

CHELLASTON RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

AGM 31 MARCH 2008

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

It has been another busy year for the Residents' Association, and I would like to take this opportunity to review what we have been working on and achieved for Chellaston and its residents.

Chellaston School and its selection procedures was an important topic at the start of 2007, as evidenced by the overwhelming attendance at last year's Forum. The Schools' Adjudicator has now agreed with the school's governing body that a lottery system will operate in the case of over subscription. The CRA lobbied for the retention of the previous "distance from school" method of deciding who should be selected, and we feel that our lobbying, coupled with the clear demonstration of the strength of feeling amongst residents, resulted in the rejection of the far worse "distance to the next nearest school" method which was advocated by South Derbyshire. We understand that the school will always endeavour to accept all children from within the catchment area who apply and this year, all such are in fact being taken. We will continue to keep an eye on the situation and make sure that Chellaston continues to be available to Chellaston children.

Residents will have noticed the closure of the Red Lion and the proposal to redevelop the land for sheltered housing. Less well known is the proposal of The High Trees Medical Centre to move from the centre of Chellaston to West Chellaston, and the possible closure of other pubs and clubs also in the centre. We wonder where it will end and we are seriously concerned about the way Chellaston will look in a few years time if these changes come about. Chellaston needs more, not fewer facilities for its growing population and we think that such changes should not happen without consultation about what Chellaston actually needs. What Chellaston does not need is yet more residential buildings in the centre where we should be creating a lively area for people to meet, shop and enjoy their leisure time. This is why we are devoting this year's Forum to the future of Chellaston and we hope that this debate will be the start of a reversal of the current trend.

Also at the Forum we will see some plans for the Chellaston Business Park and the much needed new road which will serve it – the T12 road. This is also known as the Chellaston by-pass which will provide much needed relief for the A514 when it is opened. We will need to monitor the effect of the road on West Chellaston and we are already of the opinion that it will not be wide enough for the traffic it will carry. We have continued to monitor lorries violating the 7.5 tonne gross weight limit on the A514 and we contact UK and Irish operators to advise them of the restriction. This seems to be successful, but foreign vehicles are a problem. Please send any sightings of HGVs to our website with as much detail as possible. We are also continuing to lobby the police to carry out more spot-checks and we will be carrying out more high profile surveillance of our own this year – for which we would appreciate some volunteers.

The Chellaston Recreation Ground looks as if it will get a youth shelter at last – this is something we have been working on for some years and we have already raised most of the funding for it from generous donations from local businesses and area panel funds. We hope that the Parks Department will also be planning a more extensive renovation of the Recreation Field, as well as the installation of youth facilities. More good news this year was the announcement that Chellaston is to get a permanent library, which will probably be sited near to the Community Centre. Thanks to our councillors for making representations to City Council departments to achieve these two results in particular and for their assistance on many other issues throughout the year.

It is a couple of years ago since we were fighting to stop the erection of the Vodafone mast outside the Red Lion. This was a fight that regrettably we lost, but a concession of a permanent monitoring station of RF emissions was won and we have been working with the City Council and recently with Derby University to host the results from the monitor on an appropriate website. We hope that any problems can be resolved quickly and that this facility will be installed in the near future.

I hope that all of you with an internet connection will have looked at our website, www.chellaston.org.uk . This has lots of useful local information and we are indebted to Ian Colder for keeping it maintained. We are looking for sponsors, particularly local businesses, to advertise on the site to help with the running costs. Please see Ian or myself if you would like to help in this way.

Finally, thanks to all our members for their efforts during the year. Once again we have lost some people from our committee so we would like to hear from residents who could help us to run the CRA. In particular we would like members who live on the newer estates so we can be truly representative. We have produced a leaflet about becoming a member – it costs nothing apart from a little spare time – this is available at the AGM / Forum and is also on the website. The committee would like to think that the residents will give them a mandate to run the CRA for a further year and, assuming this is the case, you can be assured that we will be continuing to work to make Chellaston a better place during the coming twelve months.

John Bowden
Chairman