



The Alpha Road Estate 2010/11

by Sadiq Mohamed,
Chair Alpha Road Residents Association

A YEAR OF FUN

The 2010 International Fun Day in May was a great success, see page 4, as was the coach trip to Littlehampton, also page 4. Thanks to all the volunteers who helped to make them such a success.

At the end of November we had a major (for London!) fall of snow which made the estate look very pretty but caused disruption for residents due to ice on footpaths. If you have any interesting stories or photos about that, please get in touch as we are working on a revamp of the website and would like more input from residents.



The fence around Charles Sumner is finally going to be repaired thanks to Mears and Quadron, and a bit of arm twisting from Councillor Moseley!, see page 3 for full details.

TMO FALLS BY THE WAYSIDE

The ARRA committee's plan to set up a Tenant Management Organisation (TMO) for the estate has had to be abandoned. We couldn't get enough residents to give up the time to work on it.

This a great personal disappointment for me, as I had been working on it for more than 3 years, but there is some good news. Kingston Council Housing Department are in the process of working out a new scheme for caretaking on estates, and the RA will be taking a role in that through an Estate Management Agreement.

This is a much less formal arrangement than a TMO, and would involve representatives of the existing RA working with the Estate Manager and Housing Officers to set priorities and monitor the performance of the service.

In the longer term we hope to extend the EMA to include grounds maintenance and communal repairs. And, the coalition Government's Localism agenda will require more involvement by residents in local

authority decision making and we are looking at what that could mean for us.

BUT THE FUTURE IS BRIGHTER

The long term future of the estate has always been shadowed by lack of funding to the Housing Department, but there finally looks to be good news on that front, as two things are happening that will effect us.

In the immediate future the council has bid for funding to deal with the backlog of Decent Homes Standard work. For years little has been done about this as repairs were confined to emergencies only. Now the Housing Department will be getting extra money to allow it to "catch up", and while this may not effect our estate immediately, it could release funds to do work on our communal areas. Your committee reps are talking to Housing about this and will keep you informed.

For the long term the notorious Housing Revenue Subsidy system is finally at an end, and Kingston will no longer have to give the government 30% or more of our rents. This unfair "rent tax" system will end in March 2012, and after that Kingston's Housing Department will be able to keep all the rent to pay for repairs. They will however have to take on a very large new bank loan (around £100 million) as a "buy out", but changes to the rules and the fact that the loan would be over a long period mean that it is manageable.

We may not see anything till 2013, but there is now real hope of getting the money to do the things we have been asking for years. More importantly we have had agreement from the council that the residents of the estate will be directly involved in setting the priorities for what work gets done and when. There is light at the end of the tunnel so stay tuned!



Sadiq Mohammed

Contact ARRA, by
Phone: 020 8390 1226
Email: info@alpharoad.org.uk
or by post c/o Flat 3, Headley,
King Charles Road, Surbiton, KT5 8QW

Alpha Road Estate 'Fit as a Fiddle' Keep Fit programme.

Age Concern Kingston upon Thames was awarded a grant from the Big Lottery to coordinate a 'Fit as a Fiddle' Project.

The focus of this project is on people over 50 living in the borough of Kingston who want to lose weight & get fit. The programme comprises a series of free six week activities with linked healthy lifestyle workshops.

By working with various groups and people on Alpha Road Estate, a programme was agreed that was tailored to the older people in the area.

It consisted of Gentle Keep Fit to Music, suitable for people of all abilities. A Healthy lifestyles workshop followed on after the exercise class, involving healthy eating discussion, menu planning, recipes, exercise and a weekly weigh in.

The course was provided at Berrylands Christian Centre, close to Alpha Road Estate, and ran from September 15th to October 20th 2010. 21 people enrolled onto the 6 week course.

Many positive comments were received, including: 'meeting people'; 'the friendly instructors'; 'the fitness achieved'; the 'information provided' and 'feeling good'.

The group were so keen for the course to continue that thanks to the efforts of the main champion of the group, June Bowers, the Church Hall Trustees agreed to subsidise the group, and the group is due to recommence in mid January 2011.

