

My advice? Keep talking to your neighbours and don't let any dispute escalate. Sort it out over a cup of tea... or maybe even a glass of wine. If you can't do that then seek good professional help early - a neighbour dispute is not a battle to be won, it's a mutual problem to be solved.

Philip Giles

## Planner Goes Walkabout

Our Chairman, Andy Atkinson, recently invited Peter Geraghty, the Group Manager of Development Control, to visit the area for a walkabout. The idea being to help the Council officers get a better understanding of our area and the work we are trying to do. A useful hour or so was spent strolling around our roads pointing out the features of the area including sites of past successes and current problems. "It was helpful to the work we are doing and to build a better relationship with officers" said Andy.

## Contact Us

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|---------------|---|
| Chairman      | Mr Andrew Atkinson - 28 Park Road<br>01702 437722 |
| Vice-Chairman | Mr Tony Brown - 15 Park Crescent<br>01702 394094  |
| Secretary     | Mrs Jill Freeth - 1 Park Crescent<br>01702 340498 |
| Treasurer.    | Mr Paul Cavanagh - 1 Park Crescent                |

### Other Executive Members:

Peter Fitzgerald, Phillip Giles, Sally Harrup (Park Rd) Neil Lands, (Avenue Terrace) Matt Norfolk (Avenue Rd),

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## Milton Conservation Society

Representing Milton and Shorefields Conservation Areas

Newsletter

Autumn 2009

[www.miltonconservationsociety.com](http://www.miltonconservationsociety.com)

**Welcome** to the Autumn 2009 edition of our newsletter. This is the first edition of the newsletter for members only. Members who have given us an email address will receive this via email otherwise we will deliver a paper copy to you - as we try to do our small bit for the environment! The members' area of the web site is now up and running. If you have not already done so you should receive your user id and password by email soon.

Our popular quiz makes a welcome return on 30<sup>th</sup> October - see details below. There is a lot more happening in the area so please read on.

**A Reminder:** PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE do not fit UPVC windows to your property where it can be seen from the road. This is a Conservation Area and any new windows fitted should be in the style and material as originally fitted when the property was built. In nearly all cases that means timber.



The Council served Enforcement Notices on 3 property owners in Avenue Road who had fitted UPVC windows on the front of their properties. Appeals to the Secretary of State were refused. To avoid prosecution and a hefty fine which is levied on a daily basis the owners have now fitted wooden sash sliding timber windows. This means that the owners had to pay for two sets of windows.

Regrettably a fourth owner has now fitted UPVC windows in this road and the Council are currently investigating this breach of planning legislation.

So please think very carefully before you carry out any work to the outside of your property where it can be seen from the road or an adjoining road. Work comprising new windows, replacement front doors, rendering of brickwork, works to construct hard-standings in the front garden and satellite dish aerials. Please seek advice from the Planning Department at

the Council on 01702 215000 or email the Society via the website and we will be pleased to advise you

## Membership Update

Thank you for renewing or joining us for the first time this year. We must be doing things right because our Membership this year has risen to 130 and we are still expecting a few more residents to join. This is good as our Milton Conservation area comprises just 6 roads. It is very important to keep our membership up because it strengthens the position of the Society when it deals with the Council Officers and Councillors when commenting on planning applications or pursuing breaches of planning legislation and Conservation guidelines. You can read elsewhere some of the activities that we have been busy with recently where your support through your membership is essential if we are to get our views heard and acted upon.

The Society Committee Members are all volunteers who give their time to represent you, the residents, so as to protect this area and ensure that it will continue to be a pleasant place to live.

## Development at rear of 14-16 St Vincent's Road

Many people are very unhappy with this development which grossly exceeds the planning permission. This was not helped by the recent support in the Evening Echo from Councillor Garston for the buildings' grass roofs, with the implication that the development was a good thing for Milton. Councillor Garston has since apologised for this 'out of context' misrepresentation and he says he supports residents concerns. We have now heard from the Head of Planning & Transport that a report will be prepared for Council Members to consider with a recommendation for enforcement action. At long last it seems that our considerable lobbying efforts over the last few months and the residents' petition we presented to Council has had the desired effect - the developer might face action to correct (reduce) the development.

However, this could be delayed if a new planning application is submitted it would have to be considered on its merits. Only after a further planning application is refused would the enforcement action be determined and then this could be appealed. This could be a long and frustrating period but it is extremely significant that the Council have said to us in writing that the development as built warrants a recommendation to Members for enforcement action.

