
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

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Village residents suffer missile attacks!

No, there has not been an outbreak of war, but the problem has been serious enough for those residents who have been on the receiving end. Some of our new neighbours across the canal have a new entertainment: "Bop a pedestrian!" Missiles have been thrown from the upper parts of one of the apartment blocks

and hit residents. Fortunately no one has been injured — yet.

You can be assured that EVTRA takes this very seriously, and will take all possible steps to deal with this mindless behaviour.

Our advice if you suffer this type of harassment is (a) inform the Police — it's a crime. (b) Inform Councillor Roger Robinson (roger.robinson@camden.gov.uk) who has already taken the matter up with the Council.

It appears that the problem comes from the social housing block (Knowle House) of Star Wharf. Roger and EVTRA are prepared to press for eviction if necessary. (c) Inform the EVTRA Secretary (evtrasec@aol.com) who will keep a log so that we have evidence of such attacks.

AGMs are boring — but they can be useful . . .

Long ago, in July, about 30 residents braved the English summer to attend the EVTRA AGM (for minutes of the meeting see www.evtra.org.uk/AGMminutes2008.pdf). They

were prepared to be bored into sleep by the usual admin, but in fact the meeting was very lively and was the most important AGM for some years, as two new schemes came into being:

the Garden Club and the Neighbourhood Watch scheme: now read on.

Economic crisis — food prices rocket, Elm Village streets to be taken up to grow carrots

Well not quite, but you may indeed see locally grown produce if the hopes of the new Garden Club come to fruition. Over recent months two things have become clear. One is that a lot of residents are interested in gardening. The other is that 100% of residents are opposed to the current PfP Green Spaces

scheme, which aims to open up the locked areas.

Stella Timmins did us all an important favour by hunting out the Green Spaces plans, which had been kept from us. She also identified a considerable number of residents who were interested in having an allotment. EVTRA then took the view that we needed to

offer a clear alternative plan if we were to get PFP to change their original scheme.

As a result of the AGM discussions a group of residents responded to the dynamic approach of Lucy Peltz and Peter McGinty and formed a Garden Club. The first meeting, in August, was very well attended, and brought out an

inspiring sense of cooperation and community in those present.

The Garden Club has two main aims at present. The first is to follow up the idea of an alternative plan for the Green Spaces programme. Lucy (Chair of the Club) and her team have been energetically collecting ideas and evidence, including a very successful

questionnaire. The first consultation with PfP is to take place on October 23 and representatives from both the Garden Club and EVTRA will be there. We will report in the next Newsletter, unless the issue becomes more urgent.

The other aim of the Club is more immediately practical: to provide gardening advice and information relevant to resi-

dents. This is given (free) by Mike Jackson of the Garden Centre, whose experience and expertise is not easily matched. He is also willing to come and look at gardens and provide advice.

You will get notification of the next meeting of the Garden Club through their impressive colour leaflets — EVTRA is green (ow!) with envy.

You can sleep quietly – Jackie's on the case!

The other big development at the AGM was the formation of a Neighbourhood Watch group. Jackie Churchill and husband Tony have kindly agreed to act as coordinators, and they will also try to build on contacts with the Street Wardens and others concerned with security.

They will be helped by EVTRA Secretary Ed Lee, who will field computer communications. EVTRA will also be able to continue to monitor Council policies on security, thanks to the efforts of Sheila Sansbury, who fits in attending meetings with a busy schedule as a grandmother.

To join or send information to the Neighbourhood Watch scheme (remaining anonymous if you wish) either get in contact with Jackie Churchill via her letterbox outside 27 Bergholt Mews or email the EVTRA Secretary at evtrasec@aol.com.

Privatisation of GP practices: it gets worse as doctors leave

You have probably read in the local papers about the privatisation of three medical practices in Camden. These three are now, as ordered by Camden's Primary Care Trust, under the control of UnitedHealth, the UK branch of a vast American insurance company with a bad reputation in its home country. The nearby practice at 142 Camden Road

has already suffered the loss of two doctors, the disappearance of another who is supposedly on "extended leave", a change of nursing staff and the removal of a baby clinic to a more distant centre.

As a result there is now a very active campaign group in Camden that is fighting against further privatisation and for the

original principles of the NHS to be upheld.

If you are interested in joining or supporting Camden Keep Our NHS Public, see the web site at <http://camdenkeepournhspublic.org.uk> or contact Maeve O'Connor at 020 7383 3092 to find out more.

Or maybe you can't sleep: noisy neighbours

The Secretary has had several emails recently from residents whose neighbours are persistently noisy. Various practical suggestions have been made, including: "several years ago there were very noisy tenants [next to us], and we called the Camden Noise Team

[020 7278 4444] who work 11-4 on Fri and Sat nights. They were great: very effective; good at dealing with rowdy/drunk parties; very careful to ensure anonymity of the complainers etc. We understood at that point that 3 calls results in some kind of letter/warning to

tenants and landlords, but you should check this, as we only had to get them to visit twice before the landlord tackled it directly". Another resident wrote "The Environmental Health section of the Council [www.camden.gov.uk/noise] say that noise diaries can't be

downloaded from their web site. It seems that people who have a problem with pub noise or maybe any other kind now have to phone the Council first, at 020 7974 2090, and then they'll maybe send whatever is

needed". However, another resident has sent the Secretary "an ' Activity/Incident Monitoring Form' which may be of use to anyone regarding a range of anti social behaviour". You can get one of these forms

by emailing the Secretary (evtrasec@aol.com).