For more information about Fit as Fiddle please contact Grace on 020 8942 8256 email: grace@ageconcernkingston.org

English for Health Course

Kingston-based charity Learn English at Home (LEAH) ran a very popular course entitled 'English for Health' at Surbiton Children's Centre in September / October 2010. This was attended by thirteen women from seven different countries, most of whom live in and around the Alpha Road Estate.

The four week course introduced ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) topics relating to health, such as making a doctor's appointment, describing illnesses and symptoms, and calling an ambulance. It also provided students with information about local health services.

Students found the course very useful - all participants reported that they felt more confident about making a doctor's appointment in English after the course, and 10 out of the 13 said they now felt that they could talk to their doctor in English more confidently. One of the attending students said "I learned about diseases and aches and making appointments. I can say all of the issues were very interesting and useful for me."

Due to the success of this course, and due to the training LEAH volunteers have received through the European Integration Fund project LEAH and Surbiton Children's Centre are planning to run another course for people with ESOL needs starting from January 2011. This course will run for 10 weeks and will cover further health and wellbeing themes along with other topics such as education, public transport and life in the UK. Anyone who is interested in this course, or in training to be a LEAH volunteer, should contact Rhiannon Moore at LEAH on 020 8255 6144 or health@leah.org.uk.

Are you 55+ ?

FREE Armchair Exercise Class

Thursday afternoons at 2.00pm in the Charles Sumner Lounge.

Join us for an hour of fun and friendship plus free tea and biscuits. Contact Aileen Hill Smith on 07768005631 for more details.

Please check with your GP before joining the class to ensure you are fit enough

The Parents Forum is a group of Kingston parents and carers who are consulted on services for children, young people and families in Kingston. Consultations are usually combined with fun days out for the family. Anyone that is a parent or carer and lives in the borough or has a child attending a school in the borough can join.



The Aims of the Parents Forum:

- To listen to the voice of Kingston's parents
- For parents views to impact onto Borough Services
- To provide an opportunity for parents to meet as a group
- To have consultations with Parents Forum members (one every term)
- To create a database of parents/carers wishing to be involved with the Parents Forum

For further information or to join the Parents Forum contact us by telephone: 020 8547 6582 or email parentsforum@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

A lifeline for the housebound

Kingston Council wants to raise awareness of its Community Library Service – a free and vital facility for any housebound person who is unable to get to their local library.

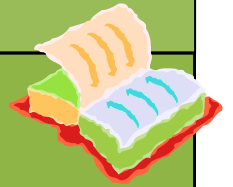
The Community Library visits the homes of housebound people every four weeks, bringing various library materials which are tailored to people's tastes and needs - such as ordinary print, large print, books on tape and CD's etc. The service is also available to carers.

The Council is encouraging residents to spread the word about this useful service, particularly if they know of anyone living in the Royal Borough of Kingston who could benefit from it. Residents do not have to be registered as disabled in order to make use of the service.

Paul Tanter, Manager of Kingston's Community

Library said: "This essential service is a lifeline for those people who are unable to leave their homes. For many of these elderly, disabled and vulnerable people, the Community Library and a few other service providers are their only contact with the outside world, and the service can be invaluable to their quality of life." He added: "If you are housebound and wish to make use of the service please get in touch – or if you know of any Kingston residents you think could benefit from our service, please pass our details on."

Details are available on the Community Library Service website, at www.kingston.gov.uk/browse/leisure/libraries/community_library_service.htm, or contact the Community Library on 020 8547 6451, or email community.library@rbk.kingston.gov.uk for more information.



Quadron Services Limited & The Mears Group working in partnership

Residents are over the moon as Quadron and Mears have come together in an incredible way to help the sheltered housing tenants of Charles Sumner on the Alpha Road Estate.

Over the years the fencing surrounding the perimeter of Charles Sumner has gradually fallen into disrepair due to vandalism and time. This fencing was a silent but very important feature in giving residents a sense of security. Because of budget constraints the council could not replace the fencing and could only carry out patch repairs until it became an impossible task.

