

# ELTHAM PARK RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

No. 227 December 2019

## EDITORIAL

Welcome to the last – and pre-Christmas – newsletter of the year. Both Eltham Lights Up and Westmount Lights Up have signalled the approach of Christmas with the traditional switching on of the festive street lights. The Friends of Eltham Parks have looked forward to the Spring by planting yet more snowdrops, crocuses and daffodils in Eltham Park South. Our sense of community is strengthened by such colourful events and activities!

There is encouraging news to report on the fight to save the Winter Garden, though there will be crucial planning decisions to take in the New Year to ensure that the proposed new school harmonises with the historical legacy of the Mansion site and does not place excessive demands on the local infrastructure.

The feedback you give us during the annual collection of subscriptions confirms how much residents value the newsletter – and EPRA's wider influence on local issues. We thank you for your continuing support, and we wish you a happy Christmas and a healthy New Year.

The Editor

## THEFTS FROM CARS

Residents have reported a series of thefts from cars parked in the drives of houses near Eltham Park South in Glenesk Road. The thieves test to see if the car is unlocked. If it is, they then steal any loose possessions or cash in the glove box or lying around in the car. So remember at all times to lock your car, even if you intend to be indoors for a short while only. The police advise that you should phone **101** if you need to report a crime and always call **999** in the event of an emergency.

## TRAFFIC ISSUES

John Babb continues to attend the South Greenwich Forum's Traffic meeting as EPRA's representative. He reports that there is to be a review of bus stops in Eltham High Street; the 335 bus route from Kidbrooke to North Greenwich is now in service; the new road island in Well Hall Road near the junction of

Dunvegan Road is causing problems to the flow of traffic in the vicinity; and there have been improvements in the frequency of buses on the 314 route from Eltham Station to New Addington (one of the few bus routes in London to benefit from an increase in the number of buses, rather than a reduction). The good news is that the proposal to eliminate the Victoria-bound trains through Eltham has been postponed. It will be reviewed some time in the future.

## ELTHAM PARK SOUTH CAFE

The cafe has now opened the community hall as an internal dining area. The new facility was officially launched on *Saturday 16 November 2019* at a gathering of Friends, users and supporters. The opening represents an important step forward for the cafe, in that it adds an inside and protected area, which gives the cafe a safeguard against the weather.

The room, which used to be a set of changing rooms, has been converted into a warm, intimate and tasteful haven, so do support Des and his team in making use of it for a coffee and a snack! The cafe deserves our support, for it is a valued amenity, and its visible presence helps to keep the park safe and secure.

## SAVE AVERY HILL WINTER GARDEN

Over 100 people attended the SAHWG public meeting which was held on *Monday 21 October 2019*. The well-attended meeting underlined the depth of interest in the future of the Winter Garden and the wider Mansion site.

In terms of saving the Winter Garden, the meeting welcomed the progress made since the last public meeting held in July 2017. The Council is well advanced in its negotiations to take back ownership of the conservatory. It has been successful in persuading the University of Greenwich to make a significant financial contribution to support its restoration and development. The meeting received positively the news that the Council was committed to working with local residents and community groups in bringing the heritage assets back into sustainable use and in

developing a plan of action to maximise their potential. The meeting felt that the success of the Winter Garden in the future would be determined by its impact and utility as a historical, cultural, recreational, educational and events asset. Members of the audience argued for community representation, alongside appropriate experts, on a Winter Garden-specific trust, if that were to be the vehicle for future governance and management.

In terms of links with the historic Mansion site, the meeting pressed the need for a physical and integrated connection between the Winter Garden and the listed parts of the Mansion site, allowing public access to, and community use of, their proud heritage. This linkage would need to transcend the impending split in ownership between the Winter Garden, on the one hand, and the Mansion site, on the other, taking account of the implications of that split for future planning and management. The meeting recognised the imperative for SAHWG to be involved in the maximum level of pre-application consultation, both with the Department for Education and the Royal Borough of Greenwich, so that the case for the Winter Garden's linkage with the listed features of the Mansion site is presented and addressed.

In terms of the impact of the proposed new school on the site, local residents expressed their apprehension about the impact of increased traffic, inevitably caused by the location of the new school, on local parking conditions (the pressures are currently heavy, with one school already located in the immediate vicinity). The meeting raised the potential problem of access to Avery Hill Park, given that the main access road from Bexley Road cuts directly through the space to be developed by the school. Those present argued that the design and construction of the school should be in harmony with the historic buildings and the ambience of the site.

## **A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF A PARK**

'Park Life' - A Year in the Life of Eltham Park South – is the title of a new DVD to be released in 2020. It is produced by Fleet Street Productions Limited under the direction of Steve Grant, who lives in the area. It is being made by kind permission of the Royal Borough of Greenwich, in collaboration with the Friends of Eltham Parks and the Eltham Park South Cafe. 'Park Life' is a not-for-profit project. The central idea of the film is to portray the changing seasons of the park over a whole year and to capture the varying profiles and activities that take place during that period of time.

You can make sure of getting your copy of the film by reserving one in advance. There is a form available at

the cafe, which you can complete and hand in. Alternatively, you can book your copy by emailing [steve@fleetstreetproductions.com](mailto:steve@fleetstreetproductions.com)  
The price of the DVD is expected to be £7.99.

## **NEIGHBOUR to NEIGHBOUR**

'Can I burn a bonfire in my garden?' There is a widespread assumption that you can only light a bonfire after 7 pm. This is not true - the law does not ban bonfires completely. But bonfires can be regarded as a nuisance if they are a regular and persistent occurrence, or if they constitute a nuisance to neighbours. It is plainly insensitive if you light a bonfire when your neighbours' washing is hanging on the line in their garden, they are enjoying their garden, or they have their windows open. The neighbourly approach is to ask yourself the question - 'Would I like it if one of my neighbours was having a bonfire, and my house and garden was full of the smoke from it?' You cannot get rid of household waste by burning it, if it will cause pollution or harm people's health. You could be fined if you light a fire and allow the smoke to drift across the road and become a danger to traffic. The Council has a legal duty to investigate complaints about smoke, and assess whether a statutory nuisance has been caused.

The Royal Borough of Greenwich discourages residents from having bonfires and prefers you to explore alternative methods of disposing of your waste. You can take any waste to the Nathan Way Recycling Centre, which is open seven days a week. You can also place green waste in your green bin for weekly collection, and you can create a compost heap, which is ecologically sustainable, because it returns valuable organic material to the soil. If you have considered all the methods of disposal and decide that a bonfire is the best way to get rid of your waste, then you should first of all inform your neighbours. Information of what materials you intend to burn and how long the fire might last will help to maintain good relations with your neighbours. You should also tell them to let you know if the smoke is bothering them. The whole of the Royal Borough of Greenwich is a Smoke Control Area, and we should do all we can as residents and neighbours to support all efforts to improve air quality locally.

## **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

*3 January – 1 February 2020:* the Bob Hope Theatre presents its Christmas pantomime, 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarves', a delight for all the family. Tickets, from £9 to £12 (group discounts available), can be obtained from the box office on **020 8850 3702** or online at [www.bobhopetheatre.co.uk](http://www.bobhopetheatre.co.uk)