

The Knowle Society



Volume 49 Number 1

January 2011

www.knowledgesociety.org.uk

‘Big Society’ demands a big Society

This is the end of the second year of my chairmanship and again the year has been a busy one. There have been a dozen outside speakers attending both our evening meetings thanks to Charles Robinson and his team and the morning ones thanks to Janet Erzen and her history team. The walks have been well organised as ever by Leighton Jones, there have been visits to places of interest and, as always, fascinating history displays from our ever increasing archive. The Trustee Directors hope that they provide the right type of programme for all our members.

On the planning front, the plans for supermarkets in both Knowle and Dorridge continue to exercise our resourceful and resilient committee. The Kimberley/Waitrose application for Knowle has not gone away as you may well have read in other local publications. We expect another application for a smaller scheme using less land and possibly also not involving the village hall. Sainsbury’s are consulting in Dorridge and a further application is expected from them. Our main concern there continues to be the resulting traffic.

Towards the end of November I attended the second meeting of the Solihull Rural Partnership. This relates to the south and eastern side of the borough and is the method whereby the Council attempts to gauge local opinion on matters relative to the Council. Items considered included possible housing developments for the future where details have been available on line and consultation ended in December. Also, the Local Transport Plan was mentioned where consultation ends on 31st January. Some considerable time was spent on the public consultation on Council cuts. Everybody was urged to contact the Council by email, phone or by letter to give their opinion as to where the axe should fall locally. By the time you read this, that consultation should have finished and we may know the result of the Council’s deliberations.

Also while I was there I spoke to two representatives from Dorridge and District Residents’ Association. They are keen to form ‘Friends of Dorridge Station’ after the ownership of the station was transferred to Chiltern Railways. They would like Knowle Society to be involved and my colleagues are actively considering that. More funding may be available if we are to become involved. As ever, if there is any member who is particularly interested and would

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Events Diary

Monday 17th January
8pm in Knowle Village Hall

Canal Boat Women
Michael Miles

Monday 21st February
8pm in Knowle Village Hall

Fingerprints for Detection and Intrigue
Sue Clegg

Monday 21st March
8pm in Knowle Village Hall

Gabriela the Storytelling Ukulele Lady—The Ukulele Story
Gabriela—Novelty songs, tongue twisters and humorous ditties

Monday 18th April
8pm in Knowle Village Hall

Birmingham Conservation Trust
Elizabeth Perkins

(Continued from page 1)

like to become involved, please let the Trustee Directors know. Please contact John Rowley.

You will be aware from my previous newsletter pieces that we are actively considering the production of a village plan for Knowle, again possibly in association with Dorridge. Balsall Common already has one, Hockley Heath is preparing one and as I have said Dorridge is also active in this area. I think if we are to be taken seriously on the question of future plans, we have to have one of our own. This is particularly the case in the light of the present government's view that planning should increasingly be decided locally. We need individuals to come forward to volunteer for this task. They will need to be enthusiastic, committed and to have some experience. We have several Trustee Directors who will be able to assist on technical aspects but nobody who can spare the time from their present roles and/or work commitments to devote the time needed to a village plan.

We again were heavily involved in one of the major events of the village year – namely the switching on of the Christmas lights. This was again I believe a success building on the experience of 2009. The police were happy with the arrangements and the organisation, as indeed were we, but more and more people, especially children, attend and safety must be our prime consideration. The closing of Kenilworth Road was a major factor in ensuring that.



Happy police at the event!

Another scheme that we are keen to pursue is the formation of a youth section. A Civic Society is of its nature bound to be attractive to more mature persons and indeed mainly to be run by such but your trustee directors are very keen to involve our younger citizens in some of our activities so far as possible. I have had a preliminary meeting with one of the organisers of Solihull Youth Workshops who was very encouraging and gave me some interesting ideas to work on. Obviously this is likely to involve Arden, as we must learn to call it, and I am glad to say that we have had several meetings recently both with the headteacher and governors to try to form much closer links. We are happier than we were initially with the change to academy status as the school seems genuine in its intention to maintain its community status rather than become a place for high flyers only from wherever they might come. I also recently attended a workshop in Birmingham run by Civic Voice which has taken over from the defunct Civic Trust as the nationwide forum for civic societies. They had several interesting ideas one of which in particular we may take up here in Knowle. That is a photographic competition aimed at teenagers particularly, involving the submission of photos taken on mobile phones and reflecting life in Knowle. The Trustee Directors are still to discuss this at the time of my writing this but watch this space (and others) in the New Year. If any young person reads this and is interested in any aspect of what I have said in this paragraph, please contact any Trustee Director.

At the AGM, we were very happy indeed to grant honorary life membership to three very long-standing members and officers of the Society. They were Stella Jarman, a founder member of the Society in 1962, whose work on environmental matters is legendary, Liz Stanley whose devoted work for the History section over the years has been quite invaluable and Martin Warr, who has single-handedly boosted the membership of the Society by some 1400. Many thanks to all three.