Charles Sumner residents and the Alpha Road Residents' Association tried to raise money through grant funding but to no avail. RBK's contract partners Quadron and Mears have very generously worked together to replace the missing fencing. The timber that Quadron provided was supplied as part of the materials that they received from the RHS Hampton Court Flower Show Re-use Scheme that Quadron were involved with this year and have donated to a number of worthwhile community projects in Kingston. Mears have supplied the labour through their handyman service.

The two contractors have benefitted the Sheltered Housing community of Charles Sumner House in a very positive way and this is much appreciated by residents.

Students in the Community

"The University takes a very proactive role in fostering good community relations and we expect our students to be considerate and respectful towards their fellow local residents," says Anne Barr, Community Liaison Advisor from Kingston University. "We do recognise, however, that many students are away from home for the first time so we provide plenty of advice and guidance on being a good neighbour and how we expect them to behave. Where there is evidence that our students are involved in anti-social behaviour, appropriate action will always be taken."

Anne wants to get to know more about how students and other residents get along in the Alpha Road estate area, and she is keen to explore ideas for improving the community for all.

"Our students are active in the local community, offering 3,000 hours of service to good causes each year through our volunteering scheme and this is just one example of the University trying to be a positive force in the community," she says. "We also contribute to the area's cultural, educational and social life through public lectures, exhibitions and performances as well as by opening up sporting, health, conference and other facilities to local residents, businesses, and community organisations. We can always do more, however and I'd like to hear from individuals what things they would like to see from the University."

Anne will be attending local meetings to get to know about any issues or concerns and to understand student and other residents points of view.

If you would like to contact Anne with your comments or suggestions you can email her through the community notice board email address on the Kingston University Community Information website www.kingston.ac.uk/aboutkingstonuniversity/in-the-community/student-behaviour-in-the-local-community/

Fun Day 2010

By Ken Hedge

Such a long time ago, I wonder if you remember that lovely warm sunny day when folk on the Alpha Road Estate came together to have fun. It was the second effort of 'ARRA' (Residents Association) and so was much more polished with more stalls and things to attract and take part in, not only for the children but adults also.

The cage saw the football in action, there was a van that would look after your blood pressure, loads of refreshments and the children catered for down at the Nursery School, things to buy. Tai Chi exercised some of the visitors. A time to meet with other residents, to chat, and space to enjoy away from every day life.

This is the sort of thing that is needed for our Estate. Not just once a year but every day where life can be made more enjoyable for those who find life difficult for various reasons. We all tend to live within our own little circles, not knowing quite often what is happening to those who are our neighbours. They would, perhaps, be those who would welcome a kind word and action. An offer to shop, to help in some other way, just a chat. In that way 'Fun Day' would be for all and not just for those of us who can get out and about.

Thankfully we seem to have got rid of the snow and ice. It will soon be time for the plans for the next 'Fun Day' to be hatched. We would love to have you tell us what you would like to see on that day, we would love to have offers of help. It is amazing how much fun can be had behind the scenes as well as being a visitor.

It cannot be promised that everything would be put into the programme for there is always the question of cost and who to take care of the item. But we will do our best and we will hope for another beautiful sunny day, lots of people, lots of fun.

If you would like to have you tell us what you would like to see on that day, or offer your help then contact me Ken Hedge by email at kh003v9660@blueyonder.co.uk, telephone 020 8390 4753 or at 15 Tilford, 30 Howard Road, Surbiton, KT5 8RH.



Want to give up smoking?

We can help!

Get help with the KINGSTON and RICHMOND Stop Smoking Service who can help you with support and FREE Nicotine replacement therapy such as patches etc

FREE Stop Smoking Group starts on Thursday 3rd February from 11.30am to 12.30pm in the Lounge at Charles Summer House

Give up smoking with us and you are four times more likely to quit than trying to do it on your own!

Call 0800 085 2903



Kingston and Richmond Stop Smoking Service

Trip to the seaside

By Jean Vincent

On Thursday 19th August we took 41 residents to Littlehampton by coach. The journey was not long and everyone enjoyed passing through the green and pleasant countryside.

Although the day started off wet and windy by lunchtime the clouds had cleared and the sun shone through.

