:30 or 00:00, at least during the week, there is inevitably (and understandably) competition for many establishments to stay open later to attract more custom.
- We doubted the value of the 'night time economy': why shouldn't people just start their evenings earlier? Does Canterbury feel it has to compete with other towns, and is this socially desirable?
- The closing times are later than they were before the introduction of the Act. So probably people are drinking more. This is not good for their health or their work. There are increased costs for the NHS (long-term illness and dealing with emergencies), and creates a requirement for more police resources in unsocial hours. Bar staff have to work more unsocial hours and their employers have to pay them more. No one benefits from this except the alcohol industry.
- The relaxations brought about by the Act have led to the normalisation of late-night drinking and resultant anti-social behaviour, which is a sad state of affairs. We would like to see closing times brought back to midnight, universally, to exclude the possibility of competition. Although hardened drinkers would start earlier, it is likely that there would be less alcohol consumed. This would have great benefits for the country and would certainly improve the lives of local residents.

## Friends of the Riverside (FoR)

This is a group of representatives who wish to improve the appearance of the Great Stour where it runs through the city. It is chaired by the manager of the Kentish Stour Countryside Project and includes a representative of the Environment Agency, some Council officers and members of community groups, including ourselves. We mentioned earlier that there were plans to plant a hedge on Miller's Field to screen the car park. This is now likely to be planted this Autumn. It will consist of native species, mainly hawthorn and blackthorn. The circular flower beds are being retained but the planting programme has been altered to rely on perennial species and not bedding plants. The thinning of some of the sycamore trees in Pound Lane should allow more light to reach the beds.

Some sycamore trees near the Abbot's Mill sluice gates were damaging the river wall and have been felled. The stumps will have to be left to rot for a few years and then they will be removed and the wall rebuilt. The removal of the trees opens up a vista into the walled area which, until now shaded by the felled sycamores, has been quite barren. We hope the ash tree at the St Peter's Lane end will continue to resist ash dieback disease. There will be some planting (probably bulbs and climbers) in raised beds on either side of it. It is hoped that a large mill-themed sculpture can be commissioned and placed at the forefront of the space.



Miller's Field with flower bed



The walled space near the sluices

Elsewhere in Solly's Orchard some dead apple trees, at the Priory end, have been replaced, and Serco have agreed to look after the climbing roses planted and provided by the SPRA.

## Stop Press: SPRA Christmas Party

This will almost certainly take place at **7 p.m. on Wednesday 14 December** (we'll let you know if the date changes) in **The Beerling Hall**. There will be Christmas refreshments, wine and fruit juice, and from time to time carol singing with an accompanist and leader. Please make a note in your diaries now.

## 12 King Street

The new owners of this property, which is roughly in the middle of the 1970s terrace consisting of Nos 10 to 15 King Street, applied for planning permission to build a brick extension at the back of the house, with a glazed balcony above, with access from the first floor. About ten residents objected, mostly on the grounds that the balcony would overlook the other gardens in the terrace and invade the residents' privacy, and would be an obtrusive addition to the terrace, unaltered since it was built. The owners withdrew the proposal for the balcony, but persisted with the ground floor extension. Some residents objected to that as well, because it would have a negative effect on the architectural integrity of the terrace, obstruct (with a height over three metres) the views along the backs of the gardens, and, particularly, take away a lot of the light from the ground floors of the immediate neighbours. The SPRA objected on these grounds, and the Secretary spoke at the meeting of the planning committee at which this was discussed, but the application was granted.

## Theatre House, 4-6 Orange Street

You will remember that the owner, Mr Sergeant, was refused a premises licence for the proposed restaurant because the Licensing Committee were not convinced (as a result of objections from several residents and the SPRA) that it was going to be a restaurant, and not a bar. Now No 6, formerly Margarita's, has reopened as Teatros, with the same licensing conditions as before. Work has continued at Nos 3-5 and we hope that Teatros will provide the bar function while Nos 3-5 will turn out to be a genuine restaurant. A premises licence will need to be sought and we shall be keeping an eye on this.

## Neighbourhood Watch

We think it worth passing on some of the very many reports we get about postal, telephone and internet scams, partly as a warning but also to reassure you that if a fraudster attempts to cheat you, you are not alone. These are just a few of the reports reaching us, but they will serve as examples:

### Frauds for week ending 30 September 2016. Please ensure these are widely disseminated.

Thank you to a NHW co-ordinator from Thanet for advising us that a resident received a land line phone call from a person claiming to be from the Postcode Lottery. The caller asked if the person was interested in joining the lottery - she did the right thing and put the phone down immediately. I have confirmed with Postcode Lottery and they do not cold call but only call former players.

Thank you to a Canterbury co-ordinator who has told us about a personal letter received from someone in Hong Kong. The letter stated that a distant relative had died in an accident in China and was intestate. The letter stated that around 1.3 million US Dollars were in his bank account and that an international tracing agency had identified the receiver as the nearest living relative and thus due to receive the money. It was a well written letter, and asked for bank details to transfer the money. This was not done, but others could be caught out.

Thank you to a NHW member from Ashford that advised us of calls supposedly from BT stating that the broadband connection will be disconnected in 15 days due to a computer virus infecting the PC. Please beware of ALL unsolicited phone calls, and do what this NHW member did and hang up the phone.

General reminder not to open attachments or respond to emails that you have not requested, do not recognise - best delete them as soon as possible.

NHW Liaison



We get daily reports of other crimes in East Kent: those relevant to our area are listed below. We are glad to say that there were only two reported crimes in our area in August and September. Elsewhere most thefts seem to be opportunistic, with thieves picking up something they see lying around, or making use of unlocked doors, unlocked garages and unsecured windows. There are also distraction crimes: i.e., two people approach you and one asks directions, or to change some money, while the other commits the crime. There continue to be many warnings about fraud of different types: cold callers on your doorstep or on your phone, internet scams etc.

Date	Time	Premises	Crime
21 Sep	1200-1530	Turnagain Lane	Door of car forced open and equipment stolen
24-25 Sep		St Alphege Lane	Door of flat forced, nothing taken

## Useful contact numbers

Bin collections, rubbish on streets and paths, dog fouling, fly-tipping, graffiti	Serco	08000 319 091
Abandoned vehicles	City Council	01227 862 203
Street lighting, potholes, anything related to roads or footpaths	Kent Highways	03000 418 181
Reporting a crime taking place	Police	999
Reporting other crime, including anti-social behaviour	Police	101
For anonymous calls with information about crime	Crimestoppers	0800 555 111
Environmental river problems, e.g. pollution, fish in distress, illegal fishing	Environment Agency	0800 80 70 60

## SPRA Committee 2016-17 and contact information

Richard Parkinson	Chairman	07764 775 672
Andrew Kerin	Vice-Chairman	01227 456 618
Chris Millar	Secretary	01227 766 790
Gary Edelman	Treasurer	01227 788 267
Clive Bowley	Planning consultant	
Gillian Rushton	Events organiser	
Kevin Porée		
Amy Barron		

You can contact the Secretary on all matters including those relating to this newsletter by phone or by e-mail:

[spra.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:spra.newsletter@gmail.com)

Our website address is: [www.stpetersassociation.co.uk](http://www.stpetersassociation.co.uk) and there is an email address for related issues:

[spa@stpetersassociation.co.uk](mailto:spa@stpetersassociation.co.uk)