

Neighbourhood News

from the Bell Tower Community Association

Issue 12 - June 2008



Casino firm pulls out

The application to turn Dawson's Music and the former Kingdom of Leather store into a casino has finally been withdrawn, despite the applicants having lodged an appeal.

The Bell Tower Community Association represented local residents' opposition to the proposal at the planning and licensing committees, which both rejected the application. The applicants subsequently appealed against both decisions, but eventually announced in May that they were withdrawing their proposal for the site.

Councillor Tony Page, who received many complaints from neighbours opposing the plan, said: "I am very pleased about this and local residents will be too, I am sure."

He said the council has already done a great deal of work in preparation for the planning appeal. He added: "I expect the applicants realised they were flogging a dead horse."

A spokeswoman for the planning applicants said: "We can confirm that Grosvenor Casinos has withdrawn its appeal for planning at the Caversham Road site in Reading."

"We are very disappointed that we are not able to proceed with the proposed development at this site, particularly since we were also unable to progress with our original plans to open a casino at Station Hill due to the redevelopment of the area..."

"...The company will now work with the council to find an alternative site for the development of the casino."

Bell Tower Community Association vice chair David Neale, who spoke before the planning committee on behalf of residents, said: "We are pleased that this application is no longer being pursued. The site was not appropriate for a late night venue because of its proximity to so many homes in a quiet area and the extra night time traffic it would have generated."

JOIN US NOW for only £1 per person per year. Remember - some local businesses will give a discount on production of a valid membership card.

You can join at any of our public meetings and events or by contacting Simon at 4 New Hope Terrace. Membership forms can also be downloaded from our web site at www.bell-tower.org.uk.



Bell Tower Community Association and Caversham GLOBE members with some of the waste cleared from Vastern Ditch (News in brief)

Tidy up your front garden and win £50!

This year we are holding our own 'Bell Tower in Bloom' competition, open to all residents in our area.

To enter your garden into the competition just pick up an entry form from the foyer of New Hope or download the form from our web site. You can nominate a neighbour's garden if you wish.

Prizes of £50, £30 and £20 in vouchers for gardening equipment will be awarded to the best three entries.

Entry forms must be returned to 92 Addison Road by Monday June 30, and judging will take place in July.

News in brief

● A big thank you to everyone that has contributed to the makeover of the land around the electricity substation in Randolph Road. If you have any spare plants, shrubs etc. that you would be willing to donate, it would be much appreciated - these can be dropped off at 92 Addison Road.

● The Bell Tower Community Association now has a noticeboard. This is by the entrance to E P Collier School, in Swansea Road. Keep watching it for useful community information and details of events coming soon!

● Association members spent an afternoon in March taking part in Reading Rescue, an event organised to clean up rivers and open spaces in the town. Working with the Caversham GLOBE environmental group we cleared rubbish out of Vastern Ditch, between Richfield Avenue and the Rivermead. Among the waste collected there were over 50 tyres and several bundles of newspapers. We hope to organise another clean-up in the summer - watch our noticeboard for details.

● A recycling bank for drinks cartons is now available at the Rivermead Leisure Centre.

● Cox & Wyman have asked residents who see children accessing their property to report the incident to the police. New parking restrictions to be introduced later this year should allow lorries to reach the front entrance of the works via Meadow Road and reduce the traffic in Addison Road.

● We have been contacted by some concerned residents about wheelie bins being left out on the pavement for several days after they have been emptied by the Council. This is causing particular concern for the less mobile residents and parents

Continued overleaf

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

What's in your backyard?

Beset by concrete and tarmac, you would think of our area as a desert for wildlife. Don't believe it! At the backs of our houses there is a major green space with a great diversity of plants and animals in a complex food chain - our gardens provide seeds, fruit and leaves to feed a myriad of insects, birds and mammals - so think just before you use those slug pellets or spray the greenfly.

The early summer is a great time for wildlife spotting - overhead we have the wheeling Swifts that stay from late April to early August - they sleep on the wing and eat high-flying midges. See if you can spot them visiting high buildings for a breeding site. We also have a range of songbirds that call around dawn to advertise their territory, or for a mate. Blackbirds choose several rooftop perches and in the last year one resident has taken to copying a mobile phone-like call. Two really tuneful birds you'll hear now are the Goldfinch that sings by day and the Robin by night. With a range of large trees and bushes we also have a base for many less familiar birds like the Sparrowhawk, Red Kite and Greater Spotted Woodpecker. I've seen all of these within 200 yards of home in the last year.

As well as bird life, we have a range of mammals - in the air you may see

the Pipistrelle Bat on still balmy evenings from April onwards, skimming a few feet overhead. Bats are a sign of clean air - and a healthy insect population as their food source. It will be interesting to see how many emerge this year, after the wet summer of 2007. The bats use older buildings and large trees as their roost so we are well placed around the area of the Cox & Wyman works. On the ground, you may be lucky enough to see what looks like a small scruffy dog with a bushy tail - the urban Fox, prowling at either end of the day. I have watched one move along the back alley and spring on to the shed roofs for a few moments to navigate. Foxes probably enter our area from the railway sidings or the farmland by Cow Lane.

A smaller member of our 'big game' is the Hedgehog - often heard before they are seen as they shuffle through the undergrowth - they will take welcome food and drink in the garden and can be watched by torchlight from a distance - feed them with pet food and a saucer of water (bread and milk are not good for them) and you will be amused by their noise and lack of table manners.

Have you seen any wildlife round here recently? Please feel free to let us know of any interesting examples of our wildlife that you have come across.

Rod Plinston

Continued from front page

trying to manoeuvre pushchairs on the pavements around the bins.

Reading Borough Council have confirmed the following:

"Please place your bin on the edge of your property no earlier than the evening before your collection. Please remember to return your bins or boxes to your property as soon as possible after they have been emptied. It can be an offence under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, section 46, not to comply with requirements made by the Council in respect of reuse or recycling containers.

"It is also an offence under the Highways Act 1980, section 1489(c), to place obstructions, including wheeled bins or boxes, on the pavement. These can cause inconvenience and create a possible hazard to pedestrians - particularly wheelchair users, people with visual impairment, or those with young children in prams or pushchairs."

● Unfortunately we have had to postpone our 'Big Bell Tower' trip to London. We hope to be able to run it in the autumn.

● E P Collier's garden has now been completed, and will be opened by former headteacher Jenny Gladwell.



Fanny's
ANTIQUES

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Why not come and see for yourself!

You can find us behind Reading station at 1-5 Lynmouth Road off the Vastern Road Caversham

0118 950 8261

HOUSE CLEARANCES UNDERTAKEN

OPEN EVERYDAY
10.30 - 4.00
SUNDAY
12.00 - 4.00

Forthcoming events



Friday July 4 - Treasure Hunt with '60 questions in 60 minutes' - have fun exploring our area! Meet at New Hope at 6.45pm. £5 per team.



Saturday August 9 - the third Bell Tower tidy up day. Yes, the big skip's going to be back again for your unwanted household goods! 10.00-2.00 at E P Collier School (to be confirmed, subject to permission).

FIVE STAR WINES

133 Caversham Road



- ★ National Lottery (Lotto) ★ Pay point
- ★ Meter keys & tokens ★ Bill payments
- ★ Gas cards ★ Bus tickets
- ★ Phone top-up ★ TV licensing
- ★ Wines, beers and spirits
- ★ Sandwiches, snacks & groceries
- ★ Newspapers & magazines
- ★ Western Union money transfer

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



Neighbourhood News is kindly sponsored by BT's Community Champions scheme.