

BVRG JULY UPDATE

AGM

Please do come along to the 2007 BVRG Annual General Meeting on **Wednesday 18th July** at the Old Bakehouse, Bennett Park, SE3. It starts at 8pm and the hall is down the first left driveway on Bennett Park, behind the Age Exchange. There will be drinks and nibbles provided after the meeting and it will be a great opportunity to meet the BVRG Steering Group and chat with your neighbours.

BLACKHEATH VILLAGE CUMULATIVE IMPACT ZONE

Lewisham Borough Council proposes establishing a "Cumulative Impact Zone" (CIZ, also known as a "Saturation Zone") in Blackheath Village. This means that, by default, Lewisham will **refuse** licensing applications if the applicant **cannot** demonstrate that there will **not** be an adverse impact on the people living in the CIZ. (Without a CIZ, the **default** is to grant applications).

BVRG has campaigned for the CIZ since our organisation started in March 2004 and we believe it is critically important that this is established to protect Blackheath village. We contacted you in a special update last month and as a result, many of our members wrote to the council supporting the CIZ. Submissions closed on June 19th and we have been told that a decision may be made by the council in October this year.

Many thanks for all your support with this and we are all hoping that if successful, this will be a strong step in the right direction for our area.

BLACKHEATH VILLAGE TRADERS ASSOCIATION ("BVTA") – SAD NEWS

In early June, the BVTA held its Annual General Meeting. The most important item on the agenda related to the future of the organisation itself, which was founded in 1984. A resolution was passed unanimously to wind up the BVTA forthwith. We imagine that many of our members will be saddened and dismayed by this news, but it must be seen against a background of falling membership and lack of support. Despite the tremendous personal efforts made by its Chairman, Chris Bull, and other members of the Committee, the number of members has been steadily declining in recent years.

Of some 150 businesses operating in the Village, barely one in three – about 50 – are now members, against almost 100 just a few years ago. The inexorable expansion of national (and international) branded businesses and the related decline of owner-managed enterprises means that – despite all the big business rhetoric about community involvement – staff in local shops are frequently moved around and do not really become part of the commercial and social fabric of the Village with any personal interest. The end result is that the present membership level is not high enough for financial breakeven and well below that needed to ensure vigorous health. Only about 10 attended the AGM, despite being informed in advance that the very future of the BVTA was on the agenda.

A very visible consequence of the BVTA's winding-up will be the absence of Christmas lights this year. Many people will now presumably discover that without volunteers some things which are popular and much enjoyed simply do not happen. There are currently discussions happening about an action group being formed to save our lights – we will keep you in touch with developments.

BLACKHEATH WARD COUNCILLORS

The BVRG Steering Group has been meeting regularly with our local councillors. The most recent meeting was on 4th July and we discussed the following topics with them:

- The Cumulative Impact Zone – decision to be made this autumn.
- CCTV in the village – money for this has not been found by Lewisham council. This will be discussed further.

- Controlled Parking Zone – there may be changes made to this after the borough-wide parking policy review this summer.
- Christmas lights – these are under question this year due to the closure of Blackheath Village Traders Association. There are currently a number of discussions happening about cash and health and safety issues surrounding these. We are investigating a variety of possibilities and may link with some of the individual retailers to support a save our lights campaign so we will keep you up to date with developments.

Please let us know if there are any other issues you would like us to discuss with our local councillors at our next meeting with them.

MOUNTAIN VIEW UPDATE

The recent Greenwich council meeting for the Mountain View application was attended by two of our steering group and two other members. Everyone was allowed to speak and ask questions. The outcome was not bad – Mountain View got the hours they wanted, but with a number of conditions that we hope will prevent the premises being run as a night club. The licensing committee spent a long time working out these conditions – please do get in touch with us if you live nearby and have any problems.

MEETINGS WITH POLICE

One of our BVRG steering group members attended the Blackheath Ward Safer Neighbourhoods Panel Meeting on 7th June 2007. The police clarified that the Safer Neighbourhoods team's current priorities in this area are:

1. Continued focus on drunk / disorderly behaviour in Blackheath Village.
2. Addressing disorder on Lethbridge Estate.
3. Addressing disorder in Dacre Park.
4. Continued focus on disorderly behaviour at St. Joseph's (where there is a police woman on full-time detachment).
5. Action to be taken against cyclists on pavements in Blackheath Village.
6. Action to be taken against those using mobile phones whilst driving.

The Blackheath Safer Neighbourhoods team wants to hear from you on 020 8284 8497 (office), 07768 178292 (mobile) and blackheath.snt@met.police.uk (email). Safer Neighbourhoods teams are not there to provide a 24-hour response, this is the role of response team officers. Response team officers do pass on information to Safer Neighbourhoods teams as appropriate. All emergency calls should be made via 999. Should you wish to contact the confidential anti-terrorist hotline, please use 0800 789 321. The police are keen that any suspicious activity be reported, however innocuous it may appear.

URGENT REQUEST FOR NEW HELPERS

As members are aware, BVRG is an entirely voluntary organisation and members give their time for free when they work on BVRG business. The BVRG steering group is working harder than ever and from time to time it seeks BVRG volunteers who are interested in joining the committee, or helping with specific tasks. At the moment, BVRG is looking for new volunteers for the following roles:

MEMBERSHIP CO-ORDINATOR – this will involve compiling newsletters and other communications to members and updating the membership database.

GENERAL STEERING GROUP MEMBER - The role is broad-ranging, with members normally having their main responsibility in a major area of BVRG activity, such as licensing or police liaison. Some months are busier than others but you would need to be available for the regular steering group meeting on the first Monday of each month.

WEBSITE DESIGNER / ADMINISTRATOR - This is a new role and we are looking for a volunteer willing to contribute a few hours a month to the establishment and maintenance of the BVRG website.

Please contact us ASAP if you can spare some time to help – we need volunteers to keep BVRG running.

Blackheath Village Residents' Group Limited

Chapman House, 10 Blackheath Village, London, SE3 9LE. bvrgroup@tiscali.co.uk Tel: 020 8143 4623A Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England. Company Number: 5206936.