*L-R, Elizabeth Stanley, Martin Warr, Chairman—Peter Ewin & Stella Jarman, with their certificates of Life Membership presented at the AGM
Photo: Jim Randle/Elizabeth Stanley*

I would like to close this report by paying a sincere tribute to all my fellow trustee directors. They all give of their time freely and I assure you a lot of time is involved. In the absence of a Parish Council, the Society must wave the flag for Knowle. I think they do it very well. I would also like to thank all committee members, some of whom have been doing the job for many years, and the Local History Centre stewards. I think you are all aware of what they all do and I would like to close by saying to all that new volunteers for any post within the Society will be very welcome.

**Peter Ewin—Chairman - Knowle 776381
chairman@knowlesociety.org.uk**

As well as the review of the Council’s long term plans for the Borough (see below) your planning Committee have been reviewing all the plans submitted relating to properties in Knowle, some 250 this year.

There has been some progress with the major applications of the last year. We’ve been told that the appeal hearing for the Grove Farm/Wychwood marina will be held in the middle of January, so the one for the Stripes Hill marina shouldn’t be far behind. We will be making our views known to the Inspector and hope to be taken note of.

We are also expecting to get a preview of the revised plans prepared by Kimberley Developments for the Waitrose store some time in January; another busy month coming up! We have been promised that a full public exhibition of the plans will be held before they are submitted. We will have to decide how to ‘take the temperature’ of public opinion on the plans once we’ve seen them.

We have heard the results of appeals on two other planning applications. Firstly on the refusal by the Council for the ‘totem pole’ advertising sign at the Murco petrol station. We were not happy about the impact this pole had on the setting of the Conservation Area so were very glad to be supported by the Inspector when rejecting the appeal. The company will now have to take steps to reduce its impact. The other appeal was from Braggs the undertakers who had put a large sign above their offices on the High Street. As well as being in the Conservation Area this was on a listed building so planning permission was required. Again the application was refused by the Council, with our support, on the basis that it was out of place on such a modest and important building. The Inspector agreed.

This might sound as if we are against everything. This is not so. Most of the applications we review go through without any problem, but we are very keen to protect the Conservation Area and listed buildings in particular. Once degraded they seldom recover. One plan we’ve been glad to support is the proposal to turn the row of offices, known as Chesshire¹ House, next to the Greswolde Garage, into a set of small houses through (mainly) internal alterations. This is a good way of providing more smallish houses with little impact on the village.

As well as these routine matters and the long term plans we are busy trying to come to terms with the government’s plans for more local control on planning matters. It is not clear yet what this will involve or how it will work, but we’ll make sure we make the most of it to protect and enhance Knowle.

¹ This is not a typographical error but the correct, if unusual, spelling of the name; the Chesshires being a long established local family—Ed.

A VISION OF KNOWLE IN 2026?

Now is the once in fifteen years when the Council is faced with having to produce a plan of the future development of the Borough. The process is well underway and the second stage of consultation is just over. In September the Council published a thick document describing its suggested plans and asking for feedback from residents and community organisations. Posters and leaflets were produced by the Council and meetings held in local libraries to try and get feedback from residents but, to be honest, it’s not the most exciting of subjects, so I suspect there wasn’t that much of a response.

However, this is just the sort of thing that the Society exists to deal with on your behalf, so we’ve been doing just that. We would have liked to do some real consultation, but time was so short and the document so difficult to absorb that we decided to give you the benefit of our review and ask for your response now. Unfortunately the timing of this Newsletter is such that we’ve had to submit our provisional conclusions already. This does not mean that your views will be ignored, just that we will take them into account in the next stage of consultation. This will be some time in the next few months and we’ll only have six weeks to respond, so now is the time for you to tell us whether we’re on the right lines.



Below is a summary of what we’ve said and the complete response is on our website (follow the news item on the home page). If you don’t have access to the Internet please let me know and I’ll send you a copy. If you want to read the Council’s document it is on its website at:

http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Attachments/EmergingCoreStrategyFinal_forWebPage.pdf

We do have one or two printed copies if you want to borrow one – please let me know. There were some at the library as well, but I'm not sure if they will still have them. I'll try and summarise our response below. (There are several sections that we feel are fine as they are, so I'll skip those, even though you may disagree when you've read the whole thing.)

Policy 3 talks about the quality of design of buildings and suggests that local communities should produce a guide to design that would suit their area. We think this is a good idea, but doesn't go far enough. We are suggesting that we look into the village preparing a plan of how we want the area to look and work **as a community**. It would be a big job but very useful!

Policy 4 covers the allocation of land for housing and Policy 7 meeting housing needs. Don't ask why these are separate, I've no idea! The suggestion is that we need more houses for 'newly forming' and 'down-sizing' households and we agree with that. However three sites are suggested (*see colour images on the website for greater clarity—Ed.*) – Hampton Rd between the school and the football club (*left*); off Grove Rd on the old Middlefield site (*centre*); and on Four Ashes Rd in Bentley Heath (*right*). In total there would be around 340 dwellings of various types. We feel that this is too many and have said so, largely based on the impact on Knowle of so many extra people.



Policy 10 talks about ensuring a good range of local services and describes Knowle's role as a local (shopping) centre. This is fine, but we need to see controls on any expansion of the shopping area while protecting the shops that we do have.



