BROOKWOOD NEWS

February 2025

EDITORIAL

New year greetings to all readers from the newsletter team in the hope that you had a delightful festive period and feel sufficiently invigorated to tackle the rigours of 2025. I have chosen snowdrops for our banner this month as they usually herald the onset of spring and should be appearing in our gardens any time soon.

The ongoing works in Connaught Road are proving disruptive and probably will be for several more weeks, but let's hope that it will all come good in the end, particularly if you get a new dropped kerb into the bargain.

We are always on the lookout for more newsletter editors (it's usually only once or twice a year). It doesn't have to be a solo effort; what about teaming up with a friend or neighbour? Do drop a line to community@brookwood.org.uk if you feel suitably motivated to become part of the team and put digit to keyboard.

Ian Angell – Editor

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

You may remember that in October we included a piece from Councillor Leslie Rice about the Community Infrastructure Levy fund, which may be available to initiate, maintain or repair community assets. Councillor Rice is still keen for Brookwood residents to give thought to possible projects which might be suitable for such assistance. He can be contacted at cllrleslie.rice@woking.gov.uk for further information.

POSTBOX TOPPER



As a reminder of our recent festivities please see the photo above of our postbox. Although I don't know the identities of the artists concerned, I am reliably informed that members of the WI were directly responsible – well done!

Seymours. Successfully selling houses in Brookwood.

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TRACK REPAIRS



You will have been aware of the major track works which took place at the station over the Christmas period. The photo below (courtesy of Mark Craven) indicates the large number of workers involved: he was told it was over 100 per day even on 25 December itself.

BROOKWOOD MEMORIAL HALLS

A huge thank you to those who attended our Christmas Trail and volunteered throughout the event. It was a great success and really brought the community together. A special thank you to VoxChoir for creating a fabulously festive atmosphere, to Gary's Garden Maintenance for donating the wonderful Christmas tree and to everyone who housed a poster to make the trail possible. We hope you all had a lovely Christmas and happy new year!



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BROOKWOOD WI PROGRAMME

The WI meets on the third Tuesday evening in the month at 7.45pm in Brookwood Memorial Hall. We would really welcome any new members to join us.

Our programme for this year includes:

February:	Travellers tales – Paul Whittle
March:	Birthday celebration supper with entertainment from The Vox choir
April:	Chair Pilates – Claire Seager
July:	30 years in the Hampshire police – Jackie Dimmock
August:	Summer picnic
September:	Race night
October:	Christmas flower arranging.

Our business meetings are held in May and November, so not the best for a first meeting. Contact Maureen at tony_gray@btinternet.com for more information.

MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT – DARTS MARATHON



Brookwood Club is hosting a fundraising event from midday to midnight on Saturday 15 February. The plan is that individuals or teams play darts for either 12 hours or until 100,000 points have been amassed. It is proposed that each participating player pays a sum of £10 to the charity in order to take part. Although not the usual time of year for a Macmillan Coffee function, we hope to combine the darts with a coffee afternoon and that cakes will be available for purchase by offering a donation. Further details will be available at the club. Do come and take part and help to raise funds for such a worthwhile cause.

CANAL NEWS

The Basingstoke Canal Society is keen to increase the number of its volunteers who can help to keep the canal and towpath safe, and available for us all to use. Please contact membership@basingstoke-canal.org.uk if you think you could offer assistance. Working parties are organized on weekdays and at weekends, so why don't you offer the society some of your time? This year the society is planning to launch its new all-electric boat,



Kitty II, which will be used for taking trips on the canal. Fundraising continues to be important in order to fund the Society's projects and allow it to play an important part in keeping the canal alive.

NEW NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH SCHEME FOR BROOKWOOD LAUNCHED

A new Neighbourhood Watch scheme has been started for the residents of Connaught Road and its side roads. Living in an area covered by Neighbourhood Watch has many benefits. Watches have been proved to reduce crime and generate a closer community spirit by means of greater vigilance, improved home security, security cameras, signage and the reporting of suspicious incidents. Watch coordinators pass information from Woking and Surrey Police and UK Neighbourhood Watch organisations to Watch members, as well as acting as a collection point for information to pass on to the Police and Woking Borough Council. Being a member is effortless and costs nothing. Connaught Road Neighbourhood Watch uses a WhatsApp group (and e-mail if required) for alerts and information. If you are interested in becoming a member and supporting "ConnaughtWatch", please e-mail pv@patrickveale.com, including your name, mobile number and house number, and he will add you to the group. The more Brookwood residents who join, the more effective we can be. Coordinator: Patrick Veale, 200 Connaught Road, pv@patrickveale.com, 07850 722240.

