

Views from the Hill

NEWSLETTER OF THE TEWKESBURY LODGE ESTATE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION Winter 2021



Reservoir Site update

The Victorian covered reservoir enclosed by houses on Canonbie Road, Horniman Drive, Rocombe Crescent and Liphook Crescent has remained an undisturbed green space and a



haven for wildlife since it was built in 1887. Most members will know that it was recognised by the Council as a Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC) following a survey by the London Ecology Unit commissioned by the Association in August 1995 which identified 78 different invertebrate species on the site including "clouds" of butterflies, 10 species of ladybird, and a very rare picture-winged fly. We have observed a massive deterioration of this natural environment with the removal this year of most of the vegetation and some of the earth. Much of the remaining depleted surface has been covered in plastic. None of us knows what is going to happen next, but the site is owned by a developer - and developers develop! We therefore expect to see an application for planning permission at some time in the future.

This destruction is distressing for local people to observe, and must be contrary to the Lewisham Development Plan which states: '*The Council will seek to deliver net gains in biodiversity and support the London Plan to be 50% green by 2050'. More specifically for the West Area, Point 9 of the objectives is to 'Protect and enhance open and green spaces along with the distinctive woodland character of the area'.*

Instead of gains in biodiversity and the enhancement of green spaces we have

witnessed a massive reduction in biodiversity and the destruction of what may have been the most valuable green space in Lewisham. Apart from this, any housing development could have the following additional consequences:

- Traffic congestion at the exit from the Reservoir Site onto Canonbie Road close to the junction with Honor Oak Road.
- Stability of the site. The area is steeply inclined and is subject to subsidence. A survey of the stability of the site will be needed.
- Interruption of sight lines from Barr Beacon, 116 Canonbie Road, and 'The Folly' in Liphook Crescent.

Before...



What can we do about this? The Residents' Association, has opposed three previous applications for development on this site, and will continue to oppose any future development plans. It is pursuing all other measures and avenues that are available. But it is also necessary for individual members to make their views known to the Council as soon as we know what is proposed. On the last two occasions we organised a petition which demonstrated the strength of local opposition. This time we will do this online.

We will be contacting you as soon as we read any planning application. Please sign it straight away, if you agree.

Stuart Checkley, Jeremy Newell and Tina Hildrey

...and after the clearance

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Date for your diary

- *Carols by Candlelight*
Triangle between Horniman Drive and

Liphook Crescent on Sunday 19th December.
Event free to members.



Valerie Ward

Message from our Chair

I do hope that with the lifting of Covid restrictions you were able to meet once again with family and friends. Reflecting on the year, it has, for the Association as well as elsewhere, been another one of mixed fortunes. We remain concerned about the continued development threats to our green spaces and are taking what steps we can to protect our environment. These spaces are more important than ever to our well-being and it is, at least, encouraging to read the positive reports of more woodland birds, wildflowers, flourishing gardens and street trees on our Estate.

As far as events were concerned, we were delighted that our NGS Open Gardens went ahead in May and that many of you were able to come along. It was, however, a great shame that a number of factors meant that the Summer Picnic and Autumn Harvest events could not go ahead this year but at least we managed to hold the Annual General Meeting, albeit on Zoom.

NGS Garden Opening

Huge congratulations go to our quintet of intrepid Open Gardeners who defied the odds and held our first event of the year. It was touch and go until almost the last minute, waiting for news about the lifting of Covid restrictions and analysing the procedures required. But, after Herculean efforts by the NGS and our team of volunteers to ensure safety measures were in place, the opening was confirmed for Sunday 23rd May. International borders might still have been closed but our herbaceous borders were well and truly open! Early worries about ticket sales were quickly quashed with all slots sold out online within days of going on sale.

But what about those all important cakes? It was going to be a challenge and somewhat different from previous years but the ingenuity of the team meant that a separate area was set up in the Triangle where the eagerly anticipated homemade cakes, teas and plant sales could go ahead safely. What a relief - a gardening opening is not really a garden opening without the teas! There was even music from the ever wonderful Open Road musicians and, of course, there was amazing art on sale at The Hermitage. All involved rose to the considerable challenge of managing numbers and ensuring that social distancing was maintained. Visitors had no problem complying with the one-way systems and restricted entry numbers - they were just so happy to be able to come.

