

St Mark's Community Centre

Your local community centre ...

a vibrant centre, run entirely by volunteers.
open to anyone of any faith, creed or colour
If you fancy joining a group or booking the hall for a class, a children's party or whatever, do contact us
Anyone is welcome, so do feel free to come and have a look round. Please contact me for bookings or a general chat

Helen Peter 334936

(footnote: The tower room at St Mark's is also the home of the Association's archives. Many thanks to all those who have recently helped with Spring cleaning and reorganization!)



The **Widcombe Mummers** are planning to 'ride again' on New Year's Day 2007, with an updated script, new characters, and even better music! Lots of good-humoured fun was had last time, and over £250 was raised for the Mayor's Earthquake Appeal. This time round we'll be collecting for the **Friends of Widcombe Surgery**. So please come out of your houses on New Year's Day between noon and 1.00pm and join in. Locations will probably be Widcombe Manor, Prior Park Garden Centre, and Widcombe Schools playground. If anyone would like to help I would love to hear from you!

Ian Gilchrist 334775

The Garden Group

Programme Autumn/Winter 2006 -7

At the Menzies Waterside Hotel
Rossiter Road
All meetings start at 7.30 pm
Cost for members of Widcombe Association £2.50
Visitors £3.00 Parking available

Monday 30 October 2006

Dream Plants for the Natural Garden

Chris Smith of Pennard Plants describes the use of companion planting with grasses

Monday 27 November

An Evening with John Tucker

An illustrated talk by John Tucker from Prior Park Garden Centre

29 January 2007

The Gardens of Southern Ireland

Jenny Whitham describes gardens from County Wicklow to County Kerry

26 February

Bath's Public Parks and Gardens with Prior Park

An illustrated talk by Felicity Medcalf on Bath's historic parks and gardens

Future dates: 27 March, 30 April and coach outing in May.

We look forward to seeing you. Friends and visitors welcome.

Ainley Wade 462807



Forthcoming meetings

Thursday November 16 12.00 at the Victoria Art Gallery.

A visit behind the scenes to view some of the many paintings and prints in store and view the exhibition on life in Georgian Bath.

Meet in the entrance at 11.50.

Thursday December 14 at 7.30pm.

St Mark's Community Centre Members' Evening

Bring along any interesting finds, old pictures and objects. Tell us interesting family stories.

Enjoy mince pies, snacks and wine.

For further information, contact Margaret Burrows, 480749, Fay Briddon, 310127 or Doreen Collyer, 311723.

Widcombe's new Vicar

The **Reverend Katie Windle** and her husband Roy moved here in the Spring and live in the Vicarage at The Orchard, Forefield Rise. She is currently expecting twins and we look forward to meeting the whole family shortly.

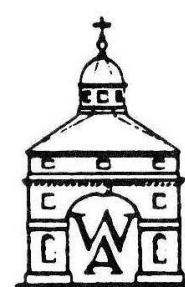
Widcombe Beat Officer

We welcome **Paul Honeychurch** as the new Beat Officer for Widcombe. He has already run two "surgeries" which were publicised in the shops. Keep your eyes open for the next. He has two messages for us: WATCH and REPORT. It is from many small observations that the police can obtain a useful picture of neighbourhood events. His contact number is 01225 842496 followed by 70887 for his Voice-mail, or he can be contacted by e-mail : paul.honeychurch@avonandsomerset.police.uk.

Links with other Bodies

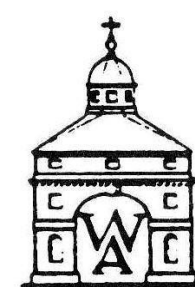
Rosemary Emsley and Mayveen Blackwell represent the Widcombe Association on the committee of **FedBRA**: the Federation of Bath Residents' Associations. We have supported FedBRA objections to Western Riverside and South Quays. They are still fighting for a Special Saturation policy for Licensing and have given presentations about Rugby on the Rec, A Vision for Bath, the Chamber of Commerce and the bid for a Casino in Bath. They have continued to support our Rossiter Road Campaign. At the September meeting, a new chairman, Francis Holtam from Green Park was elected

The Association is also affiliated to the **Civic Trust**—if you would like to receive its newsletters by email, please let Sarah Lewis know (315491).