Some of us went shopping or to the fun fair and some of us walked along or sat on the harbour wall enjoying the warmth of the sun. Many of us, young and old alike, enjoyed fishing for crabs from the harbour wall.

Littlehampton is a charming town, very clean with a wonderful display of flowers, well worth another visit.

We arrived back at Smith Street at 5.00pm with everyone looking like they had enjoyed the day.

Thanks must go to the Brave New World, Berrylands Road, Surbiton who provided goody bags for all the children.

Choose the right health service during busy winter season

NHS Kingston has joined a national campaign to signpost residents to the right NHS services over the busy winter months. During the winter season the NHS usually comes under increased pressure, with a surge in health conditions that result in people using local services.

The message is if you feel unwell you can get treated more quickly and effectively by choosing the right service, as well as freeing up services like A&E to treat those who are in urgent need.

Dr Jonathan Hildebrand, Director of Public Health for NHS Kingston said: "It's important that people go to the right place for the right treatment. If you are critically ill or badly injured then you should always call 999".

"There are also many other local health services that can deal with more minor injuries - including a walk-in centre, a minor injuries unit and a GP clinic in Chessington. Pharmacists can also give advice on common ailments - and self-care is the best option for a hangover or sore throat."

Contact NHS Direct on 0845 4647 or visit www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk for health advice.

Choose well.



If you become unwell or are injured make sure you choose the right NHS service in Kingston.

Choose A&E in an emergency.

- Dial 999 for A&E. A&E should only be used when people are badly injured or critically ill.

Choose Urgent Care Services for minor injuries, 365 days a year.

- Walk-in Centre, Teddington Memorial Hospital, T: 020 8714 4000.
- Minor Injuries Unit, Queen Mary's Hospital, T: 020 8487 6999.

Choose your GP for earache, backache or stomach ache.

- Contact your GP or walk-in to get an appointment at the Gosbury Hill GP Clinic, T: 020 8974 1884, 365 days a year. Urgent cases are seen the same day.

Choose a Pharmacist for non urgent conditions.

- Your pharmacist can provide expert advice on common health problems.

Choose Self Care for a hangover or sore throat.

- Self-care is the best option for minor ailments.
- You can also contact NHS Direct on 0845 4647 or visit www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

For more information on local health services go to www.kingstonpct.nhs.uk



A healthier Kingston

Ask your GP about the seasonal flu jab

People across Kingston who are at risk of seasonal flu can protect themselves by getting their free flu jab - every year there are approximately 8,000 avoidable seasonal flu-related deaths in England and Wales.

Everyone aged 65 and over will routinely be offered the jab, as are younger people with long-term conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, asthma, multiple sclerosis, and serious kidney and liver disease.

This year, for the first time, all pregnant women are also being offered the seasonal flu vaccination. This is because it protects against the H1N1 virus (swine flu) that will still be circulating this winter, and pregnant women who catch this strain are at an increased risk of severe disease and flu-related hospital admissions.

Around 15 million people in the UK have the jab, which must be administered every year to match the latest flu strains in circulation.

Nicola Pratelli, immunisation lead for NHS Kingston, said: "The best way to avoid flu is to get immunised, so if you're in one of the at-risk groups then get in touch with your GP. "People can also protect themselves by practising good hand hygiene with the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' technique. This means carrying tissues, covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue, disposing of the tissue after one use, and cleaning hands as soon as possible with soap and water or an alcohol hand gel."

For more information head to www.kingstonpct.nhs.uk to download a seasonal flu leaflet.

How to prepare for winter:

Make sure you have a well-stocked medicine cabinet – paracetamol, aspirin, ant diarrhoeal medicine, rehydration mixture, plaster, thermometer.

Stop things spreading – catch coughs and sneezes in a tissue, dispose of tissues quickly and safely, regularly wash hands with soap and warm water.

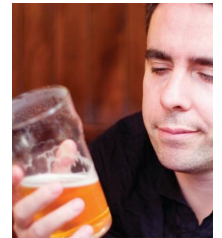
Recover properly – stay at home and get plenty of rest, let a friend or neighbour know you are unwell.