Winner of the wee
Triangle bakeoff

We rely totally on volunteers to have event ideas and to bring them to fruition (including the clearing up afterwards!) so I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has helped in the past and particularly during this difficult period. Most of the team have been hard at it for a number of years so it would be wonderful if more of you were able to volunteer and help us put on an exciting programme for the coming year – do get in touch if you would like to help in any way or if you have any ideas for future events.

We hope that the Christmas Carols in the Triangle will take place as this is a special occasion and a great opportunity for members to meet up and, for those who have moved in recently, to get to know others on the Estate. So do join the Association beforehand and come along and enjoy the singing, mulled wine and mince pies

Valerie Ward

As for the gardens themselves, they did not disappoint. Despite the hard winter and late frosts, there were still many delights for visitors



to enjoy. The green shoots of spring had at last arrived and all the gardens, while perhaps not as floriferous as usual, were nonetheless bursting into life. Amongst the myriad of greens there were still many colourful bursts from plants such as alliums, tulips, clematis, and

honesty. The lockdowns had also inspired new projects so there were tantalising glimpses of developments to come, including a wildflower meadow; a fabulous white garden on the site of an old pond; inspiring new planting schemes; and wildlife friendly areas. A total inspiration and visitors were keener than ever to avail themselves of the expert gardeners' knowledge - lots of questions were asked and many plants purchased.

Great gardens, great cakes and great causes – the spirit of the National Garden Scheme epitomised. We are delighted that so many visitors

came and that over £3,290 was raised for nursing and health charities. Although slightly less than previous years, it was an amazing result in the circumstances and many, many thanks go to all involved, especially to Dave and Michele Leslie for setting up the Triangle and to Janet Smith for manning the cake stall all day. In addition, the garden at 25 Westwood Park held a very successful private opening at the beginning of June, raising another £1200 for the charities - a total of £4,490.

Tina Hildrey

Street tree update- the good, the bad and the beautiful

Now that we have planted an amazing 50 street trees on our Estate, it makes sense to review where we are and where we want to go.

We started off by planting small, attractive trees that we could enjoy, but which would not damage the pavements and garden walls as had the trees that were there before them. A huge number of us have contributed money and helped with watering to make this possible. The trees are attractive, most of them are doing well and, so far, none have damaged a pavement. In the case of the tree outside my house I am pretty sure that its roots are not going to cause damage. Thames Water dug a massive hole just next to the tree and I was delighted to see that no roots were trying to cross the pavement. They were all, as far as I could see, either contained within the original tree pit or else they had grown straight down in search of all the water I had poured down the irrigation tube. So far so good.

There is, however, one problem, and it is a problem for many of the small trees that Street Trees for Living has planted in Lewisham. Many of them come from one family of trees - the Rosaceae, or Rose family, that includes Crab apples, Cherry trees, Pear trees, Sorbus, Rowan, Hawthorn, and Amelanchiers. Almost all these small colourful trees are relatives, however distant, of the rose, and that causes a problem in terms of biodiversity. Any disease which affects one member of the Rosaceae family might affect them all. We do have at the moment some shrivelled ends of branches on some of our Chinese Scarlet Rowan and these might be early signs of a disease called Fire Blight. As a precautionary measure we have removed the affected leaves and branches and disposed of them safely. If anyone is concerned

about any tree on the Estate, please contact me straight away.

In order to increase the biodiversity of our tree population we have been planting trees that are not members of the Rose family. *The Chitalpa Tashkentensis* (Summer Bells) is one such tree. It was cloned in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, by cross-



*Chitalpa
Tashkentensis*

ing a Desert Rose with an Indian Bean Tree. Neither of these are members of the Rose family and so this is an ideal tree for us to plant, with no disadvantages other than that it is a bit expensive. It is an incredibly attractive tree with leaves similar to those of an Olive tree but its flower, as illustrated here, is like that of a Rhododendron. It needs a warm sheltered spot, such as where Olive trees thrive, but otherwise it is a perfect tree for us, and is one that will thrive if global warming proceeds, as unfortunately is expected.

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Similarly future-proofed is the Crepe Myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica Rosea*). Last year the Horniman Drive *Lagerstroemia* produced the most exquisite deep rose pink flowers that were illustrated in a previous Newsletter. This year only a few flowers appeared, but it is attractive throughout the year and will thrive as the climate warms up.

