
EVTRA Newsletter

An occasional publication of the Elm Village Tenants and Residents Association

Covering 11-111 Barker Drive, Bergholt Mews, Blakeney Close, Rossendale Way and 44 St Pancras Way



May 2009

SPRING IS BUSTING OUT ALL OVER . . .

One of the best things about living in Elm Village is that we are surrounded by trees and plants of all sorts, and this is never more pleasant than in the spring.

A lot of this is due to the thought and hard work of Mike Jackson and his team from the Garden Centre, who are contracted by Places for People to maintain the greenery of the estate.

Mike's goodwill and knowledge (he was trained at Kew Gardens) has been helpful to us in recent months, as you will see below.

Green Spaces project – sensible improvements and locked gates

You will remember that last year we were very anxious about the proposal by Places for People to “enhance” our environment by unlocking all the gates, keeping sheep and running events for the whole community within a half-mile radius (all right, we made up the bit about the sheep!).

We are glad to report that after what the diplomats call “frank and robust” negotiation, we

have now obtained all the concessions we wanted.

Above all, the security situation will not be changed – in fact there should be some improvements – especially in connection with the canal gate next to the Constitution which has long attracted drug dealers.

Places for People will be unveiling the plans on Saturday 6 June. They will notify you of the details.

But we all owe a special thank-you to resident Lucy Peltz. In her “day job” she looks after an important part of the collection at the National Portrait Gallery, but in this matter she has been far from a shy and unworldly academic. Her skill and energy in pressing our needs can only call forth our admiration. They could use her in Downing Street . . .

A better life on Barker Drive

Mike Jackson has also been at work on another scheme which should benefit us all.

If you live in or use Barker Drive you will be very aware that for years there have been problems with crime, drug

dealing and aggressive or fouling dogs.

The Open Space (Barker Drive park) opposite the flats has been a centre for much of this nuisance. Drug dealers and their customers routinely use the upper part of the space, which is hidden by trees. Down below, a certain number of inconsiderate dog owners have made the space very off-putting, especially to people with children.

A new plan suggested by the Garden Centre should help to reduce these problems quite a lot. The Centre has approached Camden Council (who own the space) to make the upper area into a model fruit and vegetable garden, with the extra possibility that Garden Centre trainees might routinely maintain the lower area. The Garden Centre would not own the space, but would be allowed to lease it from the Council.

At present the plan has only been put forward for consideration. Before Camden Council take any decision, they will consult all local residents.

EVTRA expects to see several advantages for residents. It will be a great help to those interested in gardening and the produce (best quality and of course organic) will be available to buy. Drug dealing will be forced off the top space, and the greater presence of trainees and other users means that they are likely to find the lower space too public, especially as we shall press regularly for security patrols. The greater use and regular maintenance should put pressure on the minority of antisocial dog owners. We wish to stress that EVTRA is very supportive of responsible dog-owning residents. The park will still be open for dog owners for exercise (meaning throwing sticks and running etc.) and there will be a dog's lot for the other sort of "exercise".

But every silver cloud has its dark lining . . .

So we have to report and warn you of:

Rossendale Way – target practice for missiles from Star Wharf

There has been another incident of bottles being thrown from Star Wharf at Rossendale Way residents. The police were called and the matter was reported to the housing association.

If this happens to you, you should always take action and contact the police (tel. 0300 123 1212) and Timothy Davis, the anti-social behaviour coordinator of Community (the part of One Housing Group responsible for the Knowle House flats,

Star Wharf), at 100 Chalk Farm Road, NW1 8EH, tel. 020 7428 4331. Habitual offenders are liable to be evicted.

Noise from parties

As the days get longer, those who still have something to celebrate (or who at least wish to go down enjoying life) have parties in their gardens. This can brighten up our normally dull, indoor British lives. But those who have children or who have to get up early can find that they don't feel very festive when there is noise late into the night from party goers in the gardens.

We are sure that most residents go inside after midnight, and we have found that most neighbours will respond to a polite request. But if you find that there is frequent disturbance, remember that you can call 020 7278 4444 for noise problems at weekends or 7974 2090 at other times.

Fido's master does his business on the pavement . . .

Well, not so far. But there are a few dog owners who allow their pets to treat the pavement as a toilet – when they aren't using the Barker Drive Open Space for the same purpose. More worrying, these are typically the sort of dog which you would not want to get too close to your baby or toddler.

Unless you are good at martial arts, it would probably be unwise to ask these people to take their mess away with them. But you should report them to Camden Council (tel. 020 7974 6914 or 6915). There seems to

be a growing willingness to take action against these people, who are an insult to the many dog lovers among us. It's also worth emailing our Councillor, Roger Robinson (roger.robinson@camden.gov.uk) who has regularly pressed for action on this matter.

Most worrying – thieves

Nothing new there, but please take extra care with your property, as there have been several cases of attempted or successful thefts. The targets have been cars and bicycles.

For bikes, the thieves seem able to cut through locks. With cars, they apparently try all the doors. Unfortunately some vehicles were unlocked and had goods inside. It's awful to have to constantly be thinking about locking up, and it's easy to forget, but it really is important to lock car doors and not leave valuables inside.

And of course, if you see anything suspicious, let the police know – then maybe it will be the thieves who get locked up instead.

And finally . . .

It's already coming to the point when we go round collecting membership fees, and hold the AGM. We'll let you have details soon, but the good news is that **EVTRA does its bit to fight the recession!** Our Treasurer says that as we have not invested in dodgy funds, run up credit or overspent, we do not need to raise the membership fee, which will remain at £3.

Enjoy the summer!