

Your local councillors



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You can contact us at any time. We also hold surgeries at Beacon Rise School and Courtney School from 10.00 - 11.00 a.m. on the first Saturday of the month (except Aug) and we hold mobile street surgeries - if we're in your area, you'll get a leaflet from us a couple of days before.

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Welcome to the seventh edition of our e-newsletter !

Firstly a big 'Thank-You' to everyone who supported us at the election. The campaign was a tough one in Kingswood, with the Tories fighting a particularly personal campaign. But we are delighted that their tactics failed to pay off and residents have given us the opportunity to continue to represent Woodstock for a further 4 years.

The biggest change for us is that we welcome Gareth on board. He has taken over from Roger Coales who stood down after 28 years service as a local councillor for the area. We all wish Roger well in his retirement.

Much like every year, although business within the Council tends to quieten down during the summer, particularly during August, a quick look back at what we've been involved with has seen us as busy as ever in the ward. We've recently begun our annual round of mobile surgeries whereby, over the next 10 months, we will be visiting every road in Woodstock giving residents the opportunity to talk to us in the comfort of their own home. If we're due to be in your area, we will deliver a leaflet a few days in advance to let you know.

As ever, please feel free to contact us about anything you read - or indeed any other issue affecting you that you think we might be able to help with.

With best wishes,

Gareth Manson

Andy Perkins

Pat Rooney

PS. For those who have recently signed-up to our e-newsletters, you can find back issues at <http://www.woodstocklabour.org.uk/eNews.asp>

In this issue.....

Amongst the news in this issue;

- Frenchay to be part-privatised by the Tories
- Results from the May election
- Update on Residents' Parking and a Review of Waiting Restrictions
- Road re-surfacing
- Results of recent speed surveys
- Rotunda demolition update
- And lots more !

News from the Council

• Frenchay to be "part-privatised"

As part of the Bristol Health Services Plan approved in 2005, which will see a new Southmead as the acute hospital for north Bristol and South Gloucestershire, Frenchay hospital is to be rebuilt as a community hospital. The intention is that the new Frenchay will house rehabilitation beds and offer outpatient appointments, diagnostic services and various therapies. Cossham hospital is also being refurbished as a community hospital to offer much the same (except beds).

However, as plans for the new Frenchay begin to emerge it has been announced by the local NHS that the new community hospital at Frenchay will be built and run by an external organisation. Unlike the controversial Private Finance Initiatives (PFIs) where the NHS does, eventually, own the building, the new Frenchay is not being built as a PFI scheme and presumably will never be owned by the NHS. On top of this it has been announced that the nursing staff there will also be employed by the same company; i.e. they will not be NHS nurses.

We believe this amounts to a part privatisation of the new Frenchay hospital and that the local Tories should be held to account for it. When the Bristol Health Service Plan (BHSP) was approved in 2005 and Southmead was chosen as the site for the new acute hospital, local Conservatives were highly critical of the Labour government for allowing it to happen - despite local Labour councillors' and Kingswood's Labour MP Roger Berry's support for Frenchay. The Tories promised at local and national elections to "Save Frenchay" hospital if they were ever elected to government but have since failed to live up to their promise. And now their hypocrisy has gone even further and they are allowing Frenchay to be part-privatised. On top of this, the original BHSP said that the new Frenchay would get a minor injuries unit (MIU). We have learnt recently that, under the new Government, this will not be happening.



The new Frenchay hospital will be part-privatised by the Tories

- **May's local election results**

The elections in May for South Gloucestershire Council saw Labour increase our number of councillors from 9 to 15, The Lib Dems dropped from 27 to 21 and the Tories remained on 34. Labour gained 6 seats (3 in Patchway from the Lib Dems, 2 in Filton from the Tories and 1 in Rodway from the Tories). The Tories took 3 from the Lib Dems in Bradley Stoke, Bitton and Pilning & Severn Beach. South Gloucestershire Council remains a hung council and is being run by a minority Tory administration.