Other attractive trees that are not members of the Rose family and are doing well on our Estate include the Tamarisk at the top of Westwood Park, and the Himalayan Birch with intense white bark throughout the year. The latter is growing opposite Horniman School but it needs a medium sized pavement. Another attractive small tree that is not from the Rose family is the Judas tree. One grew well in our front garden and caused no damage to a garden wall which it almost touched. Two are growing

at the top of Thorpewood Avenue and they are attractive at all times of the year and most especially when their rosy-lilac flowers are in bloom. This winter two Judas trees will be planted as a pair at the top of Netherby Road.

Alternative trees that are unrelated to the Rose family are being tried out in other parts of Lewisham, and, if appropriate, will be tried here. I am particularly interested in the Snow Bell (*Halesia Carolina*): look out for the white bell-shaped flowers of a Snow Bell half way down Dunoon Road next summer.

Once again, huge thanks to everyone who has funded or watered a tree or trees. If anyone would like to help next year, please contact me on stuart@streettreesforliving.org

Stuart Checkley

Summer Festival in the Horniman Gardens



Twilight bliss on Hornimans lawn

This summer saw a welcome return of outdoor events in the Horniman Gardens, including the family-friendly food and music festival, The Original Jerk Cookout, which took place on the last Saturday of July. A full programme of

activities and live performances was scheduled all afternoon and into the early evening and a little rain certainly did not dampen the enjoyment of the day. The mellow sounds of jazz, soul, and gospel were the perfect backdrop to the jerk feast. There were so many food stalls to choose from, with a vast range of delicious jerk, vegan and vegetarian food cooked by top Caribbean and African chefs. The barbecues were fired up and the air was smoky with the aroma of the spice. Dance was also the order of the day ranging from reggae aerobics to samba in the sunken gardens. Lots of activities for adults and children to enjoy – a very chilled afternoon on the Hill.

Another series of free events, the 696 Festival, also took place at the Gardens in celebration of black music. The festival ran until the end of September and featured some of South London's most exciting artists in a mix of free and paid for events. Included in the programme was the Balamii Summer Series in the Bandstand on Thursday evenings throughout August – and were well worth going along to.

Tina Hildrey

Not mowing the lawn

Our front lawn has been a messy sight since moving into the house. It gets too much sunlight, as we face slightly south of east, and the house provides a sun-trap shelter. The grass goes brown, and then the weeds get a grip. Early on we thought that it was the type of grass that was the problem, so we asked Sue Bunn's team to re-turf the lawn on a properly prepared base, which they did. This helped for about a

year, before the same pattern of brown grass with scattered weeds appeared. For years I used to go out periodically with weed killer (Yuk!) and selectively spray the dandelions. All to no avail, and I shudder to think how many bees I might have harmed.

Two years ago, after neglecting to mow the grass, I noticed that the lawn was growing some wonderful Cowslips (Queen Anne's Lace), so I

decided to encourage these by allowing them to reseed at the end of the season. What next happened amazed me - the long grass and various weeds, became a living forest for Bees, Butterflies, Ladybirds - and masses of little Grasshoppers, which remind me of Provence as they chirrup in the sunlight. Apparently chirruping is the way grasshoppers attract more grasshoppers to a long grass party, as they like company – I have been reading up!

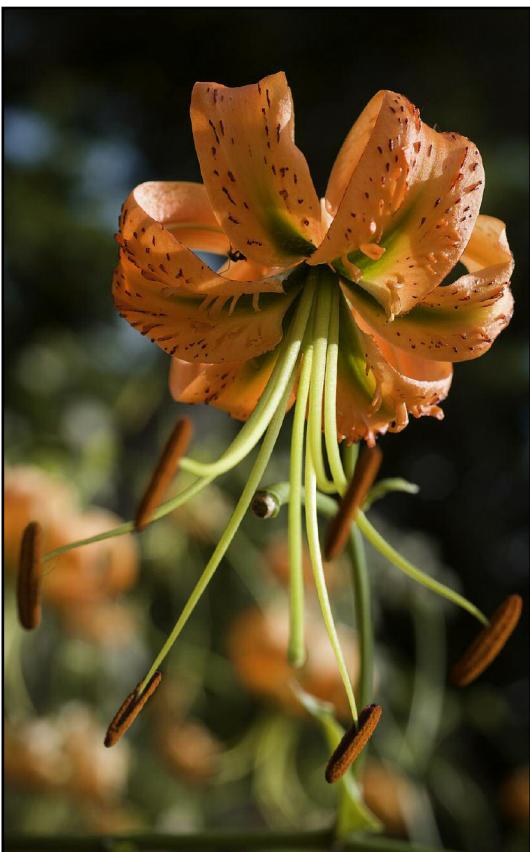
Next step? Well, I keep looking at the wildflower areas of Horniman, so I think I will try sowing some Sweet William, Blood Wort, Corncockles and Sage this winter. Wish me luck. No more weed killer for me – ever!