Independent Living for Older People In Pirbright Village



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INTERNET CONNECTIVITY UPGRADE

The internet connectivity is being upgraded in Brookwood village; we are currently having full fibre made available. It's called FTTP (fibre to the premises) and offers much higher internet speeds. Most of us currently have FTTC (fibre to the cabinet). The final link into our homes is either by a twisted copper pair of wires or coax cable (Virgin media). This limits the speed of connectivity, which depends on the distance between our homes and our local cabinet.

We now are increasingly reliant on the internet. The most demanding is for streaming video UHDTV (ultra high definition TV), but also shopping, the new VOIP (voice over internet protocol) which BT calls Digital Voice, and for seniors using pendants. Lockdown also changed the way we work. Hybrid working and full time working from home is now commonplace.

We are fortunate to have two companies installing full fibre, so prices should be competitive. They are toob and Openreach. Toob are installing fibre on poles down Connaught Road, and I asked them what their plans are for Brookwood.

A spokesperson from toob said: "toob's full-fibre service in Brookwood is currently going through testing and should be ready for sale in early March 2025.

"We carefully plan our network to ensure minimal disruption and, wherever possible, we utilise existing networks and ducts. In roads with existing poles, such as Connaught Road and Church Close, we will provide our connection overhead. In roads, such as Elphinstone Close, where there is a working duct system, we will use the duct to provide our service underground.

"In Connaught Crescent and Heath Drive, there is no duct system or existing pole infrastructure. We had plans to deploy our service in these roads by installing our own telegraph poles to carry our network overhead but, following feedback from residents in early 2024, we put the network deployment on hold and have no current plans to build in this area.

"Our aim is to serve communities, and we do not wish to alienate residents. This is why we notify affected households and encourage feedback directly to us (https://www.toob.co.uk). Our network build in Brookwood and the surrounding area started in July 2024 and serves around 500 homes."

I also asked Openreach (https://www.openreach.com/) about their plans. They are starting work to upgrade their broadband network in Brookwood. This broadband upgrade will let local people connect multiple devices at gigabit-capable speeds and help businesses trade online and compete for decades to come.

Engineers have started civil engineering work to connect the village, with build in the village starting in April. The build is expected to reach the majority of local homes and businesses in the next 12 months.

Full-fibre broadband provides more reliable, resilient and future-proof connectivity with fewer faults, more predictable, consistent speeds and enough capacity to easily meet growing data demands.

Residents can enjoy a host of online services and entertainment, with seamless streaming and smooth online gaming. The technology also supports day-to-day, business critical tasks like video calls, banking and online customer interactions.

Local people can visit openreach.co.uk/ultrafastfullfibre to register for updates and, as the build progresses, check their addresses to see when services are available from their chosen provider.

Kieran Wines, Openreach Partnership Director, said: "We're bringing gigabit-capable broadband to Brookwood and letting local people know what to expect.

"This is a major infrastructure upgrade, so there will be more engineering teams, equipment and vans around village, and we're working hard to keep disruption to a minimum.

"Wherever possible, we'll use our existing network of ducts and poles to avoid roadworks, new street furniture and disturbance. But there may be places where we need to install new poles, underground ducts and fibre cables because it's the only way to make sure households get included in the upgrade."

I also spoke to an Openreach engineer while he was surveying Brookwood. He said any existing underground ducts would be used; poles would be used in Connaught Road and Church Close.

Mike Sherwood



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VILLAGE DIARY DATES

(also see the village website at www.brookwood.org.uk)

Every Sunday	Evening Service, 6pm, Woodhill Church (Connaught Road)
Every Monday	Babies and Toddlers Playgroup, 9.45am, Brookwood Memorial Hall
Every Friday	Brookwood Art Group, 9.30am to 12.30pm, Brookwood Memorial Hall
Every Friday	Pop-up Coffee, 10am to 12pm, Woodhill Church (Connaught Road)
Saturday 1 February	Bingo, 8pm, Brookwood Club
Tuesday 11 February	Pirbright Horticultural Society, 7.30pm, Lord Pirbright's Hall
Saturday 15 February	Macmillan Darts, 12pm to 12am, Brookwood Club
Tuesday 18 February	Brookwood WI, 7.45pm, Brookwood Memorial Hall
Sunday 2 March	Guided tour, 2pm, Brookwood Cemetery (north side). Meet at the Society Lodge by the entrance to the Cemetery off Cemetery Pales

Would you like to advertise in the newsletter?

The cost of advertising is £30.00. The advert will feature on the back of the newsletter and will be no less than a 1/4 of a page. We do not normally put advertising anywhere else in the newsletter. For more information on advertising please contact us on community@brookwood.org.uk

NB: DEADLINE FOR MARCH NEWSLETTER IS MIDDAY 20th FEBRUARY preferably by e-mail to community@brookwood.org.uk or telephone 01483 480273 or a note through the door of 78 Connaught Road.

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