

# NEWSLETTER EXTRA

## **Lorries in Lansdowne Road**

Our ward councillor, Vivian Branson, has been working on getting some action on the problem of large lorries and vans venturing down Lansdowne Road, damaging parked cars and getting stuck at the corner with Lodge. Rather unfortunately, it is Kent County Council that is responsible for most highways matters locally and our attempt to interest our KCC representatives in the issue got nowhere. So now Vivian has contacted them to better effect.

As a result, an on-site meeting is being set up with Kent Highways officers to discuss improving the “unsuitable for HGV” sign which drivers either don’t spot or ignore.

A necessary precursor was a call for first-hand accounts of episodes from Slade residents which prompted some vivid reports that have been forwarded to those involved. Thanks to everyone who contacted us.

What has become clear is that lorries are being directed down Lansdowne by their satnavs –and also ambulances it would appear from one account. So as a first step Tonbridge and Malling officers have asked for Lansdowne to be entered as a no-go route on the Freight Gateway, an online routing and mapping service for local authorities to advise freight companies on the best way to route in their areas. This should help a lot. Please let us know of any recent incidents by e-mailing [sara1@slade-Tonbridge.co.uk](mailto:sara1@slade-Tonbridge.co.uk).

Vivian has also been working on our behalf to get those ghastly rusty electricity control boxes in Stafford and

Lodge roads cleaned up. This is an issue that we’ve got nowhere with for years, so let’s not hope for miracles. But Vivian has already tracked down which company in the Byzantine structure of our utilities provision is responsible and that is an excellent start.

## **Residents’ Parking Scheme**

### **Parking Bays in the Slade – no thanks**

The question has been raised why the Slade Residents Parking Scheme does not feature marked bays. The simple answer is that bays would drastically reduce the number of vehicles that could park in the area and there is too little space for all permit holders as it is.

This very issue was material to the founding of SARA way back in 1994 when horrified residents were asked to comment (for a couple of weeks over Christmas) on a parking scheme for the area providing 104 parking bays. An urgent study by SARA founder members showed there was room for more than 160 vehicles, vigorous opposition was mounted and the scheme was dropped.

The key fact is that parking bays have got to be of a standard minimum size, currently 6.5 meters – allowing for a generous size car and good space for manoeuvring, whereas Slade drivers, as we all know, would win Olympic gold in parking and many local cars are reasonably compact.

So when residents’ parking returned to the table in 2004 we were very pleased that the Council consulted with SARA from the outset and took all this on board when setting up the scheme without parking bays.

## **Free parking in Lower Castlefields – right restored**

Another result of our good relationship with the Council in setting up the parking scheme (see above) was that they recognised that there was not under any circumstances going to be room for all permit-holding vehicles to park in the area at once. So permit holders were given the right to park free in Lower Castlefields (Swimming Pool) car park when our streets were full up.

But a few months ago residents using the car park got letters saying that there had been a misunderstanding and the concession had only been temporary. In future they would have to pay.

Unfortunately SARA had no written record of the agreement when the parking scheme was set up in 2005 but this did not daunt Houselands Road resident Jacky Delescluse who managed to ferret out, on the TMBC website, the minutes of the long-ago Council committee meeting where the scheme was discussed and the concession advocated. She pointed this out to the officer in charge and he agreed that the concession was indeed permanent.

Everyone who received a letter rescinding the privilege should now have had another restoring it. Please let us know if you don't: e-mail

[sara1@slade-tonbridge.co.uk](mailto:sara1@slade-tonbridge.co.uk)

Thanks Jacky!!

## **New classroom, no sweat**

Slade residents have good reason to dread the appearance of road closure notices in our streets. All too often the distant officials at Kent County Council have no grasp of the chaos such events

can cause in our somewhat eccentrically aligned and narrow thoroughfares and fail to make adequate provision.

So when those threatening yellow signs appeared in Stafford Road, sole vehicle exit route for most of the area, back in August it was reasonable to expect the worst, particularly when the cause was what looked like a difficult operation – hoisting the new demountable classroom into Slade School yard with a massive crane. SARA swung into action to ensure KCC knew about the lie of our land and provided an effective diversion.

Whether due to our efforts or not, we are happy to record that all went remarkably smoothly and one could only admire the efficiency of the contractors, Cotaplan. Here is a picture of the last component on its way over the school fence.