A superb achievement by the Society but it is important that as many residents as possible try to attend the Development Control Meeting when

neighbour is building an extension, which is causing worry, or perhaps there is a dispute over who is responsible for a garden fence. Often, it becomes clear that this latest issue is only the latest chapter in a longer story. After all, if you have a good relationship with your neighbour, surely you can sort out the garden fence?

Often, the neighbours have stopped talking. Even worse, they may have stopped talking and started shouting at each other. Even worse than that, along with the shouting, they may have become involved in a war of attrition; one neighbour reacts to a perceived attack by retaliating - you chop down my overhanging tree and I'll no longer take in your parcels from the postman when you're out...and on it goes. Pretty soon, everything that your neighbour does is perceived as being a personal attack on you and before you know it, you forget the way in which you used to live alongside each other and no longer have a good word to say about the other.

The problem, of course, is usually one of communication. Without good communication, your neighbour is left to make assumptions - and we all know what that means! If you intend to do some building work, speak to your neighbour. Often we overlook the concern our neighbours might feel if they see unannounced changes happening with neighbouring properties. Sometimes we fear what our neighbour's reaction might be if we do inform them in advance and so we simply press on without informing them at all - and that just postpones the problem.

We live in close proximity to each other and it's inevitable that we'll have disagreements from time to time (usually about parking!). If your neighbour does something which upsets you, try to talk to them about it - when you've calmed down! Some people recommend dropping a polite note through their door (it's easier than dealing with it face to face) and that might work; however, at some point you'll have to speak to them so it's better to knock on their door for a quiet word.

Of course, sometimes neighbour disputes need professional help to be resolved. I usually recommend mediation, which involves the appointment of an independent mediator who helps the neighbours to find a solution to their problem - it's a quick, relatively cheap and flexible process which enables the neighbours to control the outcome and, hopefully, to rebuild their relationship.

Occasionally, neighbour disputes end up in Court. I can tell you that I have yet to deal with such a Court case where either of the neighbours ends up satisfied. By the time the dispute reaches Court, they will each be so entrenched and will have each spent so much money on lawyers that no outcome will be a happy one.

categories: a passive infra-red detector to detect movement and body heat inside the building or a door contact system

Both systems will operate a sounder if the building is accessed without the correct de-activation. They are available with battery or mains power supply and can be purchased from your local locksmiths, DIY or discount store.

## **A View From A Founding Member**

This past year I have returned to the MCS Committee after a number of years' absence. Visiting new and existing members with Jill Freeth during the Summer I was heartened by the response we received and by the number of younger householders who obviously love their houses and are working hard to restore, repair and improve them. We had a friendly welcome in many houses and we hope to build on this good will and community spirit in social events in the months to come.

Our walk around the Conservation Area also allowed residents to talk about planning issues, which affect them in different ways, some severely. This reminded me of the beginnings of this Society when a large development was proposed in Park Road and as a newcomer to the area, with a young family, I felt vulnerable and isolated. Thankfully there were other residents who recognized the qualities in this area that were (and are) worth preserving. They also had the skills to understand plans and procedures and how to win support from the local community. The outcome was still a new development (Parkgate) but not demolition of 5 houses and the erection of blocks of flats, as first proposed. We gained concessions in lower density and keeping the appearance sympathetic with the area. On another level, we also found that there is strength in numbers. Together we have more chance of preserving the qualities we value in these few roads and we hope to have some fun as well.

Sally Harrup

## **Neighbours -Everybody Needs Good Neighbours!**

In my practice as a local solicitor, I am often instructed to deal with disputes between neighbours. I am pleased to say that I have yet to deal with such a dispute in the Milton Conservation Area, which is not surprising given the renowned good humour of its local residents!

These disputes require careful handling. Most of us are very sensitive about issues, which affect our homes; after all, our home is the haven we want to escape to at the end of a long day. In these cases, there is usually a specific issue, which causes a client to come to me for advice. It may be that their

the enforcement action is considered. Young or old, families with children in buggies, all are needed at the meeting to show the Council how much public support there is for enforcement. This is your neighbourhood, please continue to speak up and help to defend it. We will try to inform all concerned when the meeting is due to be held.

## **Barons Court School**

During the summer the Council (as the Local Planning Authority) gave itself (as the Planning Applicant) planning permission to enlarge the school for an extra 90 children and 10 members of staff. This was without any extra provision for parking, any extra access or play space and an inadequate Travel Plan, required with the planning application. Whilst we supported the general improvements to the school we objected to the application because of this lack of parking, lack of access space and the serious impact on the surrounding streets and therefore on the residents. The building works commenced in the summer so the project is progressing at full speed. However, we will be holding the Council to account on the Travel Plan that they still have to produce as a condition of the planning approval and pushing for further improvements to the parking and access. This might involve the compulsory purchase of the garage courtyard between the school and Park Terrace. If you have views on this please get in touch with us.

