

CHELLASTON RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 26.3.07

Once again it has been an eventful year for Chellaston and the Residents' Association (CRA) has been active on your behalf in promoting Chellaston on a number of issues.

Perhaps most prominent have been the changes to admissions criteria that will be applied by the school to children entering the Senior School from 2007 onwards. Last year the Schools' Adjudicator decided that, in the event that the school was over-subscribed, places would be allocated based on the distance from the child's home to the next nearest school. This scheme would disadvantage Chellaston, whilst South Derbyshire children would be much more likely to be admitted. This, we feel, is very unfair on parents who have lived in Chellaston a long time and who are expecting their child to go to Chellaston School. The strength of feeling in Chellaston over this issue was demonstrated at a meeting organized by the CRA last September, which was one of the most well attended events ever for the CRA. The school's governors now look set to adopt an alternative scheme based on random allocation, i.e. a lottery, which we feel would not be fair to anyone as no-one would know whether their child had a place until the March of the year in which the child was due to start secondary education. Discussions are on-going but the CRA feels that it would be better for the school to offer a greater number of places so that it can avoid this iniquitous selection process altogether, and we will be putting pressure to try and get the school the extra facilities it so badly needs.

Policing in the Chellaston area is a continuing concern for residents. Whilst the police may have limited resources, we do not think that Chellaston should be largely ignored in favour of inner city areas. Anyone can see that we have anti-social behaviour here just as much as other parts of the city; indeed it could be worse because we have fewer CCTV cameras. We are becoming increasingly concerned about the numbers of young people who congregate in the central part of Chellaston, particularly around the shops. Many of our residents have found that these groups are intimidating and the shops have also reported problems. We recognise that young people need to meet somewhere, but it is when their behaviour becomes anti-social, fuelled perhaps by alcohol sold by shops which should know better, that the quality of life is diminished for all of us.

Traffic has featured this year, as it does every year. We have discussed a range of schemes with the Highways Department of the City Council, some of which are long overdue, such as sorting out the parking arrangements outside Tesco's and a lay-by outside the fish and chip shop. Once again, we are told that there is no money for such schemes, yet it seems to be forgotten that without the contribution that Chellaston makes to the city's coffers through council tax, their finances would be in a dire state.

A similar argument applies to the facilities that Chellaston has which have not kept pace with the rate of development. Our schools are full, we have no permanent library, leisure centre or even any shops on West Chellaston. We are not regarded as a deprived area and therefore we do not qualify for many of the grants that other areas of Derby get,

which could help to improve the area or provide better facilities. Yet, we know that over 1000 more homes will be built on Boulton Moor in the next 5 years. I really hope that the planners are cleverer when granting planning permission than they have been for other recent developments in Chellaston to make sure that developers are contributing not only to the provision of primary schools, but also secondary schools, road improvements, leisure facilities and shops – these usually get forgotten but are essential to any community.

On a more positive note, the CRA has been working on the start of a regeneration project for the Recreation field behind the Community Centre. We are proposing that a youth shelter is installed and to kick this off we have, with the help of the City's Parks Department, obtained nearly £4000 from various companies and organisations, including the Police and the Co-op. We thank these organisations for their generous donations and we are working with the Parks Department to get something tangible erected as soon as possible. We do need a little more money to make a start so if anyone would like to contribute to this worthy cause, please let me know.

For various reasons, some of our membership leave us each year and at some point during the coming year Bryan and Trish Radford will be moving away to new pastures in Northern Ireland. Trish was a previous chairperson of the CRA and we thank her and Bryan for their contribution over the years and wish them well in the future. This of course means that we will have some gaps in our membership, so if any residents feel that they would like to help to make a difference to Chellaston, please get in touch with me to discuss what we do and how you can help.

John Bowden
Chairman

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