

Neighbourhood News

from the Bell Tower Community Association

Issue 19 - March 2010



Playground rerieved

As many residents will know, there was a proposal to redevelop the playground at the end of Denbeigh Place. A few days before this newsletter went to press the Bell Tower Community Association learned that the planning application for redevelopment of the land had been withdrawn.

The proposal was to convert the playground into a mixture of leased private gardens and a small public space. The public space would occupy a semicircular piece of land at the front of the plot, with the owners of the two adjoining houses to the right and left being given the opportunity to lease triangular pieces of land at the back of the plot.

The planning application was submitted by Reading Borough Council as a result of requests from nearby residents who say that they



LOCKED: The Denbeigh Place playground as it is today



have experienced antisocial behaviour around the playground. However, there are also families in the area with children for whom redevelopment of the playground would be the loss of a valuable local amenity, and local councillor Bet Tickner recently sent out a letter to alert parents of children who use the playground to the potential redevelopment. There have also been reports that the gate was locked during the daytime, so it appears that the playground is not always open as advertised on the gate.

Bell Tower Community Association committee members recently spent a morning calling on residents of Denbeigh Place and Addison Road, to find out their views on the proposed playground closure. They found that the majority of residents who responded preferred to keep the playground and many had already written to the council to object to the proposed redevelopment. The Association submitted an objection on behalf of these residents, representing the majority view.

There is a covenant associated with the land which would have to be altered or withdrawn with the

agreement of the original site developers before any changes can be made to the use of the land. Thus even if planning permission is ever granted for change of use of the land further legal processes would have to be followed before the playground could be redeveloped.

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Ask in our shop about the Caversham Lodge Guest House upstairs!

News in brief

● The Bell Tower management committee recently hosted a cheese and wine evening to thank volunteers such as newsletter deliverers and others who have helped us. If you would like to help the Association grow and feel that you have a talent or skill that might be of use please contact Barbara on 01189507685.

● The draft Reading Station Area Framework documents are available for inspection in Reading's libraries and at www.reading.gov.uk/saf. Plans will be on show at exhibitions at Caversham Library on 4 March and the Civic Centre on 12 March, between 2pm and 7pm. This is your opportunity to influence this

Continued overleaf

Visit www.bell-tower.org.uk or email us at info@bell-tower.org.uk

Look out for burglars!

Readers need to be aware that there has been a spate of burglaries in the Bell Tower area in recent weeks. During 2009 there were four incidents (one each in Addison, Cardiff, Newport and York Roads), while this year there have already been seven incidents (two in Addison, one in Cardiff, one in Northfield, one in Ross and two in York Road). A range of higher value goods like TVs and laptops were stolen.

You can help to counter this increased level of crime with greater alertness to the security of your property. Think about how secure all your entrances are (doors and windows, and access to the back garden). Do you use a timed light to come on at dusk before you come home, or during the evening while you are out? Look at how visible your living rooms are from the front and back, especially when well lit and visible to passers by, and keep all keys away from the front door, to prevent 'fishing'. Don't forget to do a check before you go out at any time – the reported incidents have been at all times of the day. And avoid leaving any clues around that would suggest to someone that you are absent – the classic examples are yellow pages or milk bottles on the doorstep.



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HOUSE CLEARANCES UNDERTAKEN

OPEN EVERYDAY
10.30 - 4.00
SUNDAY
12.00 - 4.00

In at least one street in the Bell Tower area there is a Neighbourhood Watch Group. This group conveys alerts from the police to members about crime incidents and threats (specific and general) - in particular relating to home security. It also seeks information from the neighbourhood to feed back to the police. We can't stress enough how important Neighbourhood Watches can be to keep neighbours aware of crime threats and to help neighbourhood policing.

It's easy to form a Neighbourhood Watch Group and plenty of advice is available from the Thames Valley Police co-ordinating officer on 0118 953 6250, or from their web site at www.thamesvalley.police.uk. Alternatively, speak to Barbara (Bell Tower chair) on 0118 950 7685 if you would like to have an informal discussion about starting a group.

If you have any other enquiries for the police you can raise non-emergency enquiries via their web site or by calling 0845 8 505505.

Forthcoming events

Saturday 13 March 10.30-12.00
E P Collier School playground

GROW YOUR OWN!

A great opportunity to get demonstrations and free gardening advice from local expert Sara Kopp.

Tuesday 30 March 7.30pm
New Hope Centre

BELL TOWER COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION AGM

We hope to have a speaker from the Environment Agency and the opportunity to discuss flooding - since our area is in the Thames floodplain this is an important topic for all of us.

ALL WELCOME

(but only Association members are entitled to vote)

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important development - please take a look if you can.

- Did you know that one of the main obstacles to achieving recycling targets is the amount of contaminated waste thrown in recycling bins? This is often so bad that entire loads have to be diverted to landfill, with food waste and plastic bags being particularly problematic since they can clog up the sorting machines. We hope to have a longer article explaining the recycling process in a future edition of *Neighbourhood News* - in the meantime, please be careful about what you put in your recycling bin!

- A free collection service for waste electrical goods has started in the Reading area. Details on 0800 731 6646 or at www.weeecollect.it.

- Do you have a local problem that you would like to discuss or draw our attention to? Have a word with Association chair Barbara on 0118 950 7685. We have supported residents' views on the proposed casino in Caversham Road, extension of opening hours for the Deaf Centre in Cardiff Road and the proposed closure of the playground in Denbeigh Place.

- Finally, congratulations to the winners of our winter painting competition. £10 book tokens go to Lizzy Hawken and Louis Juon.



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