
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

June 2009

Take care! Canalside hazards – and other matters

Several very unpleasant incidents suffered by people who live by the canal or walk along the towpath have recently come to our notice.

The Exocet bunch are at it again

As reported in the May issue there was another missile-throwing incident from Star Wharf, from the part now called Knowles Wharf. The advice we have been given remains the same: note the time and nature of the incident, get witnesses if possible, report it to the police and also to Camden Council (Shaheda Rahman at 020 7974 4425 during office hours or the housing patrol at 020 7974 1888 between 6 p.m. and 2 a.m. every day or Timothy Davis, an antisocial behaviour coordinator for the One Housing Group at 020 7428 4331). They will take action but they need to build up a log of incidents. EVTRA has made clear that we support the strongest action, including eviction. Hopefully such a threat will make the boneheads who do this realise that they have been extremely fortunate to have the oppor-

tunity to live in some of the most desirable housing in the borough (subsidised by us) and stop this silly and dangerous behaviour.

Towpath rage

Even more worrying are the reports which some of you may have seen in the local papers of youths throwing towpath users into the canal. It seems that there have been two or three incidents. It may be funny in a Charlie Chaplin film but in our canal it is not only unpleasant but also dangerous. Apart from the risk of various diseases, the water, though not deep, is capable of drowning someone who is a weak swimmer and panics. More important, as those who have observed British Waterways cleanups know, it is impossible to see the objects which have been dumped there. Since these are often metal, and include supermarket trolleys, bicycles and even mopeds, it would be easy to sustain a serious injury. Unless you are skilled in martial arts, it is not advisable to intervene. But in an age of mobile phones it is possible to alert the police and give a description, though the culprits, having taken pictures on their mobile phones, will have hurried off.

Along with other members of the public EVTRA is pressing for police and street warden patrols to be stepped up until the culprits are caught.

Green Spaces project reaches its final stages

After a series of meetings with Garden Society and EVTRA representatives, and a successful presentation on the Green (at which those attending were able to take away various plants, including strawberries), the plans have been finalised and are nearly ready for submission to Camden for planning permission. The aim is to have the work done by Christmas.

Before this, residents will be given the chance to see and discuss the submission at the AGM on July 16. Full details will be given then, but the main points are: security will be maintained or increased; the space next to the Constitution will be made secure by extending the wall, allowing the space to be developed as an amenity (residents who live next to the space will be encouraged to suggest what planting should be done); access to the spaces will continue to be possible for all residents who want it; there will be allotments in the canal-

side space (the one with the viewing platform) and a greenhouse in the Triangle space; wildlife will be encouraged in various ways; and the alleyway between Bergholt Mews and Rossendale Way will be closed off, thus getting rid of drug dealers who have recently been trading there in broad daylight.

It's that man (or woman) again . . .

We are already at the time of year when memberships are due for renewal. So sometime between June 26 and July 12 one of our members will call to ask whether you would like to renew your membership or to join EVTRA. In the near future you will be receiving a circular telling you about the issues we have been dealing with this year.

As ever, whoever calls will identify themselves as a member of EVTRA Committee and ask whether you wish to be a member. **They will NOT try to press you to join; you have only to say no and they will go away at once and not call again.** They will not ask to come in and they will not ask for any details other than your name. They will also ask if you wish to be put on the email list; again they will not press this. We have never known it to happen but if anyone appears who fails to act in the above way, you should turn them away at once and report the matter to the Secretary by phone (020 7387 8960).

Notice of Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be held at 7pm on Thursday July 16 at the Irish Centre, Camden Square. The Irish Centre is happy to serve drinks at reasonable prices but there is no obligation to buy anything. Details will be sent out nearer the time, but two things need to be mentioned now.

One is that an important item will be the presentation of the final plans for the development of the gated spaces. This is the last chance to clarify matters before planning permission is sought.

The other main matter is the election of officers. The Committee is very small in number and although we are enthusiastic there is a limit to what we can do. We would therefore be very welcoming to anyone who would like to join the Committee. We meet for just an hour or two about six times a year and meetings are informal and friendly. Our policy is to get people to take on matters that interest them – you won't find yourself with unwelcome duties chosen by others. At present we would be especially keen to hear from people concerned with security, the canal, the environment and green spaces, and the new King's Cross development.

And finally...

Two issues about responsibility have come up.

The first is that Camden Council have again claimed that they are not responsible for

our roads, lights or whatever. We note that this fact does not stop them when money for Council tax, parking permits and the like are due. Many residents are now fed up with this bungling incompetence (imagine the treatment you would get if you couldn't produce your insurance documents). EVTRA therefore will propose to the AGM that we should begin a process of formal complaint against the Council for its failure to keep proper records, and to inform its employees of our status.

Councillor Robinson has been pursuing various issues connected with that area. He was asked who was "responsible for the flats opposite the Barker Drive Space". He asked EVTRA, and this information was passed to the relevant Council Department. They came back with the reply that on being contacted Places for People had said that they were not responsible for any properties on Barker Drive! This is interesting news to residents who have to pay service charges, rent etc, and whose lawyers diligently entered the PfP name on legal documents. Well, it does explain the remarkable difficulty we have always had in getting PfP to do anything. This includes replying to the EVTRA letter pointing out what had happened.

Watch this space, but don't cancel your holidays in the excitement. Like the mills of God, those of PfP grind slowly, but unlike those of the Almighty, they do not grind sure.