Widcombe Association

October 2006 Newsletter



widcombeassociation.org.uk

Our Autumn meeting will be held on

Thursday November 2 at 7.30pm

Widcombe Junior School, Archway Street

This will be an EGM to elect a new treasurer to succeed Sarah Lewis who is stepping down on December 31.

Only current members may vote so bring membership cards! As always visitors are welcome but are requested to pay £3 towards light refreshments. School car park available.

Better for Widcombe? - a Planning Forum

There have been a number of developments (and attempted developments!) during recent months which could affect our community. Speakers will outline plans for Western Riverside, South Quays (aka the Stothert and Pitt Newark Works), the Southgate redevelopment, building on Beechen Cliff playing fields and - of course - the latest on traffic plans for our high street.

Chairman's Report

This is a very special year for the Widcombe Association as we are celebrating a quarter of a century of our existence with an ever increasing membership and with apparently promising news on our major campaign for a two-way Rossiter Road. The circumstances surrounding the latest development in that saga deserve reporting to you as they recently unfolded.

For the first part of the year, your Committee was seeking to put further pressure on the Council and the Government for the acceptance of the WA scheme in the Joint Local Transport Plan, Bath Package, and we sent a letter for the appropriate Government Minister via Don Foster, as he had advised, with all the documents and booklets we had produced in support. Strangely, during August, we were informed that this had been sent to our own Executive Officer for Highways, as he was now going to be including the scheme in the local programme for 2008. On further investigation, we learnt that the Rossiter Road scheme had in early August been removed from the JLTP by Sir Elgar Jenkins, on the advice of Officers, because it was likely to prejudice the Business Plan. We have not been in-

formed of the facts which made such a step necessary.

We were told that this was good news as the decision for local funding made the scheme more likely to go ahead. But the Executive as a body had not been involved, even our Widcombe Councillors had no advance official warning of the change, and a more definitive decision by the whole Executive was necessary. That has now occurred on 6 September when the whole Executive agreed. Cllr Metcalfe put the case emphatically stating that the scheme would remove heavy traffic from Widcombe Parade, facilitate enhancement of the urban design, manage local traffic and parking for the shops, improve pedestrian safety and access, regenerate the shopping street and substantially reduce air and noise pollution. The statement was accepted by Officers and all Executive members, so those essential inclusions were also approved and attached to the minutes.

But will enough funding be made available when the time comes and the Council might have changed after the 2007 election? And on further enquiries the Officer mainly involved had suggested a cheaper and simpler version without

bridge widening and hence the loss of the adequate right turning lane. We learn he has now left the Council's employment. Thus no details of the local scheme are fixed. For the moment we have to remain optimistic and vigilant while believing that the two-way Rossiter Road will come into being as announced. The projected date means that detailed plans and consultation will need to be in place very soon so that the 2008/9 budget can be set in 2007. We await news.

The WA Summer Festival as it was dubbed this year was more extensive than ever and coincided with yet another Widcombe Rising street party organised by Ralph Oswick and his team. While not directly donating funds for the street party, we ran some events to support it and everyone will have lasting memories of the magic Palladian Bridge picnic where we were entertained by the "Handbags" and broke all records for visitor numbers to the Prior Park Landscape Garden. We owe a huge thank you to Sarah Lewis for the success of our own programme. There were too many events to recount, stretching through June, but those who enjoyed the Pleasure Garden supper, the Opera, the Teddy Bears Picnic and the Garden Party owe sincere

thanks to the generous residents who opened the gates of their private grounds for our enjoyment in such wonderful summer weather. Initially, I did wonder whether our programme was a bit funereal and the Abbey Cemetery events would not attract. I need not have worried; Brenda Beeton's enthusiasm and the members' interest brought wonderful support.

There have been an overwhelming series of planning issues for us to tackle during recent times. We fought the telecommunications mast in Alexandra Park where the application was subsequently withdrawn only to find another perhaps sprouting on our borders above Lyncombe Vale. After objections, that too did not go forward but I have no doubt that other sites will be sought.