Policy 11 is about open space, children's play and recreation. We think this should be used to provide more allotments and facilities for young people (not just 'children'). We are concerned that a suggestion of greater recreational use of the canal might mean more marinas, which we would resist unless they were small and inconspicuous.



Policies 12 & 13 address traffic and transport. We want these extended to look at walking and cycling (in consultation with the community). They also include a plan to look again at the need and route of the Knowle Relief Road (by-pass!). While we are happy for there to be a review we again want the community involved. One idea is to keep the route, not build the road but turn it into a wild-life corridor and part of it, perhaps from the Wychwood roundabout to Longdon Road, into a footpath and cycle way. How realistic this is, as it might need demolition of one of the houses on Longdon Rd to get access through, is another question.

The policies we are largely comfortable with are about Climate Change; Accessibility; Provision of sites for Gypsies & Travellers; Land for Business etc; Promoting Solihull as a Strong Town Centre; Supporting Economic Success; Conserving the Natural Environment; Conservation of Heritage; Waste Management; and Sand, Gravel and Possible Future Coal Extraction.

Please try and look at these plans and our response, we'd really like your views.

AIRPORT—JOHN ROWLEY REPORTS

The major changes at the Airport such as the Runway Extension, Air Space change process and the building of a new hotel complex are long-term projects which will take a number of years to complete. Regular updates have been given in the newsletter and will continue to be reported as they progress.

- Noise control is governed by a number of key performance indicators which are part of the Section 106 Agreement with SMBC. The indicators cover noise levels, track keeping, night flying, engine ground running, runway usage and community complaints. If you have concerns on any of the above you can inform the Airport on 0121 767 7433.
- ‘One Terminal’ Project – Development work is focussed on the ‘One Terminal’ project, to ‘commonise’ Terminal 1 and Terminal 2 and provide a single common security processing system. Estimated completion July 2011.
- Instrument Landing System (ILS) replacement – the planned replacement of the ILS will involve two periods for work to be carried out in December 2010 and middle 2011.

SMBC: A-BOARDS & ROAD REPAIRS

We have received a number of complaints with regards to advertising boards (A-boards) in the village and SMBC is at present carrying out a review to ensure that all relevant regulations are being adhered to. The crossing on Lodge Road will have the posts made more visible and part of the road surface repaired.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Centro Connect has informed us that it has reviewed patronage from S2 and S3 bus services and they are pleased to advise us that the use of services is showing a gradual but consistent increase. There are also some capacity issues on certain journeys and they are aware that at certain times of the day they need to work on reliability. Centro Connect buses are now fitted with smart card technology and Centro is working to introduce new innovative ticketing schemes across the West Midlands. It appears that the development of this technology will take a little longer than they had anticipated.

OUR COMMITTEE

We have vacancies on our committee and if you would like to come along to one of our meetings to see how we operate please let me know.

John Rowley - Knowle 778289

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POLICE MATTERS- LORNA GALE WRITES:

Sergeant Jerome Moran has made a very proactive start to his role as our new area sergeant. He says that he is “very keen to grow Neighbourhood Watch schemes in Knowle” – they help to reduce crime, keep areas safe and build community spirit, he says. If you are interested in setting up one in your area, contact the local Community Partnership Officer celia.davies@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk or 0121 704 8577, or Sgt Moran.

Sgt Moran is also keen for Knowle residents to have their say in how the area is policed, and to help set their priorities for the coming year. This is particularly relevant in the light of public sector cuts. A public meeting will be held soon (or possibly before publication of this newsletter) – details on the police website. You can also contact the sergeant direct if you prefer to have your say that way. It’s an opportunity to influence the way our village and area is policed, so do have your say.

Once again, we have cold mornings and the temptation to leave cars de-icing on drives. There have been at least four recent thefts of cars left in this way – there will undoubtedly be others if we fail to heed the warnings. And if keys are left in the ignition, insurance may be void as owners are perceived as negligent. Darker nights traditionally see a rise in burglaries. Leaving lights and radios or TVs on helps to make a house look occupied and reduces the risk of burglary. As, of course, does securing doors and windows.

While the rag and bone merchants’ visits seem to have tailed off, the council would still like details of the dealers. A number of vehicles were seized in a recent operation, and information received from Knowle residents was found very useful by the council. Make, model and registration numbers can be phoned to Kath Hemmings on 0121 704 6358.

Speedwatch has been operating successfully in Tilehouse Green Lane. While the police are delighted to have this working, they would like to see a village-wide scheme, rather than have lots of individual roads with their own. Do contact WPC Sharon Grant (details below) if you’d be interested in participating.

Police Sergeant Jerome Moran, Shirley Police Station, 285, Stratford Road, Shirley, B90 3AR
0345 113 5000 ext 7928 6666 Local team: 0345 113 5000 ext. 7928 6264,
knowledorridge@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk

2010 has been a year for building a strong base for the committee's future role. We now have a committee of five enthusiastic members with varied talents.

