

BRENTHAM SOCIETY



CHAIRMAN:
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SECRETARY:
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NEWSLETTER No: 107

October 1991

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM of the Brentham Society will be held, at 7.30 pm, on:
THURSDAY 7th NOVEMBER 1991

at the Brentham Club, Meadvale Road.

All members of the Society are urged to attend. Any resident wishing to become a member (@ £1 pa) may join at the meeting.

Items for inclusion in the Agenda should be submitted to the Secretary by the 31st October.

Nominations for election to the committee should also reach the Secretary by the 31st October. They must be proposed and seconded by paid up members of the society, with the consent of the nominee, who must also be a paid up member.

There is a need for new committee members. Audrey Jones and Paul Wharrier have both left the district and two of the other members have served continuously for 21 years! It is time that we had new blood, and so volunteers are needed.

The work is not onerous. There is one committee meeting each month and there is the AGM. Each committee member is allocated a task by the chairman. It may be street lighting, traffic, hedges, pavements, the newsletter, or any one of the things that we think are important to maintain the high standards that exist in Brentham. The work is satisfying and you will meet a lot of people. All you need is commitment and the willingness to enter into correspondence on your allotted task.

It is sobering to think that, if we did not have a watchful Brentham Society, we would now almost certainly have, for example, mock stone cladding on some of our houses. The window replacers would have had a field day! Think of the pleasure that you get from living in a nice area and ask yourself 'What can I do to help?' Don't leave it all to others. It's you we are addressing - why not call the secretary and offer your services?

VIDEOTRON

The arrival of Videotron cable TV upset a number of local residents because of the insensitive placing of several of the relay boxes without previous notification or warning.

The Brentham Society Committee reacted to telephone calls from residents and we have been battling with both Videotron and Ealing Council's Technical Services Department, in an attempt to get some of the boxes moved to less objectionable positions. We have also made it clear that, in our opinion, the Brentham Society and residents should have been consulted,

and that the Planning Department should have been involved, before installation of the boxes - in view of the fact that this is a conservation area.

On July 23rd 1991, in a meeting between representatives from the Brentham Society, Videotron, and members of Ealing Technical Services, the Senior Engineer of the Technical services Department adopted an intransigent attitude, claiming that planning permission was not required for the boxes and, therefore, his department was not obliged to consult the Planning Department or the Brentham Society. He insisted that, under the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) authorisation given to Videotron, the latter had, more or less, *carte blanche* to install their equipment as they saw fit.

This is not entirely so. We contacted Sir George Young, our MP, who is also Minister in the Department of the Environment. Here is an extract from his reply:

The Government wishes to encourage the development of cable TV, but there are powers available to Local Planning Authorities to protect the environment. It may be helpful if I were to outline these powers and explain how Councils can use them to protect Conservation Areas. First of all, the cable companies' operating licences oblige them to agree guidelines with the Local Planning Authority on the positioning and colour of their cabinets. It also requires the companies to inform the Planning Authority of their intention to install any apparatus in a Conservation Area, and if the Authority notifies them in writing that this would be detrimental, installation is not permitted...

It is therefore clear that the relevant Ealing Council department could have acted on our behalf, if they had cared to do so. As matters stand, we are of the opinion that the Council have let us down by failing to use the safeguards provided in the operating license.

Videotron have agreed to paint all the boxes in the Brentham Estate a dark green colour, which would make them more acceptable. They have refused to remove any boxes, on the grounds that it would be costly and would cause short-term disruption of services to their customers.

Technical Services continue to insist that they have acted in accordance with the rules laid down by the DTI, but this is at variance with Sir George Young's letter. The Brentham Society believes that the Conservation rules must not be treated in such a cavalier way, and is considering lodging a complaint with the Ombudsman. Sir George Young has been informed of our views and intentions.

It would have been helpful to the Committee if residents who had reservations about the Videotron cabinets had complained to us or the Council in writing. Nobody seems to have done so - the Council and Videotron claim to have no complaints directly from residents. In this, and other contentious issues, we need your support and active help if we are to succeed on your behalf.

AUDITOR

Is there an Accountant living in Brentham who would be willing to audit our books annually? If so, would he or she please contact David Skelton (39, Woodfield Avenue. Phone: 998 3450)

LIGHTS IN WOODFIELD CRESCENT

At long last, all the street lights in Woodfield Crescent are working. Your Committee continues to make every effort to ensure that all the lights will be kept in order by the Council. Please let us know when lights fail, so that we can contact the relevant Department immediately.