News from Woodstock

- **May's local election results :** In Woodstock our vote was up almost 8% on the 2007 result, about 5% of which came from the Lib Dems. We won around 64% of the vote, compared to the Tories 28.9% and Lib Dems on 7.1%. The overall turnout in Woodstock was 40% - varying between 36.4% around the Grimsbury Road area to 44.6% around the south-western part of the ward. Over the course of the election campaign we were able to knock on 95% of the doors in the ward
- **An update on residents' parking around the town centre**

For a number of years we have been pressing the Council to consider extending the current residents' parking scheme on roads in the town centre. Currently the scheme is limited to **South Road, West Street** and parts of **Cecil Road** and **Blackhorse Road**, but other roads such as **Laurel Street, Derrick Road, Bright Street, Halls Road, Moravian Road, Wood Road**, parts of **Hanham Road** and the rest of **Blackhorse Road** suffer from a lack of on-street parking for local residents.



Laurel Street: One of a number of central Kingswood streets where residents experience parking problems

Towards the end of last year, the Tories finally approved a policy which would allow the Council to bring-in residents' parking schemes if they have enough support from residents.

For a scheme to be introduced it will require the backing of 70% of all residents in the proposed area. If a scheme goes ahead a maximum of 2 permits per house would be issued and there would likely be a one-off £10 administration charge unless a volunteer from the local community came forward who would be responsible for administering permits.

We met-up with officials in the Council recently (see later item on Review of Waiting Restrictions) and we were advised that we should see some proposals emerging in the Spring of next year for a residents' parking scheme in central Kingswood.

- We have been exerting a bit of pressure on officials from the Council's Community Services department over the summer to get a move on with enhancements to **Court Road open spaces**. A new path and some exercise equipment was installed well over a year ago but nothing has happened since then. Thanks to our pressure, a further public meeting has been held with the promise that further work should start in the late autumn. A multi-use games area and small skate park are due to be installed on the **Hopps Road** side. In the Spring, work should commence on the **Pettigrove Road** side to introduce more planting and paths to make the open space more 'park-like'.
- Work has been completed at the **Woodstock Open Space** between Glanville Gardens, Wedmore Close and Somerton Close to enhance the play area - this was paid for by money from a Labour government scheme called Playbuilder that survived the Tory-led government's cuts.



Pat Rooney, Gareth Manson and Andy Perkins with some of the new equipment at the Woodstock Open Space

The word from the streets

- A number of roads in Woodstock which we have been lobbying to be re-surfaced have been done over the summer. **Oakridge Close, Orchard Close**, and part of **Beverstone** now have brand new surfaces - the latter had never been done as it had been thought it was not the Council's responsibility until we proved it was! **Woodstock Close** (see more below) has also been resurfaced. We have been given an assurance that **Cock Road** is on the provisional list for resurfacing during 2012/13.
- We have had a significant victory in persuading the Council to re-resurface **The Orchards**. An original surface dressing (tar and chippings) did not work as the tar kept melting and the surface was being churned-up by the tyres of power-assisted vehicles. The Council then decided to try an experimental treatment which was designed to stop the tar melting in warm weather but this also failed. So we kept nagging and went to the press with our concerns and eventually the Council decided to do a proper resurface.

This is the second road in Woodstock where the Council has had to re-surface a road after a surface dressing failed. A few years ago **Peacocks Lane** was re-surfaced properly after we complained that it was suffering from the same problems as have recently beset The Orchards. Despite our pleas that surface dressing is not appropriate for narrow cul-de-sacs, the Council has re-surfaced other roads in the ward with this treatment. We have already raised concerns about **Poplar Terrace** and



Pat Rooney at The Orchards

Lansdown View in particular and are keeping an eye on **Kingsleigh Park** and **Woodstock Close**.