I would like to be able to report that we had completed several significant projects but I have always been aware that our goals are of a long term nature. We have, however, been able to engage the assistance of youths working with the Duke of Edinburgh's Scheme and the Council to plant daffodils on a number of road verges. These were kindly donated. We also assisted the Park Rangers with planting wild flowers in the Nature Reserve by Knowle Park which were grown locally from seed at the MIND nursery in Station Road and included Cowslips, Field Scabious, Tufted Vetch, Ladies Bedstraw, Knapweed.



We have also been asked by the Friends of Knowle Park to assist the Council with a plan to improve the Jobs Close Nature Reserve which is the small wooded areas on the corner of Lodge Road and Longdon Road. If funding can be secured the work will be carried out in 2011.

The plan includes making access easier and safer together with a children's nature playground (not swings and slides). Wildlife will be safeguarded but made more accessible. The Friends of Knowle Park are also working with the Council to construct an island in the pond to provide a safe breeding area for the wildfowl.

The current committee's first major project is to improve the open spaces on and around the Warwick Road roundabout. Some of you may have noticed that a number of dead alder trees have recently been felled by the Council. This work has been carried out for safety reasons. It now makes it even more essential to have a plan for these areas encompassing the need to improve the appearance whilst protecting the wildlife habitat. We are disappointed that the progress is rather slow at present.

The Committee monitors removal of trees in the locality in association with the Tree Wardens. We are lucky that Sue Owen, an experienced Tree Warden, is also on our committee. Problems with removal of trees occur quite regularly and often even when the trees have Tree Preservation Orders. We endeavour to protect trees wherever possible.

We welcome your views on matters of general interest concerning open spaces within and around Knowle. Please let us know about matters of concern or actions which may be able to be taken to improve our natural environment.

Ian Simmonds - Knowle 778692



Leighton Jones distributing the lights on the tree with a large home-made hook.

The Chairman is directing in a Chairman-like way!



KDBS—The end of an era. See article on Page 8



As you will see from the events calendar, we have a variety of talks and visits planned for 2011, commencing on the 21 February with an illustrated talk by Arthur Casey. Arthur, I am sure you will all remember, gave us the excellent talk on "The Bournville Carillon" a while ago and we will be making a visit to see the Carillon in April 2011. Hopefully, Arthur might well be our guide. His talk is entitled; "The Croome D'Abitot, Worcestershire – Bunceton, Missouri Connection." A Personal Journey Through Time. The following is an extract from Arthur's email to me confirming the talk.

"It started for me 46 years ago in the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art. In the museum there is a complete tapestry room taken from Croome Court, Worcestershire. When I finally returned home to England I just had to find out where Croome Court was situated in Worcestershire.

After visiting the Court and finding out that the Earl of Coventry no longer lived in the house, I then visited the family church and noticed a very ornate tombstone. In the inscription there was mention of Bunceton, Missouri. I eventually went to Bunceton and this led me to two small towns north of San Francisco, called Woodland and Davis.

I was then led on to a small dusty gold mining town called Grass Valley. In this town was born a little girl called Virginia Lee Daniel who was to eventually marry the 9th Earl of Coventry's eldest son, The Viscount Deerhurst.

My story finally finishes in two small towns in Nevada, Virginia City and a very remote town called Austin. In my talk all will be revealed as to how Virginia Lee Daniel met up with and married into this Coventry family.

I hope I have whetted your appetite. ARTHUR"

Well. He's certainly whetted my appetite and I look forward very much indeed to the first talk of 2011.

The next talk of the year on 23 May will be by local lad (I hope you like the lad bit Tris) Tristan Thacker and is entitled "Down the Garden Path". Tris and his family, as I am sure most of you will remember, had a Nursery in Hampton Road, and although it must be nearly 10 years now since the nursery closed, the personal service, knowledge and attention one received when visiting the nurseries is still very much remembered and missed. I am sure many of you will be looking forward to this talk and hopefully, if Tris doesn't mind (and if he doesn't charge extra!) there may be time at the end of the talk to pick his brains re. any garden problems we may have.

The second visit of the year will be on 14 July and will be to Winterbourne House and Gardens in Edgbaston. Further details of this visit will be available later in 2011 and will be publicised in our next newsletter and on the village notice board in the precinct.

Our last talk for the year is more of a talk and visit. When I contacted Neil Phillips of Knowle Hall and owner of Hardmans to enquire whether their Archivist, Mr Michael Fisher, would be willing to give us a talk, he very kindly offered to let us have it at the Hall. We are very grateful to Neil for his kindness and generosity.

Obviously there will have to be different arrangements for this talk and numbers will have to be restricted. Further details will be released later in 2011 so "Watch this space!" and also watch our website; www.knowledgesociety.org.uk for a news item on the home page.

On behalf of my committee and myself I would like to say a big thank you to all of you who have supported us over the last year, joining us on our visits, attending our talks, coming to see us in the Local History Centre to see our exhibitions and displays and coming to see us with your enquiries re. village history and family history. Please keep doing so, you make it all worthwhile. Also, thank you to everyone who has contributed to the 218 new acquisitions we have received, which as I have said before, are such a valuable contribution to our archives and to preserving the history of our village and its people. If we go on like this, we shall soon need more new storage units! (I hope our treasurer Peter doesn't read my article, he'll have apoplexy!)

