

BVRG SEPTEMBER 2005 UPDATE

Dear Neighbours,

Here's our latest newsletter – apologies in advance for the size of it, there's been quite a lot going on over the summer months!

Best wishes,
BVRG

HOW BVRG WORKS We are a network of neighbours who are keen to keep Blackheath Village a special place. The group was set up in March 2004 as a result of the increasing amount of anti-social behaviour in our local area and we now have over 350 members. Everyone involved with BVRG works on a completely voluntary basis and the aim of the group is to campaign on local issues, circulate information and increase community spirit in the village through events and networking. The main focus so far has been the problems linked to binge drinking in the area and so far, much work has been done circulating information about late licence applications and liaising with the police and the Councils.

With such a large number of members, there are bound to be differences of opinion about what's happening within the local area. **BVRG aims to act as an information network for neighbours and individual residents can make up their own minds about each issue that comes up.** We do our best to keep you all up-to-date, but also need people to let us know of anything that may be interesting to the group as a whole - either problems they've experienced or more positive things they'd like to promote to local neighbours. We do not charge a subscription for membership and cover our costs (printing etc.) with donations from members. We're always keen for more people to get involved so do get in touch if you would like to help - it's a great way of meeting more people locally. The results we've seen so far prove that neighbours can directly make a difference to their local area. **Thanks** to everyone for your support over the last 18 months!

BLACKHEATH ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR MEETING Representatives from BVRG attended a meeting of the Anti-Social Behaviour group on 17th August. This was also attended by the police, Cllr Andrew Brown, Lewisham Council and the Blackheath Society. We were impressed by the commitment of all parties to support residents faced with anti-social behaviour. The process of establishing a Saturation Zone for Blackheath Village continues. If this is approved, it will be more difficult for pubs to get the type of licence extensions which many residents have been protesting about. The police have concrete plans to deal with crime and nuisance connected with drinking in Blackheath.

MEETING WITH POLICE BVRG members, together with representatives of other community groups, continue to meet with the Police on a regular basis to discuss the problems that residents have in Blackheath. Many village residents continue to suffer from noise and anti-social behaviour from customers leaving the pubs and bars in the Village. The Police underlined their determination to take a proactive approach to tackling these problems and various potential strategies were discussed. Once again, the Police emphasised the importance of residents telephoning their local police station so that such incidents can be logged. Lewisham Council and the Police are to produce a guide for residents to explain how to complain effectively. In the meantime, please do log and reports all such incidents.

UPDATE ON LATE LICENSING ISSUES As you all know, there's been a flurry of activity over the last few months with many premises making applications to extend their opening hours. Many residents have written letters and attended the council hearings for each one. Some have been more reasonable proposals than others - here's an update for you of all the applications so far:

PRINCESS OF WALES This premises had applied to extend its hours under the new licensing regime to 12.00am (midnight) Thurs/Fri/Sat and 11.30pm Sun/Mon/Tues/Wed. On 2nd August, BVRG representatives and a number of residents attended a hearing of the Lewisham Borough Council Licensing Committee for this proposed extension. Residents and the BVRG addressed the Committee, emphasising the very real concerns about granting an extension of the licence. At the end of the meeting, Mitchells and Butlers brewery unexpectedly **withdrew** its application.

O'NEILL'S This premises was applying to extend its hours for the sale of alcohol, hot drink, food and entertainment to the following:

Sunday–Wednesday 10am–12 midnight

Friday and Saturday 10am–2am

Thursday 10am–1am

O'Neill's **withdrew** from its application just before the expected hearing on Monday 8th August. This pub is owned by Mitchells and Butlers brewery, who also own the Princess of Wales. Many of you have been kind enough to comment on the strength of the case presented by the BVRG on your behalf and this, together with the quantity and quality of your objections undoubtedly played a large part in the decision to withdraw the application. It has helped that many residents have begun to report incidents relating to licensed premises to the police - please keep doing this.

THE CROWN This premises had applied for the following extension of hours: Sun–Weds Midnight + 1 additional hour of "late night refreshment" after last sale of alcohol (Closing at 1am) Thurs-Sat 1am + 1 additional hour of "late night refreshment" after last sale of alcohol (Closing at 2am)

They were also applying for live music limited to a max. of two performers. Their current licence only permits recorded music. They had also applied for additional hours on a variety of dates which could have led them to be open as late as 3am on certain days.

Just before the council hearing on Tuesday 30th August, The Spirit Group who own The Crown, unexpectedly **changed their application and brought their hours back down** to 11pm Mon-Sat and 10.30pm Sun. This was a direct result of the huge number of objection letters received from local neighbours. They were still applying to open for alcohol sales from 10 am on Sunday mornings. At the hearing, they were allowed an additional 10 minutes drinking up time (from 20 to 30 mins) and were told they could open at 10am on a Sunday, but only for non-alcoholic refreshment. These changes will only be allowed subject to the following conditions:

- Prominent notices at all exits requesting the patrons to leave the premises and area quietly.
- Doors and windows to be closed at all times of live public entertainment.
- To have an inspection by the council's Environmental Health Department and subsequently put into place any noise limitation measures recommended by them.
- To keep consumption of alcohol within the licensed area and not spilling out on the street.
- To install CCTV outside the premises to help combat the unacceptable level of urination, vomiting and other anti-social behaviour from patrons of this pub.

