

CLERK'S REPORT ON PARISH COUNCIL ACTIVITIES SEPTEMBER 2009

BEACON COURT CLOSURE

A packed meeting in the Church on 17th September heard from Steve Henning, Alan Dulson and Jackie Trundle of Riversmead Housing Association as to how they decided to close Beacon Court. They confirmed that they had not consulted with East Herts District Council or anyone in the village before taking that decision. Riversmead have been offered a total of £45 million to build new affordable housing on land including Beacon Court. They have briefed architects to provide nine 3-bed family houses, six 2-bed family houses and six 2-bed flats on the Beacon Court site and have indicated that some of the flats may be available for the elderly. They intend to seek planning permission in January next year.

Many at the meeting expressed great concern at the lack of consultation as to what was needed in the village and the stress put upon Beacon Court residents by requiring them to move by the end of the year. Nearby residents also had concerns about how the site could be developed without causing a great deal of inconvenience to the village and whether the site could take the number of homes proposed and the attendant car parking.

The overwhelming feeling at the meeting was that Beacon Court should be refurbished rather than demolished. Riversmead confirmed that the grant could not be used for refurbishment but that other grants may be available.

The Audit Commission recently commented adversely on the practice of councils building new houses with the attendant strain put on local facilities rather than refurbishing existing properties. The Parish Council Chairman, Andrew Crumpton, is meeting with Mark Prisk MP and William Ashley to see how the village can inform Riversmead's plans and perhaps get Beacon Court refurbished.

If and when the Parish Council gets notice of any planning application, it will arrange a meeting at which the proposals can be discussed by all. This may be at short notice, so keep an eye on the noticeboards.

ALTERNATE REFUSE COLLECTION

Jackie Bruce of East Herts District Council gave an interesting briefing on the new system on Monday 14th September. I shall be putting copies of her slides onto the website by the end of the month so those who missed it can see what was said. Every home has had a leaflet describing the new system with contact numbers for queries.

BONFIRE NIGHT

Don't forget – this is on Saturday 31st October. If you want to help, please Paul Walker know on 586161.

TELEPHONE SCAM

Neighbourhood Watch has warned about a telephone scam. Apparently a professional sounding adult male telephones the victim (the victims chosen are listed in the telephone directory) stating he is calling from BT Collection Service because money is owed to BT. The caller states that the victim's bank has stopped the Direct Debit and that money is immediately owed, failure to pay will result in their phone being cut off. The amount that is allegedly 'owed' has been less than £10 (typically £9). The caller requires the victim's credit

card details so that payment can be made. The caller also 'proves' he can easily cut off the victim's phone telling them to hang up and try dialling out. It is then believed he puts them on 'hold' so that the line is still connected but of course the victim believes their line has been disconnected. The offender then phones them back and again attempts to obtain their credit card detail. The main object is not the £9 but is to obtain the credit card data. The caller is described as very professional sounding.

Please be aware and do not give any personal details out over the phone. Do not give any Credit or Debit card details to anybody phoning you. Should you receive such a call like this then you should immediately contact the BT Nuisance Call Bureau on 0800 411 422.

THE SOLDIERS, SAILORS, AIRMEN AND FAMILIES ASSOCIATION (SSAFA) - FORCES HELP

This is the National charity helping and supporting those who serve in our Armed Forces, those who used to serve, and the families of both. Each year they provide a reliable caring and trusted service to more than 50,000 people throughout the UK and beyond.

Although no two people have exactly the same experience whilst serving their country, they are all entitled to the support of SSAFA Forces Help if they face difficulty in civilian life. Their trained caseworkers operate through a regional network of nearly 100 branches to support members of the Ex-Service community. They visit people in their own homes to learn about and help with the problems they face. Anyone who approaches them will be treated with dignity and respect.

Their volunteers provide:

- * Experienced, non judgmental and friendly advice
- * Help for those with additional needs for equipment or home redevelopment
- * Financial assistance, in association with other charities and benevolent funds
- * Emotional support for the lonely, ill or bereaved

What makes SSAFA Forces Help special?

- * Their commitment - They work tirelessly to meet the current needs of our servicemen and women and the changing needs of those who have previously served.
- * Their people - Their reputation has been built on the excellent work of their dedicated volunteers and staff. They make a difference to thousand of lives.
- * Their strength - No other charity operates on the same scale across the military community. SSAFA Forces Help has been supporting the military community since 1885.

For more information about SSAFA Forces Help and how they may be able to help you and your family do please contact the East Herts Divisional Secretary: Delia Miles on 01279 659992.

YOUTH CLUB

The Youth Club meets in the Mission Room on Wednesdays from 6.30pm to 7.30pm for years 4 to 6 and in the Village Hall on Fridays from 7.30pm to 9.30pm for years 7 to 9. Contact Nick Sharp for more information.

NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Monday 5th October in the Mission Room at 7.30pm.

Members of the public are always welcome at Parish Council meetings.

Carolyn Morgan
Clerk to the Council

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