The results of the Local Plan inquiry were presented on time and were disappointing in some respects. The Green Belt boundary will change but 15 acres have been saved : the area known as St John's Field remains in the green belt. The University may be in future be allowed to build on what was formerly protected; at the moment they have plans for student accommodation on land next to Bushey Norwood, not Green Belt , but in a sensitive area next to National Trust property. Our concerns are for the open spaces which Widcombe residents have formerly been able freely to use and enjoy, as well as for the approach to the city from Claverton which is designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Greenway Lane is partly in our parish and development there has been of concern for residents on Lyncombe Hill and in Lyncombe Vale. The future of the playing fields below Beechen Cliff School has been threatened by the Government Inspector's recommendation for housing development. Individual members and local campaigners objected and the leader of the Council has agreed with the residents: so B&NES Executive will not recommend to Council that the Inspector's suggestion be adopted. That will be debated in Council on 12 October. We hope the preservation of that green space is secured but there is yet opportunity for further debate on the Inspector's Local Plan Report. We must keep up the pressure to prevent loss of one of the essential green breathing spaces which fork into the city and are part of its character as a World Heritage site.

The major projects which will change the face of Bath and the footprint of the town centre are all on our borders. We have decided to dedicate the Autumn Meeting to informing you of what is likely to hap-

pen in Southgate, Western Riverside and now South Quays all of which will affect us. Instead of one speaker, we shall have a number, each one concentrating on a major project. We shall mount an exhibition to help residents to see and discuss the changes which are imminent.

The South Quays development - within the Widcombe boundary - was kept under wraps until well into July and it was in the August summer holiday period that we were supposed to respond to the demolition of the Stothert and Pitt's Newark Works. Meetings on the subject were poorly publicized and ill-attended. Once the intentions became clear, many residents have joined in the general disquiet that Bath's single remnant of Industrial Heritage of architectural renown and the manufacturing site of the world's most important cranes in their time should be swept away. We believe development is essential but that elements of that old building and reminders of its history should be preserved alongside the new; and that sensitive architects should have been briefed with this in mind. It is up to individual members to make their feelings known: the Council tells us that numbers of individual, not duplicated, letters carry more weight with the planners than a representation from an Association even as well supported as ours. There has been public debate following the initial so called consultation period but the planning application for development of the site can now be seen at Trimbridge House and decisions are sometimes reversed or adapted in the light of public opinion. Letters to the Chronicle are heeded, too. Do make your own representations as soon as possible to the Planning Department .

While the planning applications for the Prior Park Garden Centre took a while to be approved, work is now under way and on schedule. Floor and walls are in place, the structure will rise in October, followed by the roof in November with the hope of completion in January. We look forward to a re-opening in early spring.

We expect an interesting meeting, and as we are celebrating our 25th anniversary on the same occasion, something of a party. Thank you all for your continuing support.

Finally, we were very sorry to hear of the death of John Hawkes who was Chairman of the WA planning committee from 1988 to 1994 during which time he started the battle for Rossiter Rd, dealt with the extension to the Garden Centre, fought open top buses and monitored all planning applications. We were privileged to have

someone so highly qualified in our Association. He continued to give his expert advice for many years and was a great friend who will be sadly missed.

Mayveen Blackwell


Membership

Over the summer period private membership numbers have swollen to 639. In terms of households choosing to take out membership of the Association, there are now 350. Yes, membership numbers continue to grow undoubtedly due to the sterling work of our last membership secretary, Angie Frith but residents were clearly attracted by the incredible quantity and quality of this year's summer social calendar. An up-to-date membership form has recently been printed along with a new introductory letter to the Association that new members will receive with their membership card. May I take this opportunity to remind you that membership renewal date is January 1 2007 for the coming year. As Angie reported in the Spring Newsletter, many people are choosing to pay by standing order which undoubtedly takes the burden of reminders and expense off our shoulders. So please, if you think the Association is doing a good job and you have not yet got around to completing a standing order form for your membership, do so today!

Annual membership continues to be excellent value at just £4.00 per household or £10 for business (Businesses receive a FREE mention on our advertisement page as part of their subscription.)

Remember you can also download membership application details from our website: www.widcombeassociation.org.uk

Ian Sharp 461596



The Friends of Widcombe Doctors' Surgery

The objectives of the Friends of Widcombe Surgery are to help give health professionals and patients the opportunity to meet and discuss topics of medical interest; to provide the means for patients to make positive suggestions about their own health care; to encourage health education activities within the practice; to develop self help projects to meet the needs of fellow patients and to act as representatives to attempt to influence the provisions of Health and Social Care.



