

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

The SPRA Christmas Party on 14 December



**Our Christmas Party is at 7 p.m. on Thursday 14 December in
The Beerling Hall.**



We do hope you will come and enjoy some refreshments and the accompanied carol singing, led, as last year, by David Clarke. There is no charge for this event and members and their families are very welcome. We are grateful to The King's School for allowing us to hold this event on their premises. A flyer with more details is attached or enclosed.

Please let us know if you intend to come

Proposed changes to Best Lane, Orange Street and The Friars

The City Council has a large sum of money (about £1.9m), raised by increasing its parking charges, which is ring-fenced to enable road improvements in the city. It intended to make changes to St George's Street but there was opposition to the removal of the trees and that proposal was shelved. The next area for proposed changes is Best Lane, Orange Street and The Friars. This proposal seems to have been business-led, as the Council convened a meeting of local businesses on 18 October but only the initiative of one of our members led to a meeting for residents – and that only two days before the deadline for contributions to the consultation. There was a very inadequate leaflet distributed to residents of the three streets, and on the Council's website very little explanation of the purpose of the changes.

The residents' meeting was chaired by Kevin Porée and was attended by Anna Stevens and Richard Moore, council officers from the Transportation team, Michael Dixey, one of our ward councillors, and Ida Linfield, the county councillor for our division.

Afterwards the SPRA submitted its suggestions. Among many others

1. We welcomed the resurfacing of the pavements and road surfaces in Best Lane and Orange Street, provided this did not lead to restaurants and bars putting out tables and chairs on the pavement.
2. The proposed bollards across The Friars were clearly in the wrong place, preventing easy access to The Friends Meeting House and the residents' parking area opposite, and we suggested that they should be moved to the far end of The Friars, beyond the theatre, with a narrowing of the road at the entrance to The Friars, to indicate the start of the pedestrian area.
3. The pavements should not be widened, as this would certainly encourage the pub, hotel and the theatre to extend their activities with undesirable consequences for residents.

Our complete submission can be seen on the Council's website. They initially printed only our original questions (which weren't answered anyway). Now that we have complained, our submission is printed as a supplement to the main agenda: see

<http://democracy.canterbury.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=617&Mid=11168&Ver=4>

Our submission was picked up by the *Kentish Gazette*, who had a page on it in their 30 November issue.

The proposal was considered at a meeting of the Regeneration and Property Committee last night (30 November), at which the Secretary and another member of the committee spoke. Apart from Michael Dixey, who spoke up on our behalf, and a councillor from Whitstable, the council officers and the other councillors seemed to have made up their minds that it was all a very good thing and there was little discussion.

Gardening in Solly's Orchard

One of our members, Geraldine Fish, volunteered to look after the rose bed (originally planted by the SPRA – with later additions by the Kentish Stour Countryside Project (KSCP)). She is being helped by Anne Poole, Carlos Elias, Janice Butler and another. The weeds have all gone, the honey fungus has been cleared from the old sycamore stump (which has been attacked with an axe and a crowbar), and there is a beautifully straight edge to the bed which is ready to receive the wooden edging strip which has been promised for some time (but which should arrive fairly soon now). The supporting wires have been tidied up and the roses will be pruned soon.



A very neat edge and a weed-free border



The vine doing well

Separately, Solly's Orchard also had a visit in mid-November from the volunteer team from the KSCP. They did some maintenance work on the informal flower beds, removing unwanted weeds, and also weeding the bases of the apple trees. Incidentally the apple trees, although belonging to the Council, are managed by Old Rough Wife, an artisan cider-making firm at Old Wives Lees and Elmstead.



KSCP maintaining the informal flower beds



The KSCP team of volunteers

St Peter's Lane

- We have asked KCC if the pavement near the junction with Westgate Hall Road can be improved – actually, ‘replaced’ would be a better term, since at present there are no kerbstones and a very poor surface. KCC have told us that although its appearance is poor, they don't have the money to do anything about it. The only prospect of improvement is if they have to visit the area anyway and can do two jobs at the same time – since the road would have to be closed.
- We have asked CCC if they can exert pressure on the landlords and occupants of Nos 31-39 so that the appearance of these properties can be improved. At present wheelie bins are routinely left in what were once front gardens, the gardens are overgrown with weeds, and some meter boxes are decaying. Enforcement officers have visited the site and will be returning to check. The CCC Contracts department has been contacted to see if the wheelie bins can be replaced with purple sacks, which may be more suitable for houses through which the bins would have to be wheeled.
- A member alerted us to the very dark area in Donsway Drive between Victoria Walk and St Peter's Lane. The good news is that the Marlowe Theatre will be extending their low-level bollard lighting from Victoria Walk into Donsway Drive in the next few weeks. We can't take any credit for this, but it's good to know that this will happen.

Planning matters

Dairy Crest site, 57-61 Military Road

This proposal, for a student accommodation block for 200+ students, at one end of a residential square in a conservation area was submitted in 2015. Despite being recommended for approval by the planning officers it was rejected 9-0 by the Planning Committee. The developers submitted a very similar proposal in 2017, but also appealed against the original refusal. The planning inspector allowed the appeal. This was a very disappointing result.

