

Chislehurst

REPORT

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Chislehurst

FESTIVAL 2011

17 September to 1 October



Chislehurst Festival 2011 17 September to 1 October

We hope you find plenty to interest you in the programme for the second Chislehurst Festival which was delivered with this *Report*. Booking is now open for all the events that will take place during festival fortnight, and you can book your tickets by phone, email, post or online at the Festival website – check the booking details for each event.

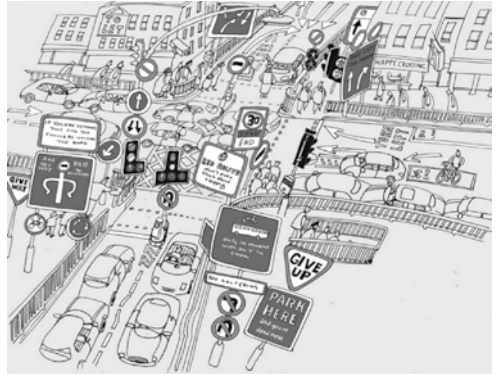
The Festival is organised and underwritten by the Chislehurst Society to highlight the range of activities in and around Chislehurst. See page 7 for a fuller report.

If you have not received your copy of the programme, or would like further copies, please contact us on 020 8467 0900.

Chislehurst - Civilised Streets?

The Society is hosting an open meeting for Society members on Monday 19 September at 5 p.m. at the Bull's Head Hotel in Chislehurst.

Members will recall that we are working with the Chislehurst Town Centre Management Group (CTCMG), including traders, to consider how we can improve the High Street for the benefit of all those who use it. As part of this work, we have invited Ben Hamilton-Baillie to come to Chislehurst, and to talk to the Society and its members about



some of the recent developments in the principles governing the design of streets and spaces, currently underway in Britain and mainland Europe, and how they might benefit us here in Chislehurst.

Ben is regarded as the leading exponent of integrated street design in the UK. His consultancy practice in Bristol continues to research, monitor and develop innovative approaches to traffic in towns, addressing issues of speed, road safety, accessibility, walking and cycling, and economic vitality. Ben advises the Design Commission CABE on street design, and helped English Heritage produce the regional 'Streets for All' guides.

Ben will explain the emergence of a new approach to street design and the integration of highway engineering with urban design, and how it presents significant opportunities for historic places such as Chislehurst, and for towns and villages across the country.

Reduced reliance on highway interventions such as signs, signals and conventional traffic calming offers opportunities for greater emphasis on retaining and regenerating the civic qualities that underpin the social and economic foundations of towns. The principles of 'civilised streets' seem to us to be really important to investigate in the context of Chislehurst High Street, and indeed in other areas around Chislehurst.



Come along and have your say!

Chislehurst Road Railway Bridge

Users of the railway bridge on the A208 (the main road from Chislehurst to Orpington) and local residents will know only too well that the bridge has had a width restriction imposed for some time (effectively barring heavy vehicles). This was because it was deemed to be structurally unsound.



The bridge is now to be closed to all traffic starting at some time in September. It will remain closed while the bridge is completely rebuilt, and this is expected to take about a year.

The reason why it will take so long is partly because it is necessary to keep rail traffic running at all times. Councillors and council staff are well aware of the necessity of keeping closure as short as possible. It will of course mean that all traffic will need to take alternative routes (as buses and HGVs have had to do for some time) which will entail considerable inconvenience. It is unfortunate that there appears to be no alternative.

Members who are adversely affected by the closure should continue to pass their comments and concerns to their Ward Councillors. Please let us have copies of any comments you make. (contact details are on the back page of this *Report*)

Parking on Chislehurst Common

We are in communication with the Trustees of the Commons about their concerns at the increased incidence of commuter parking on Cricket Ground Road, which runs from Watts Lane, behind the cricket ground, to Summer Hill.

This road is part of Chislehurst Common, and the Trustees are advised that it is not a public highway. The Common's bye-laws prohibit vehicles from using or parking on the Commons without express permission, and the Trustees are charged with enforcing those bye-laws.

The Trustees are in discussion with local residents, some of whom have had to purchase the right to drive over the Common to their homes, and are looking for ways of preventing commuter parking that will not adversely affect the appearance of the Common. They have considered various options, including the erection of barriers. The Society's executive committee has already provided feedback to the Trustees, but would welcome comments from any members.

Planning update

The Society's planning sub-committee continues to meet each month to review planning applications affecting Chislehurst. In May and June the sub-committee reviewed 68 applications and made six objections and five observations. The objections were all in respect of inappropriate development.