The residents at the hearing were generally happy with this result.

THE RAILWAY This premises applied for the following extension of hours for the sale of alcohol, regulated entertainment and refreshment:

Sun-Weds 10am – midnight

Thurs-Sat 10am – 1am

The Railway was successful in its application to open into the early hours of the morning, despite BVRG arguing that this would inevitably disturb Village residents. The Council made the licence variation conditional upon door staff being in place on Thursday to Saturday. This was a disappointing result following a series of very successful battles with the breweries over extended opening.

The two key differences between this and the other applications seem to be that the objections from local residents were fewer than for other applications and did not present the same level of evidence of incidents connected with the pub. There was also a lack of presence at the meeting of residents living in the immediate vicinity of the licensed premises. At every other meeting, residents have told Councillors in graphic detail of the difficulties of living near licensed premises, often with photographic evidence of the anti-social behaviour that residents have to endure. Unfortunately, at the Railway hearing, nobody living close to the pub attended the meeting and this made a huge difference to the decision. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of every resident to ensure that if you have concerns about licensed premises, that these concerns are voiced - and voiced loudly. BVRG will continue to do all it can to help, but it cannot work alone. Neighbours in the vicinity of the Hare and Billet who object to their application for a late licence (and outside drinking) are strongly advised to attend the meeting on 28th September to make their views known.

THE HARE AND BILLET This pub has applied for the following extended hours: Sun-Weds 11.00-23.00 & Thurs-Sat 11.00-00.00 (midnight). They have also applied for regulated entertainment including live music and to serve late night refreshment inside and outside the premises. Although the hours are not as late as other premises, neighbours in this vicinity have had many problems in the past with outside

drinking at this pub and their current licence bans outside drinking as a result of these previous problems. **The hearing date for this premises is Wednesday 28th September, 7pm at Lewisham Town Hall's Civic Suite in Catford (opposite the council offices). Please attend if you live in the vicinity of the Hare and Billet and have objected to this application.**

PIZZA EXPRESS Pizza Express, Tranquil Vale has applied to permit live entertainment throughout the whole of the premises on a daily basis from 19.00-2230. **BVRG has not objected as a group to this application.**

BVTA DONATION Many thanks to Blackheath Village Traders Association who have very kindly donated the sum of £150 to BVRG to help with the work we are doing in the village.

TRANQUIL VALE TELECOMS MAST APPEAL Earlier this year, Lewisham refused planning permission to T Mobile who wanted to install a 10 metre high 'telecommunications' lamp post together with associated equipment and meter cabinets on the traffic island at the top of the Village. T Mobile have now appealed against the refusal and the question will be decided by the Planning Inspectorate. Any objections made by residents and others at the end of 2004 will be forwarded on to the Planning Inspectorate and automatically be considered by the Inspector. If anyone wants to make any further observations, they should be sent to: Miss Ruth Strainge, The Planning Inspectorate, 3/14 Eagle Wing, Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol BS1 6PN by **29 September 2005** in triplicate and quoting reference APP/C5690/A/05/1187206. All those who objected to the application should have received from Lewisham a letter to this effect, enclosing a statement of the grounds of T Mobile's appeal.

THE NEWPIN FAMILY QUIZ The FWA Newpin Family Quiz is a worthy cause fundraising for the Greenwich & Lewisham Centre. The next quiz will be on Friday, 23rd September 2005 7.00 - 10.00 p.m. at St Mary's Church Hall, Cresswell Park, Blackheath. Doors are open at 6.30 pm and the price is £12.50 for adults and £6.00 children (under 12 yrs). This includes some food and a bar is available. Please call Elinor on 020 7574 2702 or email elinor.pritchard@elizabetharden.com to book tickets.

THE WEEKEND TO BREAKTHROUGH BREAST CANCER The Weekend to Breakthrough Breast Cancer is Saturday 24th and Sunday 25th September and there's much to do to ensure that the dedicated Walkers have a fun and safe experience. They are desperately in need of willing volunteers from the Greenwich area that weekend. The Opening and Closing Ceremonies will take place in Bandstand Field, Greenwich Park and they need Volunteers to support and encourage the walkers on their way to 60km on the Saturday and then celebrate their success with them when they return on the Sunday. The Saturday morning shifts are from 4.30am -9.00am and the Sunday shift starts from 8.00am-6.00pm. Volunteers are an integral part of The Weekend and they are hoping that with extra support and enthusiasm this first-time event in London will be a huge success! If you would like to get involved, join The Weekend to Breakthrough Breast Cancer Volunteers today. To sign up please email Rosannah Dawood at rdawood@breakthroughweekend.org or call her on 0870 950 8888.

FUTURE EVENTS We are hoping to hold another BVRG event in the autumn but are having some difficulty finding suitable venues in the village. The 29th Oct date we gave you before is likely to change so we will keep you informed. Please get in touch if you would like to help, or have some ideas to contribute.

WEB VOLUNTEERS Is there anyone within our membership who can help us put together a BVRG web site? Please get in touch with us if you can help.

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