Dave Leslie



Summer to Autumn in the garden

Looking out in mid-August, I was struck by how tall some plants have grown to form a real



presence in the garden. None of them needed any support or feeding and displayed until late autumn. The Perovski powered up as never before with scented powder blue spires. One morning I noticed the variegated Yucca had sent a high plume formed of individual bell-shaped creamy white flowers that gradually opened; it was a splendid thing. Purchased at one of our NGS Open Gardens a few years ago, the burgundy Orache, an ancient spinach-like vegetable plant, was higher than the Black Jack dahlia that complimented it. *Salvia Amistad* is a favourite, as is white *Anemone Japonica* - both growing strong and long! How high the yellow ochre flowers of the bronze fennel had grown, swaying in the breeze in the golden afternoon light, looking a treat next to the silky delicate grass *Stipa Tenuissima*. A special mention for the smiley orange turksheads *Lilium Henryii* - it really sings out on a gloomy day and rests on the black *Aeonium Zwartkop* by the back door. The *Eryngium pandifolium* with serrated glaucous sword like leaves had spectacular small dark red berry like flower heads on towering long branching stems. It needs space, this show stopper!! With the coming of Autumn, all the colours glowed richer and warmer. A big hug from the garden that gives so much pleasure.

Alice Hutton

Lilium Henryii

Woodland birds on the Hill

2021 has been excellent year both for our trees and for the woodland birds that visit them. The year started with the departure of the Peregrine Falcons that may have bred on the Telecom Mast (off Horniman Drive) in 2020. Peregrines are reputedly the fastest flying birds of prey in

Europe and their arrival was followed by the hasty retreat of the starlings that had previously roosted on the Mast. It was sad to see the peregrines go in the New Year, but in their absence many other woodland birds moved in.

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A flock of about 50 Redwings arrived in February with the assistance of Storm Bella. The main flock dispersed but a smaller group



Tawny owl

stayed for the rest of the winter until the last of the Cotoneaster berries were gobbled up. Redwings are incredibly wasteful eaters and swallow one berry every 30 seconds but in the frenzy many berries fall to the ground.

Annual General Meeting 2021 – with a difference...

2020 was the year that the whole wide world went Zoom and the trend continued in this year's lockdown. The Association has been no exception. Having had to cancel last year's Annual General Meeting, the Committee decided to bite the bullet this year and enter the unchartered waters of the virtual general meeting.

A Zoom AGM was duly convened in June and we were pleased that a quorum of members joined us on screen to conduct the formal business of receiving the accounts for the last three years and of electing the Executive Committee Members. I am delighted to say that no technical issues were encountered and that all there were able to be seen and heard – the miracles of technology! The meeting proceeded

A Red Kite flew over the Hill in February. These attractive, fast-flying reddish birds of prey with a forked tail were once restricted to mid-Wales. However, following a successful re-introduction to the Chilterns between 1989 and 1994, their numbers have taken off in the home counties. Other members of TLERA have reported seeing them flying over the Hill in the past, but this was the first time I had seen one. Sparrowhawks are of similar size but have much wider and rounder wings. Both soar on thermals and also hunt by flying fast over hedges and catching small garden birds unawares. They used to be quite regular visitors to the Hill but gave us a wide birth when the much larger and much faster Peregrines were around. Now they are cautiously checking us out again. In the summer several us heard what we thought might be distant Tawny Owls with their "Tu-whit, tu-whoo" calls, as characterised by Shakespeare. And then, at the end on September, I heard one hooting in my garden, and others heard them in Ringmore Rise and Westwood Park.

None of these birds are here because of the beauty of our trees alone, but because our trees are part of a chain of wooded hills which stretch from the North Downs near Croydon through Crystal Palace, Sydenham Woods, the Horniman Triangle opposite the Museum, the Horniman Gardens, our Estate, and One Tree Hill. A wildlife corridor along which birds migrate.