Members should continue to raise any planning concerns direct with Bromley Council, but we would be grateful if you could send copies of your communications to the Society so that we may be kept informed about local feelings.

A very recent change in Bromley Council's facility for public viewing of planning files had made the work of the sub-committee much more difficult, if not impossible. We are very grateful to the Chief Planner, Bob McQuillan, for making alternative arrangements for us that will enable us to continue effective scrutiny.

Members are advised to consider the implications of a recent change in law regarding privately shared drains, which will now be treated as public drains. In future, if an individual wishes to build an extension to his/her property which comes within three metres of a public drain (which could in future be within one's garden), permission will have to be obtained from Thames Water. At the same time, if Thames Water need to repair that drain they will be entitled to automatic access, which could involve the demolition of that extension. The owner would receive no recompense, although one could insure against such an eventuality.

The Society is continuing to take advice on the implications of the Localism Bill, and whether it should apply to become the Neighbourhood Forum for the Chislehurst area. This would enable us to be more involved in the planning strategy for Chislehurst, but could have a significant resource requirement for us.

Police reports

Chislehurst News – Chislehurst's online newspaper – continues to provide details of incidents dealt with by the Chislehurst Safer Neighbourhood Team.

Fortunately, Chislehurst was not directly affected to any significant extent by the riots in early August, although members of the SNT were in readiness for predicted trouble in Chislehurst. They were also called upon as reinforcements in other troublespots.

One recent development of note is that the SNT plans to establish a visible fixed police presence on Chislehurst High Street, probably near the Willow Grove junction – a proposal which the Society supports.

More information on SNT activity is available at <http://chislehurstnews.wordpress.com/crime-reports>

Facilities for Young People in Chislehurst

The Chislehurst Youth Forum is a relatively new initiative of the Chislehurst Society, which has brought together representatives of the local community interested in providing more facilities for local young people, both to deter anti-social behaviour, and, just as importantly, to give them a place to meet safely where they will bother no-one.



This initiative is being actively supported by the local Safer Neighbourhood Team and by the London Borough of Bromley. Other groups that are involved include Chislehurst Rotary, Churches Together, Invicta Scouts, Coopers Technology College, and Friends of the Chislehurst and Walden Road Recreation Ground.

At a recent meeting, a decision was made to install a new Youth Shelter, similar to the one pictured, in an open, visible space in the Edgebury area, but well away from housing. Funding sources are now being identified to pay for this, and it is proposed that we will engage local young people in doing some fund raising themselves. In early September, members of the Forum will be meeting with local young people to take ideas forward and make a decision on the preferred design – there are many to choose from!

We are all hoping that this will be a first step in developing further facilities in the area that will be appealing to and enjoyed by our young people.

If you would like further information, to get involved, or to contribute financially to these initiatives please contact Alison Stammers, a member of our executive committee, who is leading on this for the Society (contact details on back page).

Farmers' Market - no apologies this time

The Chislehurst Farmers' Market was launched at last, and with great success, in June on the day of the Summer Fair.

It is now being held regularly on the third Sunday of every month in the car park behind the old Police Station on the High Street. There are a range of stalls, with new additions appearing each month.

This is part of the CTCMG's initiative to improve the range and quality of outlets on the High Street.



Chislehurst Schools - The Mix

'The Mix' is an annual local event inspired by the Chislehurst Schools Forum (established by the Society); its goal is to bring the students from our local schools closer together, through joint activities of relevance to Chislehurst.

In previous years the focus has been on producing a joint newsletter. This year's event was designed as a debating forum, and on 22 June, nine of our local schools (primary and secondary) sent students to St. Peter and St. Paul Primary School where the thirty-six pupils from years 5 to 8 (ages 10 to 14) were placed in four groups and asked to complete various challenges.

- Should school uniforms be standardised in Chislehurst?
- What additional shops should there be in Chislehurst High Street?
- What facilities would students like to see in the Recreation Ground?
- Which Chislehurst celebrity should be given the last seat in the lifeboat?

'We had many great ideas. One of them was a paintball party area, which we acted out! I loved "The Mix" debate and wish I could do it again in the future.'

In addition, eight senior students met to discuss local issues in the first 'Chislehurst Youth Council' (CYC). Once the older students had finished their meeting they acted as prefects and helped run the various elements.

The event was a great success; all of the students developed their public speaking skills, we found out much more about what our young people think of Chislehurst, and, most importantly, everyone enjoyed themselves.

At the end, prizes were presented to:

- the person with the best local knowledge,
- the best group presentation for a topic,
- the best debaters.

Thank you to all of the students, the staff who assisted, and those who helped organise everything. The Chislehurst Society paid for the meals and awards.