- In addition to road surfaces, we hope that the footpath at **Greenore** will be re-surfaced at the beginning of October, because two previous dates were postponed.
- Last year we were able to secure around £35,000 for a **pedestrian crossing on Blackhorse Road** roughly outside of Blackhorse Court. We have met up with officers to have a look at potential locations and we are hoping that some initial designs will be available for public consultation later in the Autumn.
- **Review of Waiting Restrictions:** If you've ever contacted the Council with an enquiry about double-yellow lines or other parking restrictions, the chances are the reply you got back was along the lines of "It's a very lengthy and costly process so we'll stick your enquiry on file".

Every 4 or 5 years or so, the Council goes through a process of reviewing waiting restrictions and this is when it considers all the enquiries and requests it has "on file". At the current time, officials in the Council are undertaking a review of restrictions in Kingswood and they are now doing those from Woodstock. We have met up recently with officials to have an update on progress and make sure that anything we are aware of will be considered.

Over the next few months the Council will be writing to residents in areas where various parking restrictions are being considered for possible alteration. When this is complete they will be working on, what we hope, will be the beginning of a proper residents' parking scheme for roads near the town centre (see news item earlier).

- Long awaited changes to the road layout at the junction of **Orchard Road** and **Hollow Road** have been announced. The Council should begin work on installing two speed tables on 24th October at this accident blackspot. This follows a 2-year campaign by us on behalf of local residents and for which we were able to obtain some funding from a local Area Forum.
- A number of **speed surveys** have been carried out recently. When analysing survey data, the Council is interested in a figure called the "85th percentile" speed. This is the speed under which 85% of vehicles are travelling - or conversely the speed over which 15% of vehicles (about 1 in 7) are travelling. If the 85th percentile speed is above the level at which the police would take action, then the Council considers there is a problem for them to investigate further.
 - At **Laurel Street** almost 9500 vehicles were counted over 9 days. Roughly 1000 to 1100 on a weekday on this one-way residential street. Not far off 50% were over the 20mph limit. The all important 85th percentile speed was 25.8mph. This is inline with other findings in Kingswood's 20mph zone and shows that the 20mph zone is widely



**Gareth Manson at the junction
of Orchard Road and Hollow
Road**

flouted. Our next step is to try and get the Council to take this issue seriously.



- At **Orchard Vale**, on the straight section between Grimsbury Road and Fairview Road nearly 16000 vehicles were counted eastbound (towards Grimsbury Road) over 11 days and almost 17000 westbound. The average speed was around 28-29mph in both directions. The 85th percentile speeds were 35.3mph eastbound and 34.5mph westbound. This is not quite high enough for further action to be taken but we will try and see what can be done.
- At **Cock Road** near the Chapel, just over 33000 vehicles were counted heading eastbound and almost 39000 vehicles westbound over a 9 day period. The average speeds were 26-27mph eastbound and 27-28mph westbound. The 85th percentile speeds were 31.4mph eastbound and 33mph westbound. At these levels, the speeds are no different to comparable roads elsewhere in South Gloucestershire. However, of interest is that the average number of vehicles using the road per day is far higher than a survey found in 2008 (ca. 4300 vs. 3000) giving some support to suggestions we have received that the ring road roundabout lights are altering drivers' choice of roads. This is one we are following up.

Meetings, Greetings, Out & About

- We have attended two events at **Abraham Fry House**; firstly to hear residents' concerns about a proposal for housing behind Woodland Terrace; and secondly to hear about Merlin Housing Society's review of sheltered housing.
- We have attended an Open Day at **Grimsbury Farm** and the quarterly meetings of the local Safer & Stronger group.
- We spent a few weeks during the summer delivering our latest **Woodstock Rose** newsletter to each of the 4600 homes in Woodstock. We hope you find these newsletters informative. If there's anything you'd like to see covered (or not), please let us know. Copies of our newsletters can be downloaded from our website at <http://www.woodstocklabour.org.uk/rose.asp>
- As we said in the introduction to this e-newsletter our 2011/12 programme of **mobile surgeries** has kicked off and we have been out on the streets around the western and northern parts of the ward. It is very useful to meet local residents whilst we are out and about so we can see and hear about issues at first hand as well as spot problems with litter, blocked drains and so forth. But, of course, you don't have to wait until we're in your area - you can contact us at any time.