Stuart Checkley

smoothly and all resolutions were passed unanimously.

Although there were no guest presentations this time, Valerie Ward summarised the achievements of the Association during this difficult period, including the continued success of the Street Tree Scheme, as well as outlining the current issues facing the Association, notably the threats to our green spaces and planning challenges. There were a number of questions from attendees and a useful discussion followed. A vote of thanks was given to the hard-working members of the Committee and to the Chair.

Zoom served a purpose and thanks to all who attended. We very much hope that in 2022 we can meet again in person. Virtual is just not the same.

Tina Hildrey

Planning-help urgently needed

One of the Association's key objectives is to consider and respond to planning applications that are out of keeping with surrounding homes and/or adversely impinge on neighbouring properties. With lots of planned changes on the Estate, and limited resources, unfortunately the Association cannot respond in every case,

particularly when informed at short notice or changes to properties that border the Estate are involved.

We therefore urgently need someone with an interest in Planning to help out. Please give me a call on 0208 699 8432/07974 175064 to find out more.

Valerie Ward

Social history corner

Did you know, well I'm sure you do, that we live in a very interesting part of SE London? In his new edition of *The Green London Way* Bob Gilbert explores the social history and wildlife of London over a 110 mile circular walk. The section that particularly drew my attention was the chapter entitled 'The Peasants heath and the Commoners hill'. Within this chapter are two local battles: the Battle for One Tree Hill and the Battle for the Westwood. Both involved local people fighting against restrictions or developments of open or common land. The first was a 19th century fight to prevent the local golf club taking over One Tree Hill. Mass protests occurred with up to 100,000 people encircling the hill to defend it and, after various incidents, it was saved in 1902 by the London County Council and remains as open land to this day.

But I knew nothing about the Battle for the Westwood Hill that is a much older affair. The Westwood was part of the Great North Wood that covered much of our area. To quote Bob Gilbert 'Westwood is honourable... as it was the site of the first recorded fight for commoners' rights in Britain'. As part of the Manor of Lewisham it was over 500 acres and 'the poorer inhabitants had for generations used it for pasturage and regarded it as common land'. However, when in 1605 the king granted the land to Henry Newport, a member of the local gentry, the commoners complained and the case went to court in 1606.

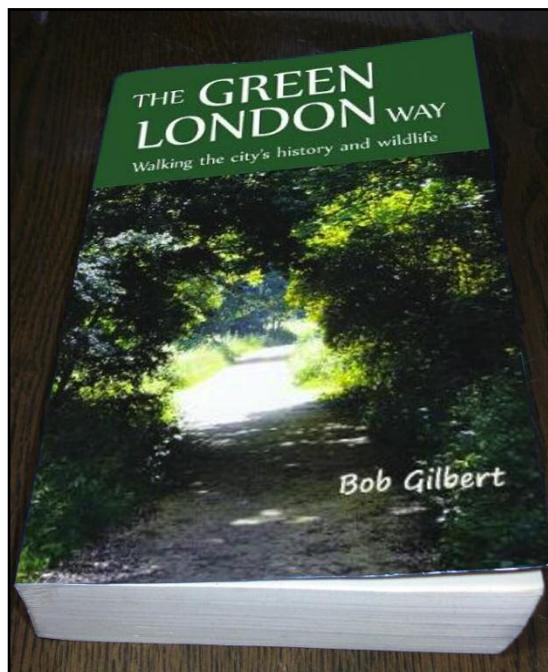
The first trial tried to come down on both sides pleasing nobody, so it went on to the Court of the Exchequer in 1607. The commoners won but Newport and his associates ignored the ruling and took over 347 acres of the common. A third trial was in Newport's favour and he

immediately began to construct fences and ditches. The local people responded by demolishing the fences and filling in the ditches. Things were getting very nasty and to let Bob Gilbert finish the story: 'As the crisis came to a head the local vicar Abraham Colfe led 100 parishioners to London to make a direct appeal to the King who referred the case to the Privy council.'

A retrial was ordered and on the 16th October 1615 the judgement was made 'on behalfe of the poore inhabitants'. It was a great victory for the commoners and lasted 200 years. In 1810, an Act of Parliament was passed authorising the enclosure of the whole of the common. Today, Westwood only exists as a street name. So if you live on Westwood Park you have, in my opinion, some pretty impressive antecedents!

