

Neighbourhood News

from the Bell Tower Community Association

Issue 5 - September 2006



One year on!

Welcome to Issue 5 of *Neighbourhood News* – it is incredible to think it was only a year ago that we decided to form the Bell Tower Community Association. Thank you for all your feedback, much appreciated – do keep your comments and suggestions coming in!

Those new to the area may like to know that Bell Tower is for the community, whether you are an individual or family living or working in the area or a local business. We are independent of church and politics, so there is no pressure to become affiliated to any other organisation. We work closely with the police (for a safer area), the local authority and councillors (for a more pleasant environment) and other groups in the area.

Neighbourhood News is our prime method of communication, and additional information is posted on our web site between newsletter issues. We also hope to have a noticeboard on the school wall in Swansea Road soon – we will let you know when this is in place.

Thank you again for your support – we look forward to seeing you at our future events!

Barbara Kendall (BTCA Chair)

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Bin it: Members of the Bell Tower Community Association with Abbey ward councillor June Orton.



Junk: Bell Tower clean-up organiser David Neale gets physical.

Community clean-up reveals a right load of old rubbish

by **Lucy Thorne**

■ lucythorne@readingchronicle.co.uk

MATTRESSES, broken furniture and old Christmas trees were just some of the items dumped at a Reading community group's tidy-up day.

More than 100 residents cleared their sheds, gardens and cluttered corners of their homes, to fill the 40 cubic yard skip in just under four hours.

The Bell Tower Community Association, which represents residents and businesses in the area around E P Collier Primary School in Ross Road, staged the event with the backing of Reading Festival promoters Mean Fiddler.

Organiser David Neale said: "The response was overwhelming.

"After opening the gates I went away to clear some rubbish from my own house and by the time I got back 40 minutes later, the skip was already nearly half full.

"As well as giving residents the chance to clear their houses and gardens, this event has provided a great opportunity for neighbours to work together and get to know each other."

● **Link** www.bell-tower.org.uk

Courtesy of the Reading Chronicle

**COMING SOON - Public meeting with ROB WILSON MP
(Con, Reading East) - Thursday 14 September 2006,
7.30pm at New Hope. ALL WELCOME!**

A great opportunity to meet your local MP, hear his plans and question him.
If possible please contact Barbara at 77 Addison Road in advance if you plan to attend, to give an idea of numbers.

Visit www.bell-tower.org.uk or email us at info@bell-tower.org.uk

TEA WITH THE MAYOR

Not just tea, but wine and snacks... with free food and drink on offer, the invitation from Reading's new mayor couldn't be refused. In June our local councillor, Bet Tickner, who became mayor earlier this year, invited members of the Community Association to tea in her parlour at the Civic Offices.

About 30 local residents attended the event on a hot, sunny evening – luckily there was plenty of wine, juice and tea to keep us refreshed. Bet gave us a short talk on her role as mayor, and then answered a variety of questions about the job and about the charities she is supporting. The charities provide help to a village in Sri Lanka stricken by the tsunami, and encourage sport and recreation in Reading for local children.

We found out some interesting facts, including:

- ♦ the mayor is paid less than £10,000 a year
- ♦ Reading has scrapped the mayor's car, and now hires a car when required (but we'll still see Bet using her bicycle for some trips !)
- ♦ the fur on the mayor's gown is fake

Reading is twinned with several towns (in Germany, Nicaragua & Japan) and has been given lots of gifts from these locations, including

a samurai mask, all on display in the gallery next to the parlour.

We learned the significance of the symbols in Reading's civic crest (from Elizabethan times) and how Reading 'stole' the medallion on the mayor's chain from the Queen.

We were allowed to touch the mayor's gown (Bet wasn't wearing the full regalia – it was too hot!) and the mace (very heavy), and view all the gifts from Reading's twin towns.

It was an enjoyable evening, and we felt it was a good way of finding out more about what the mayor does and the history of Reading. It was also a great chance to meet more of our neighbours. If E P Collier school has not already visited the parlour, it may be something the teachers there could consider as an interesting trip for the pupils?

Andy Ellis

Are you thinking of starting a Neighbourhood Watch group in your street? The window stickers show who's a member and help deter snoopers and the information packs give good advice on security - and how a burglar will choose their target. Members will receive information on what's happening in the area and what to look out for, and there are regular opportunities to meet with the local Neighbourhood Watch coordinator. It all creates a sense of mutual security and helps you to get to know your neighbours.

If you're interested please contact Barbara at 77 Addison Road.

Volunteering in the school library

Having retired some years ago from working in the local library, I was pleased when it was suggested that I might like to volunteer to do a few hours in the school library. A lot of what I do is basic tidying – putting the fiction and non-fiction sections in order, arranging the other shelves and boxes and adding the new books. There may be a special job awaiting me from one of the staff – that's good since it leaves them free to get other work done.

It is all about giving my time to help where I can, and I enjoy it.

Yvonne

News in brief

● E P Collier achieved joint third in the Yellow Pages collection challenge – many thanks to everyone who supported this. Some pupils also took part in a 'Yellow Pages construction challenge' in Broad Street. Two of them, Ellen Kirk and Jasmine Lewis, won a competition for their designs to feature on the sides of the new recycling trucks.

● In June all the children took part in the record breaking 'Walking Bus' around the school, to highlight road safety. Children across England set out simultaneously in an attempt to form the largest ever walking bus. Barbara and Teresa from the Bell Tower Community Association acted as independent witnesses for the Guinness Book of Records.

● We say goodbye to Jon Westall, vicar of New Hope, who left us in August to take up a new post in London. Jon was a great help in getting the Bell Tower Community Association started. We wish him and his family well.

● The Association held a very successful fun quiz evening at New Hope in June – there were plenty of entries, and the fish and chips went down particularly well with participants! We hope to arrange another quiz soon.

● Our local councillors will be visiting the area on Saturday 21 October and will also be available at the Civic Offices on Saturday 4 November. If you have any concerns or suggestions please talk to them (or ask us and we will raise the matter on your behalf).

JOIN US NOW for only £1 per person per year. Remember – some local businesses will give a discount on production of a valid membership card. Lace-Ups in Caversham is the latest business to join the discount scheme.

You can join at any of our public meetings and events or by contacting Simon Bolton at 4 New Hope Terrace, Newport Road.



Neighbourhood News is kindly sponsored by grants from the Berkshire Community Foundation and Reading Borough Council.

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