Sweet little creatures – or tree rats?

Another topic residents have been writing about is squirrels. The EVTRA Committee considered this matter at their last meeting but decided that before taking or recommending action they would sound out residents in various ways. The problem is that squirrels can create real problems:

Resident A: "I had a whole family of them breeding and running round my loft last year. At P4P steve.bruce@placesforpeople.co.uk seems to be the person with the authority to get things done."

Resident B: "When we had mice, and managed to get rid of them with Green Shield (www.greenshield.com) mains plug device the company I used stated 'there is no effective electronic gadget out on the market for external use for squirrels'. However, [the plug] may be effective for squirrels

internally and it is supposed to be humane."

At the Committee meeting it was also noted that food left out as refuse or for animals (e.g. stray cats) often attracts squirrels, foxes and rats. However, the Committee also felt that many people have strong warm feelings for animals and also for wild creatures.

It is clear that not all residents share these feelings, though:

Resident C: "Re squirrels: Pest Control at the Council say they don't deal with squirrels. I have e-mailed Mike Jackson to see if he has any advice". [He regrets he hasn't.]

Resident D: "I had problems with about 4 or 5 squirrels setting up home in my loft space a few years ago and contacted the RSPCA for advice. They informed me to call someone to catch them and dispose of them

as they are considered vermin. I had traps set like the ones in the link for about a month and caught 2 which were taken away and shot by the company I hired. I then had the loft space sealed to stop them entering again. Only problem is that they move on to other homes so unless the estate tackles this problem as a whole in one go you will be effectively passing the problem on."

Resident E: " [To deal with squirrels] See <http://www.Telegraph.co.uk/earth/main.Jhtml?xml=/earth/2007/10/02/easquir202.xml> and <http://www.trap-man.com/squirrel-traps.htm>.

There are also various blog groups of allotment people and others talking about this problem. What about a bit of collective action: we could think about relocating them (to the heath?... is that legal?).

King's Cross: city of the future; Elm Village: "the other side of the tracks"?

Things are really moving around the King's Cross area. If you haven't done so you are advised to walk along the canal towpath to see the illustrations of work under way. Come up at York Way and cross the road to go into Kings Place — the new concert hall and art gallery complex (you don't have to pay

for admission to the building or the galleries).

But a lot of residents around the periphery of the development are getting worried about the possibility of being outside all the good things. EVTRA have started to address the whole question of access to and development of our own area. We are also talking to our

neighbours. We will make our first progress report in the next issue, but meanwhile we would very much like to hear from interested residents who would like to be involved in the process. People with knowledge of urban planning in any form would be especially useful, as we are strongly inclined to think that we need to find out

about and influence the development of Camley Street.

Residents' email list – join the gang !

You will see from this issue that many residents are finding the EVTRA email list a valuable way of hearing what is going

on and of exchanging ideas with other residents. If you would like to be kept in the loop contact the Secretary

(evtrasec@aol.com) and ask to be put on the list.

Useful contacts

Police

Urgent calls: 999

Drug dealing etc.: 020 8733 6262

Reporting needles:

Drug Action Response Team (DART): 0800 032 3278 (do not move the needle yourself)

Reporting dealing etc.:

Safer Neighbours Programme:

020 8721 2810

Camden/Kentish Town police:

020 7404 1212

Camden Town street wardens:

020 7974 5195

Street Services Team (help for people on the street): 7833 7970

Community safety team: 7974

2915

Borough Control Room (for reporting less urgent crime):

7404 1212

Crimestoppers (for anonymous information): freephone 0800

555 111; www.crimestoppers-uk.org

Places for People

0800 432 0002 or 0800 432 0003;

Neighbourhood Officer: Mehz Omar 020 7520 7419;

mehz.omar@placesforpeople.co.uk

Camden Council

Recycling: 020 7974 6914 (for free collection of garden waste); recycling@camden.gov.uk;

www.camden.gov.uk/recycling

Guide for older people (Getting on in Camden): 020 7974 4523;

www.camden.gov.uk

Healthy living activities and events: 0800 068 2949, or www.wellandwise.org.uk

Disability information directory : 020 7974 2230

Community Safety Team:

020 7974 2915

Litterline (rubbish collection, graffiti, dirty streets, abandoned cars): 020 7974 6914 or 6915; street.environment@camden.gov.uk

Blocked kerbside gullies and drains: 020 7974 2005

Dog fouling: 020 7974 6914

Hole in road/uneven pavement:

020 7974 2015

Street lighting: 020 7974 2006

Street sweeping: 020 7974 6915

Parking permits: 020 7974 4646

Noise (9.0 a.m. to 4 p.m.):

020 7974 2090; env.health@camden.gov.uk

Weekend noise service (Friday and Saturday, 10 p.m. to 4

a.m.): 020 7278 4444

General enquiries (Town Hall):

020 7278 4444

Councillor: Roger Robinson, roger.robinson@camden.gov.uk