Thanks in particular to Joanna Seymour, Head at St Peter and St Paul Primary School, for hosting the event; to Jim Attridge, Assistant Head at Farrington's School for leading its organisation; and Kirsty Everson, St Peter and St Paul Primary School, for making sure everything happened as it should on the day.

Quotes are from participating students – read more on our website.

'The youth council members had to judge the pupils throughout the debating sessions and their presentations. It was difficult to nominate the winners as everybody had put in a great deal of effort into their work and enjoyed themselves.'

'I had a brilliant time discussing changes in Chislehurst and developing my debating skills. I learnt how to speak confidently and express my ideas, while socialising with other schools.'

Chislehurst Festival 2011

The second Chislehurst Festival opens on Saturday 17 September with the Big Draw on Chislehurst Common, and runs for two weeks until 1 October.

With more than 40 different events, this is even bigger than the first Festival, which was held in 2009. The Chislehurst Society is running the Festival for the



benefit of the Community, and this year has obtained sponsorship from a range of local businesses, many of whom will be offering discounts and other benefits to shoppers during the Festival. Fuller details of events and sponsors can be found in the programme, which has been delivered to all members, and circulated widely throughout the area.

Highlights include:

- Chislehurst Rocks – a music festival held at Chislehurst Recreation Ground,
- Cabaret Night at Zizzi's, including music and a magic show,
- Strictly Music Hall at Beaverwood School,
- an international Food Day at Chislehurst Active Age Centre,
- open day at Chislehurst and West Kent Cricket Ground, and
- a country fair on the Common, with wild birds, dog show and petting farm.

There are classical music concerts, Jazz, and a male voice ensemble, sports events, including the now regular Chislehurst Chase, a kids' talent show at Coopers College, and drama and dance.

To celebrate the opening of its new, exciting interior, Chislehurst Methodist Church will be hosting the Methodist Art Collection for the whole of the Festival, and there are a number of other events in many of Chislehurst's churches.

With wine-tasting, and a cup-cake masterclass, you might also want to go to the weightwatchers' open session, and then go on one of the two guided walks!

Many events are free, and elsewhere ticket prices have been kept low. In addition, for £10 you can become a Friend of the Festival, and recoup more than the cost of the Friends' membership.

The festival website, www.chislehurstfestival.org.uk has information on all the events, and this year you can book online. Call 020 8467 0900 for more information.

Road Stewards update

Since the Spring issue of *the Chislehurst Report* three Road Stewards have retired: Sylvia Daniel (Inglewood), Neil Jamieson (Crown Lane), Bernard Mihenstedt (Holmdale Road), and Jean James (Manor Park Road).

The Executive Committee extends the Society's sincere thanks for all the help and support these members have given. We wish them well for the future.

We welcome three new volunteers to our Road Steward network: Fiona Blair (Inglewood), Miss K Lane (Oaklands) and Margaret Yardley (Manor Park Road).

There are several roads with current members and vacancies for Stewards: Crown Lane, Holmdale Road, Marlings Close, Marlings Park Avenue (even numbers, 38–70), and Marlowe Close.

If you would like to assist with one of these roads or want more information please contact Keith Heselden, membership secretary, on 0208 467 5503.

Members' talks

David Ely is a member of the Society and a local magistrate. He gave a fascinating talk in July at the second of our members' meetings on *The Role of the Magistrate*.

The magistracy celebrates its 650th anniversary this year. Edward III appointed the first 'Justice of the Peace' in 1361. Initially available only to aristocracy, and then landed gentry, then leaders of local industry, it is now open to all by self nomination. There are now 30,000 magistrates in England and Wales, all unpaid ordinary members of the public, with 5% from ethnic minorities. They are not legally qualified but receive training and are required to sit at least one day a month.

All criminal cases start in magistrates' courts, and most go no further. Only 4% go on to higher courts, either where the magistrates feel the alleged offence merits greater than 6 months imprisonment or the defendant elects for jury trial.

There are specialist magistrates for Youth (10-18 years) and Family.

Every offence and offender is different. Following initial offence assessment magistrates consider the seriousness of the offence and the circumstances of the defendant, before coming to a decision regarding the appropriate sentence, which can range from conditional discharge, through fine or community penalty, to custody for the most serious offences.

Magistrates must be socially aware, of good character and have understanding, communication, sound judgement and commitment. It is thoroughly rewarding.

Thank you to David for taking the time to talk to us. Our next talk in this series of talks will be on 1 September at 2.30 p.m., when Roy Hopper will give an illustrated talk about the geology of Chislehurst. Entry is free to members.