A big thank you to my committee; Kathy, Susan, Pam, Bill and Bryan, and to stewards; Elizabeth, Ann, Coral, Colin and David for all of their continued hard work and support. Special thanks to Elizabeth for always being at the end of the telephone for me with her vast store of knowledge and advice.

I would also like to say thank you to our librarians in Knowle Library for their continued help and assistance.

Happy Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year to everyone.

A new series of occasional updates on changes of Knowle shops begins here with this issue:

We welcome the following new additions to our village shops and wish them every success for the future;

- Station Road - **Beaus Cave de Vins** run by local (more or less) lads from Hampton-in-Arden, Andy, Anthony and Anthony's son Beau Boland. Beau will be the licensee.
- Kimbell's Walk, off the High Street - **Freak Le Shabby Chic**. Home Interior Styles and lovely unusual gifts. Sister shop of Freak Le Chic in Greville Court. Both owned by Lesley Kent.
- 1703 High Street (Formerly Cara Mia Shoes) - **Whispers Boutique & Fashion Agency**. Owners, Angela Earlswood and Andrea Hessay.

On the other side of the coin we say a sad farewell to Knowle Decorating and Building Supplies, Kenilworth Road, known locally as simply Knowle Builders.

Knowle Builders was started originally in Station Road (where Gourmet Foods are now) in the mid 1950s by Bill Neale and his wife Moira and was known as A.S. Neale's Hardware Shop. Business thrived and when in the early 1960s the premises in Kenilworth Road came on the market, although it was very neglected and needed a lot of work doing to it, Bill took a chance and bought it. A lot of work was needed to bring it up to the standard Bill wanted and much of this work was carried out by master bricklayer George Burton who was, as many local people will recall, a member of the Washpits Farm Burton family. At the back of the premises was an orchard which unfortunately had to be bulldozed and paved in order to make a home for the sand and gravel and various other building materials. *[Photos Page 6]*

Eventually in the mid 1960s the new premises opened for business. After a short time Graham Bottomore joined the workforce and married the boss's daughter Carolyn which in turn resulted in their son Paul also, eventually of course, joining the workforce. Between them all they ran a thriving and successful family business providing a friendly and helpful service not only to Knowle villagers but to traders and many others outside the village. That is, until about 18 months ago when, probably because of the economic climate, traders and the like started taking their business elsewhere, to bigger and cheaper suppliers such as B&Q. Knowle Builders could not compete, and so yet another family-run local business disappears from our village.

On behalf of Knowle Village, we say farewell, good luck for the future and thank you to; Graham, Carolyn and Paul and also to John (31 years at the shop) and Steve (20 years). You will all be very much missed. Bill Neale died 15 years ago but Mrs Neale who is now aged 90 years young, still lives in the village. Thank you to you also Mrs Neale. There is a moral to this story of one of our local shops - USE THEM OR LOSE THEM !!!

Janet Eržen - Knowle 779040

VILLAGE PLAN

THE KNOWLE SOCIETY NEEDS YOU or at least someone, to consider helping not only the Society but also Knowle villagers, schools, businesses or in fact, anyone who lives or works in Knowle with the preparation of the Village Plan. I am sure you are aware of the Government's intention of widening the scope of responsibility for the affairs of local people by local people - in fact it has been difficult for anyone not to be so aware of The Big Society! Part of the Big Society's proposals includes the implementation and consideration of how the Village is expecting to see itself in the future. The current Solihull Council Emerging Core Strategy Consultation document - to which the Chairman of our Planning Committee Leighton Jones has submitted the Society's response with a resume (see Page 3) - includes the requirement of a 'Village Design Statement' to assist in Securing Design Quality (Policy 3 of the ECS). The intent is clear! Balsall Common as a village community recently completed its own Village Plan in conjunction with the Council! Dorridge and District Residents Association has already set up a team to bring their Plan to fruition and is talking to the Council.

Knowle must not be left behind! However, in order to ensure this does not happen, someone, or a group of people, are required to take the concept forward. This will not only include the identification of what we now have in Knowle but how it will appear in the future. If we don't take steps to ensure some control behind positive statements for which we are responsible we will find ourselves seeing a future for Knowle appear without our having any say in the matter.

If anyone has an interest in how the community works together, that is between villagers and businesses, has an interest in planning and building design, has an ability to get on with people and above all, has time on their hands, then we would like to hear from you. Such a person will not be representing just the Society as a body but will be representing the whole community.

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THE KNOWLE SOCIETY

A charitable company limited by Guarantee

Extracts from the Annual Report and Accounts for the years ended 30th September 2008, 2009 & 2010