The Parrot PH, 3-9 Church Lane

The application was for permission to place tables and chairs outside the pub, contained by café-style barriers, in front of this mediaeval building. We objected, as did a number of members, and the Council refused the application. Shepherd Neame appealed, and their appeal has been granted, although they have accepted that the outdoor activity shall cease by 9 p.m. each night. We quote from the Planning Inspector: *'The licence also places obligations on the licensee to manage any rowdy or drunken behaviour on the site and to keep the space tidy. It appears to me that as the licence would be withdrawn if these obligations were not met, it would be in the licensee's interest to meet them.'* So we need to complain if we feel these obligations are not being met. The Planning Inspector's report can be seen on the CCC web site (17/00122). Another victory for commercialisation.

6 St Peter's Street

The proposal was for a change of use from retail premises to drinking establishment, i.e. from Benji's Sweet Shop to Houdini's Magic Bar. The Magic Bar, offering magic acts as its main *raison d'être*, seemed relatively harmless, but we objected to the lack of detail in the planning application, the likelihood of more people being present in All Saints Lane - possibly for nefarious purposes - but particularly because once the premises has a Class A4 (drinking establishment) licence it is unlikely ever to be revoked - and the Magic Bar will eventually move on and may be replaced by something less apparently innocuous. However, the application was granted.

52 King Street

A proposal to place a house on the vacant site next to 52 King Street was submitted a few months ago, but refused by the Council on a number of grounds. The developers have now submitted a very similar proposal which does not seem to us to meet any of the objections raised by the Council, and we shall be objecting again.

'Our Stour' project

The KSCP has been given £85,500 by the Heritage Lottery Fund to set up this project. We quote from their website

<http://www.canterburybid.co.uk/stour-wins-national-lottery-support/>

'One of the important aspects of this project is that it will set up a scheme of River Wardens with the responsibility to monitor the problems and the wildlife on different sections of the river. A key part of this remit will be to report rubbish and trolleys in the river and to make sure that the problems are dealt with – keeping the river clean, green, safe and enjoyable!'

'Our Stour' is all about enjoying and improving the rivers and streams in and around Ashford, Canterbury, Sandwich, Herne Bay and Whitstable. Local people will get directly involved in work to improve rivers and riverside land. Film making and photography will help people discover and tell others about the waterways on their doorstep, while free educational activities for kids and adults will gather valuable new data about river environments.

Here are just some of the ways people will be able to get involved:

- Take part in wildlife surveys, with training from wildlife experts
- Do hands-on conservation work to improve rivers
- Become a river warden and look after your own stretch of river
- Use technology to record and add to knowledge of the river environment
- Tell the story of a river by making a short video with the help of a professional film maker
- Explore a river, take your camera and get tips from a professional photographer

If you are interested, please contact KSCP at 07740 185224, 03000 410900, or Jon.shelton@kent.gov.uk

Neighbourhood Watch

A few excerpts from NHW messages that we have received recently:

Crime prevention – Remember the WIDE principle:

	W	Window locks on every window
	I	Interior lights left on a timer when you are away
	D	Double or dead bolts fitted on doors
	E	Exterior lights on a sensor

Consider installing CCTV to provide formal surveillance to the most vulnerable areas of the property.

Perhaps of interest (though not much comfort) to those who have had lead stolen from their roofs:

'The man was taken into custody on suspicion of dangerous driving, theft of a motor vehicle, failing to stop, criminal damage and assault on police. He has been released pending further enquiries. The car has been seized along with £3,000 worth of lead, which was discovered in the vehicle.'

'Preventing burglary is a priority for us throughout the year however we have seen historically that offending can increase as the nights get darker. That's why we want to encourage people to take simple crime prevention steps and to reassure people that we will be continuing to focus our efforts on catching and convicting offenders.'

'Advice: Keep keys, cash and expensive items out of view; use timer switches on lights and radios to make your home look occupied; keep gates locked and boundaries secure; lock away bikes, tools and garden items that could be stolen or used to break into your home.'

There has been a new malware released called 'Bad Rabbit'. While it has mainly affected eastern European countries and Russia it is possible that it may find its way outside of that region. It manifests itself through a Flash update that appears in a web browser. In the event you receive anything relating to a requirement to update your Flash, do not follow the instructions.

A message from NHW: 'Please could I ask you to remind your members that when/if they call the Police using 101 or 999 to advise the Control Room that they are part of Neighbourhood Watch. This information is recorded on the system and helps us to demonstrate the good work and intelligence that you provide us with.'

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 41 81 81
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 2017-18 and contact information

Richard Parkinson	Chairman	07764 775 672
Andrew Kerin	Vice-Chairman	01227 456 618
Chris Millar	Secretary	01227 766 790
Alan Turner	Treasurer	01227 451 217
Clive Bowley	Planning consultant	
Gillian Rushton	Events organiser	
Kevin Porée	Events organiser	
Tania Hoser	Events organiser	

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

spra.newsletter@gmail.com

Our website address is: www.stpetersassociation.co.uk and there is an email address for related issues:

spa@stpetersassociation.co.uk