

**BERA E-NEWSLETTER 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2018 – [www.bera.co.uk](http://www.bera.co.uk)  
(printable version of Newsletter is available soon on website if needed)**

Reminders:

**NEW: BERA – Special Meeting for Members (including a social get together)**

**Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October at St Augustine's Church from 8pm**

We will have a short presentation by Jean Broadbent, the Healthwatch Southend CEO, followed by a question and answer session. Please see link <https://www.healthwatchsouthend.co.uk/> for the health advice and social care they offer.

There will then be a short break for refreshments, after which we will have a short presentation by Southend Fire Station followed by refreshments at the end, and a chance for you to speak to local councillors about any concerns you may have.

**If you have elderly neighbours without computer access, who you know are BERA members, please advise them of this meeting.**

The next BERA sponsored coffee morning will be on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2018 at The Methodist Church on the corner of Johnstone Road and The Broadway from 10am to 12 midday.

**We will be bringing alarms/signs in case any of you want to buy them. The costs are:**

PIR sensor alarm £7.38 (the white one)

Defender shock/contact alarm £9.94 (the grey one)

Garage and shed signs £1.19 each

We also have free panic and personal alarms available for BERA members.

**Which subscription logon details:**

Username: burgesestate

Password: BERAresidents

## **1. Woodgrange Drive**

We have contacted Southend Council about the amount of accidents on the bend in Woodgrange Drive, and following an investigation they have agreed to re-surface the area with anti-slip material.

## **2. Burges Road**

A resident reported that a large dip has appeared in the road surface at the junction of Burges Road and Parkanaur Avenue, adjacent to the post-box. Mike Stafford reported it to the Highways Department at the Council. Following inspection by them, they have advised it is not dangerous. We believe that caution is needed and therefore wanted to make you all aware.

## **3. Free Swimming Programme**

Following a request from a local resident about the Free Swimming Programme we have finally had a reply from the Council:

Dear Cllr Woodley,

Thank you for your email regarding changes to the current Free Swimming Programme.

The Free Swimming Programme was initially a government funded scheme, introduced in 2008 and designed to encourage certain age groups to take up swimming. The funding for this scheme was withdrawn nationally in July 2010. Since that date Southend-on-Sea Borough Council continued funding the scheme itself.

Funding for the scheme (Wet Wednesdays) this financial year was agreed for a period of 6 months. The present scheme does not allow us to measure how effective the free swimming programme is and whether or not it is achieving the outcomes of enabling inactive people to become and remain active. The cost of the Wet Wednesday scheme has been rising significantly over the past 2 years and is no longer financially sustainable in its present format. Rather than withdraw free swimming altogether the decision has been made to offer 4 free swims per local resident (aged 65+) for the remainder of the Council's financial year. Those wishing to participate will be issued with a prepaid swim pass, which they can obtain from any of the Borough's leisure centres operated by Fusion Lifestyle Ltd.

It is hoped that those who participate in the free scheme continue to swim. There are ways to support people to continue swimming, examples are shown below:

- \* A swim only membership. Further details are available from the leisure centres.
- \* A Choice Concession membership. Further details are available from the leisure centres.

\* Through having an Advantage Card. This provides a discount on a range of sessions at the centres, including swimming during a public session. Further details can be accessed through [http://www.southend.gov.uk/info/200354/sports\\_and\\_leisure/109/southend\\_advantage\\_card](http://www.southend.gov.uk/info/200354/sports_and_leisure/109/southend_advantage_card) or by phoning 01702 215000.

I hope this provides you with some clarification on the position.

#### **4. Meeting with McCarthy & Stone**

Ron Woodley had a meeting with planners from McCarthy & Stone, who had contacted him with a view to finding suitable sites in the area for care homes. Ron said they were very impressed with the area and the meeting was very positive. He informed them of how BERA and the residents want the area protected from large unsightly buildings and advised them of property covenants covering much of the estate. They were very understanding of this and will come back to Ron for further advice if they are able to locate plots they feel would be suitable.

#### **5. Barking dogs**

A BERA member has requested that dog owners please be thoughtful to their neighbours and don't leave their dogs barking loudly outside all day and at various points throughout the night.

#### **6. Scammers**

The scammers are about again, this time offering tree services. Please be careful and always ask for references from a number of local residents.

#### **7. The position of a new Aldi on the old Echo site in Priory Crescent**

We have been notified of a screening opinion, reference 18/01732/RSE, from Aldi Supermarket for the Old Echo site on Priory Crescent, asking what the council wish to see in an application which the Developers have not indicated will be forthcoming. It is right and proper to bring forward points of concern which potential objectors would wish to be dealt with in a full application. Specifically the main problem here is the traffic impact. Currently there are no plans about the access arrangements on the Council's applications website, only the site outline. However, the point has to be made about the potential access arrangements, and this is a valid one. Additionally, members will know we managed to drag from the Council, traffic figures showing the increased use of Priory Crescent, Cuckoo Corner and Sutton Road roundabout emanating from the Queensway Development. Coupled with the intended Hospice, you have a situation which calls for a detailed analysis of the increased traffic volumes and how they will be managed. In the mind of the Chairman, this is the most fundamental problem with this proposal and one that the Developer needs to show can be solved.

## **8. Brief outline from BERA of the Council's borough wide parking and access strategy report**

Our thoughts on this are:

This consultant's report is not a strategy as such. The strategy has been formulated in the Southend Central Area Action Plan (SCAAP). The report is effectively suggesting a means by which the strategy can be achieved and that is by using an IT solution.

The report puts forward the idea that visitors and local residents in particular, but really everyone visiting, should have "live" information about access conditions and parking availability before they make their journey, and indeed updated information as they progress towards Southend-on-Sea on any changes. This would be in the form of a Southend parking App. It is also intended to look at the potential for modifying parking charges during peak periods to reflect the different levels of car park occupation, and thereby influence drivers' behaviour, and car parks wider afield from Leigh to Shoeburyness would be included to assist in overcoming the congestion and parking stress.

To achieve this perfect world of parking happiness, SMART CITY technology will require the current information about car parks to be integrated together with access to road conditions and road signing.

There is nothing wrong with the logic or the objectives. The devil is in the detail.

Firstly, there have been many examples down the years of public and private services attempting to integrate data from different programmes and different suppliers, with some disastrous and expensive results. Now this report (which cost £52,400) contains no detail, no figures and no measurable tangible outcomes. You could spend a fortune linking together all the data from the carparks, (capacity, occupancy on an ongoing basis and pricing), and put it into an App for public consumption. How will we measure its success? What would have to happen to say it is successful? Less congestion but the same number of visitors could be seen as successful, but what reduction in congestion would you want to justify the costs of all the work required to achieve it. In other words would it be value for money?

Picture Mr & Mrs Buggins sitting in East London with their kids one Sunday morning in the summer, contemplating a trip to Southend-on-Sea. They look at the Southend App and it tells them that there is congestion, and parking where they want go is more expensive, so they go to Margate instead. People en-route to Southend-on-Sea see a worsening situation on their App as they get closer, might they not turn round? Now the prospect of less visitors as a result of exposing the traffic problems may well appeal, but I doubt the seafront traders and local businesses would be very impressed (but it may well help the ambulances on their way to Basildon Hospital).

You will now have realised that we are not entirely sold on this idea. We need far more information on details, costs, targets, and objectives.

We should say finally that the report contains some suggestions for train and bus integration but nothing earth shattering.