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>
<u>Incoming Resources</u>			
Members' Subscriptions	7043	7687	7817
Donations	5	607	550
Gift Aid Tax Recovered	1017	1375	1257
Activities for Generating Funds	1845	1382	1400
Bank Interest	545	625	71
Total Incoming Resources	10455	11676	11095
<u>Resources Expended</u>			
Society Meetings (net)	558	298	1524
Newsletter	1656	1989	2203
Other costs of Generating Income	1383	1125	1815
Local History Centre	796	693	845
Christmas Expenses (Tree etc)	498	498	424
Festival in the Park	0	559	354
Public Meeting (re 'Waitrose')	0	0	938
Other Charitable Activities	890	1496	1477
Accountancy Charges	0	0	460
Storage Facilities	0	0	851
Other Governance Costs	664	837	1005
Capital Expenditure inc. Depreciation	1605	899	1484
Total Resources Expended	8050	8394	13380
<u>Net Income (Net Expenditure -)</u>	<u>2405</u>	<u>3282</u>	<u>-2285</u>
<u>Balance Sheet</u>			
Fixed Assets	0	0	4980
Stocks	1032	774	516
Debtors	144	510	318
Bank Balances	17301	19604	12789
Total Funds	<u>18477</u>	<u>20888</u>	<u>18603</u>
<u>Number of members</u>	3100	3134	3109

- 1) The Accounts have been Independently Examined (as required by the Charity Commission and Company Law) and an unqualified Certificate issued.
- 2) A full set of the Accounts is available to any member, free of charge, on application to the Hon. Treasurer, Peter Johnson
- 3) The Hon. Treasurer is very happy to deal with any queries or concerns.

**The Knowle Society
Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 30 September 2010**

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is controlled by its memorandum and articles of association, and constitutes a limited company, limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006.

Risk management

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The objects of the Society, in the governing Memorandum, are:

1. To secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of general public amenity or historic or public interest in the ecclesiastical parish of Knowle or adjacent areas.
2. To educate the public in the geography, history, natural history and architecture of the area.
3. To promote a high standard of planning and architecture in or affecting the area and to oppose any inappropriate developments.

These objects have been achieved largely through the work of our committees viz: Planning, Community Services, Natural Environment, Local History, Meetings & Social and Walks. Information on the Society's activities has been publicised through the Newsletter, our Website and the local media.

Several of the committees maintain close contacts with Solihull M.B.C., the Police, Public Transport providers, the Airport and the local traders to ensure that the views of the Society are heard in all relevant activities. This fulfils our mission to maintain the character of the village.

The Local History Committee also maintains contact with appropriate organisations. It manages the Society's collection of documents and artefacts relating to the village and also arranges regular exhibitions of local interest in the Committee's Centre in Knowle Library. During the year the Society installed new furniture and fittings in the Centre. This has noticeably improved the overall appearance of the area and enabled the various items and exhibitions to be better displayed.

The Meetings & Social and the Walks Committees arranged well supported programmes of talks and walks throughout the year. Our involvement with the Festival in the Park and in the switching on of the Christmas Lights in the High Street have again been well supported and widely appreciated.

In addition to these ongoing activities the Planning Committee has again had a busy year, especially dealing with the Planning Application in respect of St John's Close, usually known as the 'Waitrose plans'. Interest in the Application was such that the Society circulated every house in the Knowle area with details of the plans and then arranged a public meeting to discuss the issues and to enable the Trustee Directors to form a representative and balanced view. In the event we submitted a comprehensive objection to the plans. The outcome of the Application has not yet been determined. Appeals have been launched against the refusal by the Borough Council of Applications for two separate berthing facilities on the local canal. The Society has objected to these proposals also. Regular contact is maintained with the Council's Planning Department and representations made when appropriate. The Trustee Directors are also grateful for the advice and assistance given to the Society by the local Councillors on planning and other matters. Talks are also being held with other interested parties to discuss the possibility of the Society leading the move towards the preparation of a 'Village Plan' for Knowle. These already exist for some of the neighbouring villages and often serve as a 'blueprint' for future developments and activities.

We continue to be an active participant in the Knowle Green Community Project. This involves the redevelopment of the former toilet block at the junction of Station Road and the High Street. Although this is taking rather longer than we hoped, draft plans have been drawn up for consideration by the various parties involved and to enable the necessary approvals and substantial funding to be obtained.

Result for the Year

The year resulted in an excess of Expenditure over Income of £2,285. (2009 - Excess of Income over Expenditure of

£3,282). This was part of the agreed strategy of the Trustee Directors to reduce our Reserves to more acceptable levels (see below and Note 9 on page 10). Expenditure included the costs of the activities referred to above and reflects what was a very busy year for the Society.

Membership

At the end of the year the membership of the Society stood at 3,091.

Risk Assessment

The Trustee Directors, through the committee Chairmen, carry out an annual risk assessment to ensure that all possible steps are taken to minimise risks to the Society's assets and to those who take part in our activities.

Reserves Policy

The Reserves Policy of the Society is that sufficient funds are retained to cover a minimum of one year's expenditure. It will be seen from the figures that the Reserves at present are in excess of this figure. The reasons for this are given in Note 9 on page 10 and a strategy is in place to effect a reduction.

Gifts in Kind

The Trustee Directors and many other volunteers freely give of their time and expertise. It is not considered meaningful to place an accurate value on this gift.

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD :

P Ewin (Chairman) - Trustee

10 November 2010

MONEY MATTERS

Members may recall that at our 2009 AGM those present agreed that future AGMs would not receive the full 14 page Annual Report and Accounts of the Society but rather they would be provided with a copy of the 'Report' part together with a single sheet of 'Extracts' from the 'Audited' figures.

