

BVRG UPDATE - SEPTEMBER 2004

**** STOP PRESS ** LATE LICENCE APPLICATION WITHDRAWN**

We've just found out that Cave Austin has **WITHDRAWN** its application for extending its licensing hours on Sunday nights. There was to have been a public meeting on the 23rd September which those of us who wrote letters to the London Borough of Lewisham were invited to. Having spoken to the Licensing department at Lewisham this week, the Licensing Officer verbally confirmed that the application has just been withdrawn. We should be receiving confirmation in writing over the next few days.

Whatever Cave Austin's reasons were for withdrawing this application, it almost definitely helped that so many local residents objected. We did gain confirmation from the Licensing Department that they were writing back to 89 addresses. Many of these addresses represent families, couples and other local groups so well over 100 local people have been active in contesting this. Thank you to all our members who took the time to write to the council - we really think it's made a difference in this instance and we're all relieved to be able to sleep peacefully after 11pm on Sunday nights.

BVRG - WE'RE NOW OFFICIAL! Paul Watts, our Treasurer, has been extremely busy this summer, setting up Blackheath Village Residents' Group as an official not-for-profit limited company. We felt that having grown to over 300 members, it was important to make the group more formal. The major benefits to us now, as a group, are that we have limited liability (up to one pound per steering group member – all other members are completely protected), a registered company number and address and an official bank account for current and future donations to be paid into. If you have any additional questions about how the organisation has been formed, please contact us either by phone or email and we can forward these enquiries to Paul. BVRG's official details are at the bottom of this update.

MEETINGS WITH LOCAL PUBS Over the last two months some of us have met with the Area Manager and Manager of O'Neill's and the staff at The Crown. Both pubs / breweries seem to be entering into the spirit of dialogue with local residents and have said they are keen to work with us to resolve any future problems that may come up involving their patrons. We'll be updating you on any changes happening as a result of these meetings. So far, some of us have noticed a reduction in anti-social behaviour during the last few weeks - we will continue to work with the pubs to improve this further over the months to come.

BVRG has also written to The Spirit Group, who run The Crown, to express the concerns residents have with the anti-social behaviour of some of its patrons. Meetings are scheduled with both pubs on a quarterly basis. Please let us know if you're having any difficulties with bars near the roads you are living in so we can work with them, as a group, to improve the situation. Many of the bars in the village are linked to the same breweries, so we may be able to have some impact.

It's important to us that BVRG is seen in a positive way as not being against the bars or restaurants in the village. As residents, we enjoy going to many of these places ourselves. We are positioning ourselves as being keen to keep a healthy balance between licensed premises and local people in Blackheath which has always been a highly residential area.

EXTENDING THE BVRG STEERING GROUP We are having a meeting on **Wednesday 15th September** for members who would like to get more involved with the Steering Group for BVRG. Please us know if you would like to be part this and we will forward you the details of the meeting. We have already had a number of volunteers and we're hoping to be able to allocate the future work we're doing so nobody is too overloaded.

Being on the Steering Group will involve one monthly meeting and some responsibility to help out with certain projects which could include local issues (such as licensing or liaison with Councils, local police or other local groups), events or general publicity and distribution for the group. Steering Group meetings tend to become fairly sociable as well! We do appreciate that we're all busy people so whatever time or enthusiasm you can contribute will be gratefully received.

OTHER NEWS FROM MEMBERS This information has come from emails we have been sent from individual members and other neighbours. **BVRG has not, at this point in time, confirmed the details with the relevant organisations involved.** We do need any members who are particularly interested in these issues to get involved with the Steering Group so we can work on specific projects on behalf of residents.

- Traffic Controls around the village - proposed 20mph zone around the village, speed humps and footpath widening. Much discussion from people about whether this will improve the area by slowing the traffic or create a gridlock resulting in increased fumes and noise.
- Rail services - there is currently a rumour in the area that SouthEastern may be planning to stop trains running to Charing Cross from Blackheath at weekends. There has been local discussion about whether Blackheath needs an active rail user's group.
- Applications for mobile phone aerials in the area. Some residents have recently been involved in contesting planning applications in Wemyss Road and other parts of Blackheath.

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