Stay warm – keep room temperature warm and comfortable, have regular hot drinks and hot meals including fruit and vegetables, take regular gentle exercise, wear lots of layers outside.

Get the flu jab – remember that if you are in a priority group or are over 65 you are entitled to a seasonal flu jab. Contact your GP to find out more. There are over 8,000 avoidable deaths each year due to the flu. **For a list of local health services go to www.kingstonpct.nhs.uk**

Are you ready to Down Your Drink Kingston?

Many of us drink, but how much is too much? This is the question a new pilot programme in Kingston is asking residents. Down Your Drink Kingston is aimed at helping individuals take a closer look at their drinking. In particular, men drinking more than 21 units of alcohol per week and women drinking more than 14 units per week. Considering one in four adults drink above these levels, many of us could probably do with a rethink about the way we drink. Down Your Drink Kingston offers a discreet way of doing this, with a bit of support along the way.



The programme involves a one-off face-to-face appointment, where you'll be assessed and then given a tour of the Down Your Drink Kingston website: www.dyd.kingston.nhs.uk. The website is packed full of tips, tools and techniques to help you look at your drinking and decide whether there's anything about your drinking you'd like to change, but "it's up to you". It's your very own personal resource you can visit 24 hours a day, 7 days a week!

Participants have commented they found the website useful, particularly the drink diary, as it includes the calories in each drink and estimated cost. They also appreciate the brief follow-up phone calls from an Alcohol Advisor, as they help to keep them motivated. To get online with Down Your Drink, ask your GP for a referral, or for more information contact the Alcohol Project Officer, downyourdrink@kpct.nhs.uk

Not sure how much is in that bottle, glass or can? Use the guide below to work out how much you drink.

Or use the following formula: Volume in millilitres x percentage ABV ÷ 1000



So, one pint (568ml) of beer at 4% ABV would be:
 $568 \times 4 \div 1000 = 2.3$ units

Want to know what your drinking level of risk is? Try the below questionnaire (called AUDIT-C) and add up your scores at the end.

Questions	Scoring system					Your score
	0	1	2	3	4	
How often do you have a drink containing alcohol?	Never	Monthly or less	2 - 4 times per month	2 - 3 times per week	4+ times per week	
How many units of alcohol do you drink on a typical day when you are drinking?	1 - 2	3 - 4	5 - 6	7 - 9	10+	
How often have you had 6 or more units if female, or 8 or more if male, on a single occasion in the last year?	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily or almost daily	

If you scored 4 or less, you're probably drinking at low-risk levels. If you scored 5 or more, you are probably drinking at increased or higher risk levels. Some of the impacts your drinking could have on your health include a lack of energy, low mood or anxiety/stress, insomnia and injuries. Reducing your alcohol intake would decrease the risk of you experiencing these harms.

Although different strategies work for different people, some tactics you might find useful to help reduce your alcohol intake include choosing drinks with lower alcohol content, eating or drinking soft drinks to slow down the pace or keeping to a limited drinks budget (leave the bank-cards at home). Keeping a 'drink diary' can also help to monitor your progress.

If you're worried about your drinking, talk to your GP or if you'd prefer to remain anonymous, call Drinkline for advice and support: 0800 917 8282

Are you staying afloat in the economic downturn?

It's normal to feel worried, anxious or down during this time of economic gloom. Most of us are increasingly dealing with emotionally distressful situations such as job insecurity, redundancy, debt and financial problems, which can all have a big impact on our health and wellbeing.

Mental health is generally about how we feel, think and behave. It determines our ability to engage in productive activity, have fulfilling relationships with other people, adapt to change and cope with adversity. It is therefore very important that we strive to remain in good mental health.

Anyone can be affected by poor mental health, there are certain things **you** can do to ensure that you and your loved ones remain in good health.

Visit your local Jobcentre to check if you're eligible (and apply) for any benefits to help you meet your basic needs or those of a loved one

Enrol on a course – to improve your skills, confidence and chances for a job. Talk to your local Jobcentre or Kingston Adult Education 020 8547 6700/6875 or email adult.education@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

Seek opportunities to connect with family, friends and your community.