This arrangement first operated at the meeting in November last and I am pleased to say that it seemed successful, with members being able to gain a better understanding of our activities and finances. Copies of the sheets which were distributed are printed out in this Newsletter on pp 9-10 and the full set is available on the Society's website.

The Extracts show another successful year. The top half of the sheet covers income, the middle expenditure and the lower part the position as at 30th September last. Whilst most of the figures are self-explanatory, some additional comments might aid understanding.

Amongst expenditure the large increase in 'Society Meetings' stems from a number of factors including our holding more meetings, having to pay speakers more and the purchase of additional display boards. The total cost of our activities in relation to the 'Waitrose' planning application is also shown (£938) and, as a result of our expanding activities, we now incur both Accountancy and storage charges. During the year we also purchased some very fine new furniture for the Local History Centre in the Library and the annual depreciation on this plus the 'Waitrose' costs largely account for the 'loss' of £2,285 on the year. However, this was planned and was part of the trustee directors' strategy to reduce our Reserves to more appropriate levels. Long-term low interest rates have now caught up with us and the deliberate 36% reduction in our balances in the bank, have both led to the particularly sharp drop in interest received compared with 2009. As you will see we are very fortunate in that our membership continues in excess of 3,000 which gives us financial flexibility and more influence when dealing with other bodies.

All-in-all another good year for the Society. If any member would like to know more on any of the figures or topics mentioned, then I should welcome contact with them.

Peter Johnson – Knowle 770268

ARDEN (THE ACADEMY)

The Knowle Society recently expressed concern about the fact and the process of change of Arden School to Arden (the Academy). We have therefore invited the academy to contribute a piece to this newsletter which it has kindly agreed to do.

There has been much local debate about the conversion of Tudor Grange and Arden to Academy status under new legislation. This follows on from the previous Government's agenda of directly funding schools to enable them to run more efficiently for the benefit of pupils in their local community.

As a sponsor of another Academy, in the North of the Borough, Arden has experienced at first hand the benefits that this can now bring. Services have been carefully selected to meet the needs of the pupils in the school resulting in improved quality of service and value for money. The savings made have been put back into the teaching and learning resources of the school and have brought about a dramatic improvement in pupils' achievements.

As an 'Outstanding' School Arden converts to an Academy through the setting up of a company, 'Arden Academy Trust'. It has charitable status and no sponsorship is required. The 'articles of association' are available to any member of the public to view. As an Academy Arden sets up its Funding Agreement directly with the Secretary of State. The funding operates from September to August in line with the school year making budgeting very straightforward. We have received an increase of £540K to our annual budget.

Most of the changes to the school relate to back room organisation and costs with many services now being purchased directly from either the Local Authority or other providers. This brings great improvements in the way that [the] school interfaces with the provider; as a 'customer' we are able to determine the exact needs of our children and oversee the quality of provision directly. It is clear that this more mature partnership will ensure the very best for our children now and in the future.

Arden is one of the highest performing comprehensive schools in the country. Not just for the brightest children but also for our most vulnerable. All children within the community are welcomed and we would wish to make clear that many of the rumours that have been circulating are false. We will continue to take all of the children in our local community into the school up to our agreed number; we will not select pupils by ability; we will not move our children about for their education and we will not be bringing children from other communities to the school. An intended outcome of a school becoming an Academy is to ensure that it is deeply rooted in its locality and the very best are allowed to flourish.

Arden has already taken steps to reshape the way in which the school is governed; increasingly it is involved with parents, business and community groups. It has given specific responsibility to a Senior Member of staff to work closely with people in the neighbourhood to further secure close relationships. A school is a very important resource both for the education of its children and for the facilities it offers. Being an Academy will ensure we can never become complacent and we want to find even more ways to serve the community in which we live. If you have any suggestions for the ways in which our new freedoms can be harnessed to use the school for everyone's benefit please get in touch.

The communities of Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath have an exceptional school at their heart. We are certain everyone is united in a desire to see it continue to thrive.

SWITCHING ON THE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Clockwise—The Ardennaires, K&D Lions Club volunteers, Great Expectations, that not-so-rotund gentleman and gallery view

2012 ANNIVERSARY

The Trustee Directors have asked me to make the appropriate arrangements for the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Society, which was founded in 1962. The first meeting of the then Executive Committee of the Society, as it was known in those days, was towards the end of June. Other anniversaries are due that year including a very important 60th anniversary for Her Majesty.

After due deliberation and thought it was taken into account that the Queen's celebrations are to be held on Monday 4th June and Tuesday 5th June, which will be Bank Holidays. It was then decided that probably Saturday 2nd June would be more appropriate for the Society's celebration. The type of function was the next consideration and eventually it was decided that an application to close the High Street be made to the Council in order for a street gala to be held with all the other organisations within the village being invited to have their own stands in order to show their wares to the local community.

In order to process this all these organisations will be written to and invited to a meeting to discuss any aspects that they wish to raise. This meeting will be held as soon as possible.

The organisation for this event will be considerable and at the moment I only have a small steering committee, but several aspects will need to be carried out and additional assistance will be required from time to time, as well as on the day of the event. I am therefore asking now for any volunteers to come forward and identify yourselves please. At this stage what will be required is not identified but as an example I can think of a need to meet the requirements of Health and Safety as being a priority. In fact no application can be made for the street closure until this aspect has been worked out. Further information will follow throughout next year.