Back in our March newsletter we reported that the Widcombe Association had intervened with the Council to try to make sure that the new more discreet street lighting being installed would have lamps in keeping with the listed buildings in the Widcombe Parade area. The chosen Victorian style lamps have now been installed and have provided the hoped for boost to the parade's ambience. The reinstatement of the antique Victorian lamp outside the White Hart is still part of lighting plans. There are 6 similar other lamps to be installed around the city – they require new brackets which are being obtained. Unfortunately, the original lamp outside the White Hart was badly broken by the lorry that knocked it down and the templates necessary to manufacture a new one have been destroyed. Nevertheless, the Council has arranged for the parts, including the base that has been dug out of the pavement, to be sent to a firm that will hopefully be able to put the pieces together and refurbish. The plan is to position the lamp further back from the road to try to lessen the likelihood of further collisions.

A few months ago the Association's committee received a complaint from a member about the state of the defunct public lavatories opposite the Widcombe side of the Ha'penny Bridge. We contacted the Council, who very promptly had them cleaned up, but also told us that, like other defunct lavatories around the city, they were up for sale. Apparently the sale by the Council was successful about a month ago, but the new owner has now put them back on the market! The Council has assured us that they will take up any issues with the owner should, for example, their condition deteriorate again.

Good news finally to see the refurbishment of the old empty plumber's shop and yard just above the White Hart on Widcombe Hill – only one more plumber's shop eyesore to go!

Please pass the recruitment leaflet in this newsletter to a neighbour or newcomer to persuade them to join the Association!

Summer Festival

This seems such a long time ago! But the weather was very kind, and the ticket sales were excellent after a slow start. Many of the events have become old favourites, but the 'new' event of the 18th century evening at Lyncombe Court where we enjoyed supper in the garden while being serenaded by a guitarist, singers and a string quartet was a huge success, as well as raising £550 for the Bristol Cancer Help Centre. The Handful of Singers concert in St Thomas' raised £490 for iThemba (an HIV/Aids charity working in Africa) and a similar sum was raised for the Abbey Cemetery by the many events masterminded by Brenda Beeton. As a result of collecting entrance money and shaking buckets at the Picnic with the Handbag of Harmonies choir on the Palladian Bridge, and the garden party at Bewdley House, The WA sent £ 1300 towards Widcombe Rising. As there will be no street party until 2008, we thought we should hold some events next year - but not on the ambitious scale of this Summer, which really stretched our resources! We should dearly love to hear from you if you could offer some stewarding , bar tending or any sort of help, even for just one event. Ideally we would also like a box office manager! Please call me with any offers or suggestions. Please also contact me if you are an artist interested in taking part in a Widcombe Art Trail. Meanwhile, enormous thanks are due to those who made this year's programme possible!

Sarah Lewis 315491



The photo shows our hosts at Lyncombe Court, Chris Rogers and Denise Coughlan, impersonating the 18th century owners of their property which was once a Pleasure Garden.

Abbey Cemetery



Over the past year BANES staff have undertaken considerable work on the trees and cleared the ivy from several monuments. The working parties have been very well attended and great fun - in the middle of our summer festivities we had musical accompaniment from the Widcombe Warblers! Our original publication 'Bath Abbey Cemetery Tombstone Trail' has now sold out so we are preparing a new edition and planning markers on the graves mentioned. We are applying for a grant to cover costs Our final working party this year will be on **Saturday November 18 from 2.00 to 4.00pm.** We aim to clear the overgrown tombs next to the lower central main path leading up to the Chapel as this is part of the new tombstone trail. Please join us if you can - bring secateurs and spades, wear garden shoes and bring a flask of tea to revive you!

Website
After overhauling our website, **Jamie Law** is off to Bath University and we are very grateful to him for agreeing to continue to look after it.

Can you help?

Many thanks to all the Committee who have worked so hard since the AGM. We are seriously short of personnel and in particular would welcome someone with an interest in our history who could take over the Archive from John Brushfield and someone who would like to put together our exhibitions. We also need a designer for posters and other similar items. Our most pressing need though is for a professional in a related field to look after the monitoring of Planning Applications and to advise on our response to major schemes. Please do let us know if you can help: this is an urgent request. We used to have a whole Planning sub-committee but now we have no one. Even if you could join us but do not fit any of these roles, please come forward – we need four people. And if you would rather not join the Committee, there are some other very important and helpful things to do on sub-committees.

Please volunteer now!

Contact Rosemary Emsley 337865