## **Quiz Night - A Date for your diary**

Yes folks, as the nights draw in we thought we would lift the spirits with another outing for the QUIZ NIGHT! Last year's was a successful and extremely fun event and with a fish & chip supper included it's a night to enjoy.

Come along with friends and family to form a team of up to 8 or come on your own to form a team on the night - we can introduce you.

When -: Friday 30<sup>th</sup> October at 7:30pm

Where:- Barons Court Infants School

Tickets cost £7 per person which includes fish & chips and are available from Tony Brown (15 Park Crescent) or any executive committee member (see back page) or email us and we will call round. We will need to finalize numbers by 28<sup>th</sup> October so please let us know if you would like to come along! Bring your own drink and nibbles. We look forward to seeing you there.

## Shorefields Conservation Area

We are pleased to announce that the Shorefields Conservation Area area is now represented by the Milton Conservation Society and 17 people from the area have joined our Society as Shorefields does not have its own constituted Society. This means that MCS will comment on any planning applications monitor any breaches of Conservation legislation. It may be that in time they will attract enough members to form their own separate society.



*Westcliff Hotel c. 1910*

Shorefields Conservation area comprises both sides of Marine Avenue, Trinity Avenue and Westcliff Avenue together with Westcliff Parade from No 12 along to and including the Beecroft Art Gallery.



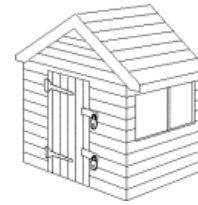
*Stuart House, Christian Boarding Home c. 1914*

The area has many fine Victorian properties and includes Southend's oldest hotel (The Westcliff) built in 1890. The area was developed around the same time as Milton as Southend grew outwards from Clifftown. Shorefields has some fine late Victorian and Edwardian buildings, many with charming decorative features that we wish to conserve for the future.

## Secure Your Outbuildings

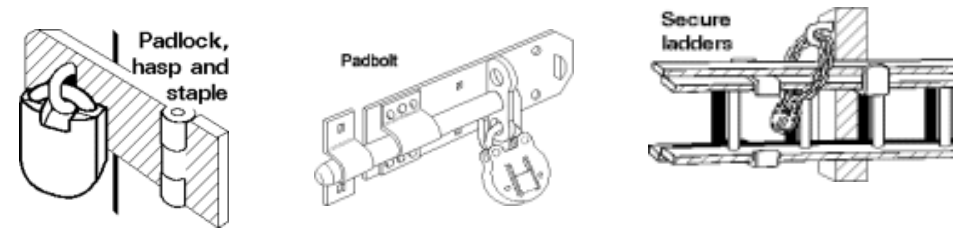
As the nights draw in crime tends to rise as thieves take advantage of longer nights so now is a good time to start to make your property safe. Most burglars are lazy. They look for easy ways of getting into a house or garden.

By taking a few simple precautions you can reduce the risk of being burgled and make your house and garden more secure.



Garden sheds and garages are a very popular target with burglars and are often overlooked when security is being considered. The value of the contents, such as power tools mowers, cycles etc. can often add up to many hundreds of pounds. They also provide burglars with an arsenal of house breaking implements, e.g. a garden spade - few door or window locks can withstand a prolonged attack because of the blade size and the leverage that can be exerted.

It is therefore wise to secure the door with at least one heavy duty hasp and closed-shackle padlock. It may not always be appropriate to fit a heavy duty padlock, hasp and staple as the door and frame may not be strong enough to support them. There is a range of smaller but sturdy padlocks, padbolts, hasps and staples which would be suitable. Always use coach-bolt fixings through the door and frame



If the building is too fragile to secure adequately, tools such as spades the spade could either be bolted or padlocked to a heavy bench or frame or chain them together.

Alternatively use a strong lockable box or cage within the shed or garage in which you can store not only your tools but also insecticides, weed killers or other items which may be harmful if improperly used.

All opening windows require good window locks.

Ladders should be chained and padlocked to a strong post or wall

It is also worth considering an alarm. This does not mean a complete burglar alarm system, though, if your house already has one, it may be possible to extend it. There are various stand-alone devices on the market specifically designed for remote use in garages or sheds, which fall into two main