Beatrice Jackson

Bob Gilberts: "The Green London Way", published by Lawrence and Wishart Ltd



Membership and subscriptions

We have not collected subscriptions since lockdown began, but as we start to hold events

again, we will be restarting. It has been decided to change the subscription year, so that it will now begin in January and we plan to start

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sending membership reminders early in 2022. Subscription will remain at £5 per household per year.

During the past two years a number of properties on the Estate have changed ownership and I have been delighted that several new residents contacted me via the website to say they wanted to join TLERA. If this newsletter is your first contact with the Association and you wish to join, then please contact your road representative whose name is listed in the back page.

Alternatively, you can contact me directly via membership@tewkesburylodge.org.uk A few of

our new members have paid their £5, which has made them eligible to receive future newsletters, attend the free events for members, receive updates of criminal activity in the area, and join our Facebook group, as these are only available to paid-up members. Any subscriptions paid since April 2020 will be carried forward to cover 2022.

If you want more information or have any queries about the Facebook group, do contact me.

Carole Abrahams

Committee List

Officers

Valerie Ward	53 Ringmore Rise	Chair	8699 8432
Stuart Checkley	19 Liphook Crescent	Co-Chair	07709 578417
Kate Morris	27 Canonbie Road	Treasurer	07791 202350
Tina Hildrey	1 Horniman Drive	General Secretary	8699 6039
Carole Abrahams	24 Liphook Crescent	Membership Secretary	8291 1312

Road Representatives

Beatrice Jackson	60 Canonbie Road	Representing	2-70 Canonbie Road (even numbers)
Ann Bowers	33 Canonbie Road		1-81 Canonbie Road (odd numbers)
Nano McCaughan	Flat 12, 108 Canonbie Road		07779 022538
Mary Bayliss	75 Canonbie Road		83-105 and 72-120 Canonbie Road
Rose Agnew	27 Horniman Drive		Barr Beacon, Canonbie Road
Christine Martyn	8 Cleeve Hill		8699 8175
Tony & Maria Branchini	10 Liphook Crescent		1-63 and 2-36 Horniman Drive
Alice Hutton	12 Netherby Road		8699 7710
Valerie Ward	53 Ringmore Rise		65-77 and 50-70 Horniman Drive,
Alison Welch	12 Tewkesbury Avenue		8699 3010
Jim Hyett	20c Westwood Park		Amroth Close and Cleeve Hill
Rita Zarvou	67 Westwood Park		Liphook Crescent and Roccombe Cr.
Michael Levin	38 Westwood Park		8699 3078
Jacqueline & Alan Priestley	104 Westwood Park		Netherby Road & Sydmons Court
Linda & Gabriel Porras	126 Westwood Park		8699 3078
			Ringmore Rise
			8699 8432
			Tewkesbury Avenue
			07949 182135
			1-15d and 2-20d Westwood Park
			8699 4322
			and The Hermitage
			15e-87 Westwood Park (odd numbers)
			8699 2429
			22-76 Westwood Park (even numbers)
			8699 6251
			78-114 & 89-125 Westwood Park
			3605 5017
			127-163 and 116-134 Westwood Park
			8699 7895
			and Langton Rise/Moonlight Walk

Sub-Committee/Group Leaders

Crime / Police Liaison	Christine Noon	43 Canonbie Road	
Environment (natural)	Steward Checkley	19 Liphook Crescent	07709 578417
Environment (built)	Michael Levin	38 Westwood Park	8699 6251
Gardening Club	Beth Falkingham-Blackwell	25 Westwood Park	8699 2616
Newsletter	Valerie Ward	53 Ringmore Rise	8699 8432
Newsletter Graphic design	Michael Schlingmann	23 Liphook Crescent	8699 2927
Planning	Rowena Lowe	6 Tewkesbury Ave	8699 7390
Social Activities	Valerie Ward	53 Ringmore Rise	8699 8432
Traffic/Transport	Dave Leslie	38 Liphook Crescent	8699 1784
Webmaster	John Hudson	36 Westwood Park	07775 557880

This newsletter was compiled and edited by Valerie Ward, and Tina Hildrey. Design and layout by Michael Schlingmann. Contributions from members are very welcome and can be e-mailed to us at secretary@tewkesburylodge.org.uk