Planning and licensing news

- Over the summer we have been applying pressure through the Council on the owners of the **Rotunda** to hurry up with demolition. Planning permission has been granted (twice) for demolition of the building and replacement with a mixed development of offices and flats. The proportion of office space to flats is different in the two applications. However, despite having planning permission, the building has been left to deteriorate and it had become subject to repeated arson attacks, criminal damage and anti-social behaviour. We were initially promised that demolition would begin in early August but this was delayed due to the lack of an asbestos survey. This survey has now been completed and we are told that asbestos removal is now underway. Demolition should take 6 weeks following the removal of the asbestos.
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- Andy Perkins at the Rotunda**
- There have been a number of controversial and/or large planning applications submitted and/or decided over the past 6 months or so;
 - A proposal for 23 dwellings on land behind **Woodland Terrace** - which would involve a new access road across what are currently the playing fields of Our Lady of Lourdes.
 - A proposal for 14 dwellings to replace a bungalow and large garden on **Woodstock Road** was approved in August.
 - A proposal from **Sainsburys** to open a mini supermarket in the former City of Bristol College building next to Kingswood library.
 - A revised proposal has been received to demolish the **Highwayman pub** and replace it with flats.
 - A proposal has recently been received to demolish a boarded-up bungalow opposite Courtney School and replace it with 11 flats and a new bungalow.
 - And finally, about a year after being submitted, planning permission has been granted for 375 units of housing on the **former Douglas motorcycle works** between Hanham Road and Forest Road. The total includes 306 homes (138 houses and 168 apartments), a 40-bed nursing home and a 28-unit sheltered housing scheme. 390 car parking spaces will be provided.
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- Gareth Manson and Pat Rooney outside the building on High Street which Sainsbury's want to convert to a mini supermarket**
- A small development of 5 houses off Courtney Road between numbers 44 and 48, now called **Courtney Place**, was completed recently but the developers failed to install pedestrian safety measures within the access road where it crosses an existing footpath linking Russell Avenue with Langford Way. Following intervention by us, the Council has now forced the developer to install some tactile paving, signs and bollards.

- The Council looks like it intends to sell off Enmore House on **Court Road** now that children's social services have vacated the property and moved into the so-called Children's Hub on Alma Road.
- **General advice about planning applications:** If you are advised by the Council about a planning application close to you and you have concerns, the most important thing you can do initially is put your concerns in writing to the Council. You can do this as a traditional letter or online via the Council's website. You may also support a particular application, and if so, you can also make your support known to the Council. Please note though, that your letters/emails are made public although some personal details such as signatures are removed.

The majority of planning applications received by the Council are not controversial and get dealt with behind the scenes by planning officers under powers granted to them. In our role as your local councillors we cannot stop (or approve) applications by ourselves. However, in the case of controversial applications we do have the right to ask that the decisions are made in public by a committee of 13 councillors and we can also ask that the committee visits the site to see the issues for themselves. At these meetings, there are opportunities for the public to speak.

If you are ever concerned about a planning application, please feel free to contact us. Please note though that Gareth is one of the 13 councillors on the planning committee. This does mean he is unable to give an opinion about the rights/wrongs of applications before decision-making committees meet. If he does venture an opinion beforehand, then he forfeits his right to vote when it comes to making a decision. Andy and Pat do not sit on the committee so they are less constrained in what they can say.

That's all for this issue ! Don't forget you can follow us on [Twitter](#) and find out more about us on our website;

woodstocklabour.org.uk