Keep active – find affordable ways such as taking walks and volunteering - contact Kingston Volunteering Centre – Tel. 020 8255 8685, www.kvc.org.uk

Eat healthy – try to cook foods from scratch and substitute unhealthy snacks. Avoid using drugs and alcohol as a coping strategy.

Seek advice and guidance from reliable sources e.g. your local Citizens Advice Bureau

Most people who experience emotional distress will pick themselves up after a few days or a few weeks. But if you feel unable to cope with your situation, please speak to your GP who may be able to help by explaining stress management techniques, prescribing medication or arranging counseling and talking therapies.

Further information and help:

NHS Stressline - Call 0300 123 2000 (textphone 0300 123 2810) for advice and support daily, from 8am-10pm.



The FREE NHS Health Check Programme

Residents of the Alpha Road area who are aged between 40 and 74 can take advantage of free health checks offered by NHS Kingston at Newman Pharmacy, 17 Berrylands Road and Shan pharmacy, 106 Ewell Road.

All people who are not already diagnosed with high blood pressure, diabetes, chronic kidney disease, heart disease or have had a heart attack or stroke are encouraged to have these checks.

There is no need for an appointment; people can just turn up at the pharmacy to have their 20 minutes checkups. Residents will have their blood pressure, body mass index, cholesterol, diabetes and waist circumference measured to identify their risk of having; heart disease, diabetes, stroke or kidney disease in the coming 10 years.

Did you know..... the Active Kingston Card gives up to 70% discount on selected leisure activities in Kingston? If you are:-

- ▼ aged 60 or over
 - ▼ receive Jobseeker's Allowance
 - ▼ receive Income Support
 - ▼ are a full-time student in further or higher education
 - ▼ receive Carer's Allowance
 - ▼ are registered disabled or receive a disability benefit
- Visit ww.kingston.gov.uk/browse/leisure/sports
Telephone 020 8547 5207
Email: sports@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

New Year, New You?

Kingston has a number of sports and leisure facilities for use by the community. Whether you are looking for a sports club to join or contact details for your local leisure centre, this is your one stop shop for all your sporting needs

www.kingston.gov.uk/browse/leisure/sports

Here you will find the latest sports, news, events and competitions that are happening in the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames.

This newsletter is distributed free of charge to all residents of the Alpha Road Estate thanks to Grassroots funding received from Thames Community Foundation.

It provides an opportunity to promote forthcoming events and or services to you as well as updating you on existing projects services or activities.

We are always looking for articles, news and information from residents, or of interest to residents, so if you would like to submit an item for future newsletters please contact Ken Hedge by email at kh003v9660@blueyonder.co.uk, telephone 020 8390 4753 or at 15 Tilford, 30 Howard Road, Surbiton, KT5 8RH.



we need your help!

As a Residents Association we're always looking for residents willing to volunteer their time or expertise.

This doesn't mean you have to make a regular commitment such as attending Management Committee meetings, although of course you would be more than welcome.

If you can spare just a couple of hours a month posting leaflets, volunteering at our events, updating our website or contributing expertise once in a while with specialised advice or knowledge that would be great.

we need everyone!

Contact ARRA, by
Phone: 020 8390 1226
Email: info@alpharoad.org.uk
or by post c/o Flat 3, Headley, King Charles Road, Surbiton, KT5 8QW

If you have difficulty reading this document because of a disability or because English is not your first language, we can help you. Please call us on 020 8390 1226 or ask someone to call on your behalf.

Kingston Council Contact

Us For all General Enquiries, please call the **Contact Centre** which is open **Monday to Friday**, from **8.00am to 6pm** on **020 8547 5000** or text **07797 806 521** For a Service Specialist, please use one of the numbers below:

Service	Phone Numbers
Housing Benefits	020 8547 5001
Environment	020 8547 5002
Housing	020 8547 5003
Children, Schools and Families	020 8547 5004
Community Care Services	020 8547 5005
Culture, Leisure and Libraries	020 8547 5006
Council Tax	020 8547 5007

Emergency Out of Hours Line 020 8547 5800