I appreciate that you do not have a diary for 2012 yet but you could write the date of 2nd June 2012 at the bottom of the 2011 diary in order to remind you of what is going to happen, and also a big note of the following telephone number and email address in order to contact me as a volunteer early in 2011.

Gary Masters – Knowle 779955
2012@knowlesociety.org.uk

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PRESIDENT: Peter Ellis COMMITTEES

Planning

<u>Leighton Jones</u> *	Peter Ellis
John Hulse	Andrew Marston *
Peter Morton	Norman Stanley
Phil Vince	

Community Services

<u>John Rowley</u> *	Lilla Baker +
David Page	John Shayler
Lynne Steyn	

Natural Environment

<u>Ian Simmonds</u> *	Rowland Hopkinson +
Gordon O'Connor	Sue Owen
Bernard Spittle	

Local History Centre [# Steward only]

<u>Janet Erzen</u> *	Bill Bohanna *
Coral Harris #	Kathy Jephcott +
Bryan Smart *	Colin Smith #
Elizabeth Stanley #	Susan Trucchi
Pam Watson	Ann Wiles #

Meetings, Social & Walks

<u>Charles Robinson</u> *	Gill Fageant
Susan Trucchi	Martin Warr

Knowle Green Community Project

<u>Gary Masters</u> *	Andrew Marston *
Dave Pinwell *	

Christmas Lights

<u>Peter Ewin</u> *	Leighton Jones *
Gary Masters *	Charles Robinson *

2012 Celebrations

<u>Gary Masters</u> *	John Berry
Kathy Jephcott +	Tony Moon
Phil Rhodes	

REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Airport Consultative Committee &	
BIA Environment Monitoring Working Group	John Rowley *
Centro Transport User Forum	Gary Masters *
Conservation Advisory Committee	Phil Vince
Knowle Village Hall Association Council	Susan Trucchi
Solihull Local Involvement Network (LINK)	Lilla Baker
West Midlands Amenity Societies Association	Leighton Jones *
West Midlands Police Rural Assembly	Lorna Gale

* Trustee Director Committee chairman + Committee secretary

One year over and a new series of talks for 2011 about to begin but first a quick review of the meetings since the last newsletter. We had a very successful Quiz evening in November with the hosting of the event and the questions being provided by Peter Ewin the Society's chairman. Peter's team had won the last two times we have held a quiz for the social event so it seemed a good way to stop him going for a third win in succession by getting him to ask the questions and disqualify him from competing!! The plan worked very well as he did not win but hosted a very enjoyable evening for the attendees instead.



Established in 1677 with origins dating back to before the reign of Charles II, Firmin & Sons is one of the longest established companies in the United Kingdom. Originally based in the City of London, the Company moved to Birmingham, the manufacturing heartland of the UK, in the late 19th Century. Firmin manufactures and supplies all requirements for ceremonial dress, uniforms and accoutrements for Navy, Military and Air Force requirements. Samples of Firmin's work were on display ranging from bearskins (traditionally the headgear of grenadiers), buttons worn by both sides in the American Civil War, to ceremonial helmets worn both by military forces and members of the Royal family participating in trooping the colour at Horse Guards Parade. An excellent speaker from Firmin, Tony Kelly, coupled with excellent samples of their work made for one of the best talks of the year.



A gleaming display of Firmin's skill and the iconic helmets and breastplates of The Household Cavalry



The speaker Tony Kelly from Firmin talking with Mr & Mrs Dean

You can always gauge the success of a talk by the questions afterwards – in this case we had trouble getting people to leave the hall almost an hour after the formal talk had ended!

That's enough of 2010 now to look forward to 2011. All talks are at the village hall at 8.00pm and all are welcome whether members of the Knowle Society or not.

We kick off in January with an illustrated presentation from Michael Miles on the working lives of Midland canal boat women from 1800 to the 1960s on Monday 17th January. We follow on with what promises to be a fascinating talk on the Forensic Science of fingerprints used for detection and intrigue, this talk is on February 21st Lastly for the first quarter of the year we have Gabriela the Story Telling Ukulele Lady from the Black Country on March 21st. Gabriela is well known for her stories of the epic adventures of the tiny ukulele featuring novelty songs, tongue-twisters and humorous ditties. Gabriela has been featured several times on Radio 2 and promises a very entertaining evening.



I would like to thank the Social Committee, Martin Warr, Sue Trucci and Gill Fageant for their hard work and support in arranging the meetings in 2010 and the planning for 2011.

The Chairman and Trustee Directors are delighted to welcome 31 new members (see back page) who have joined us since the start of the new Society year at the beginning of October.

As well as new members joining we do have people leaving us for a variety of reasons and this is the time of year when we discover who has left us. Consequently the database is changing on an almost daily basis as subscriptions are collected and delivered to me, along with updated information about the membership, by our 79 distributors. The situation at the time of writing is that 56 out of the total of 79 distribution rounds have been collected and processed so far. A further 10 rounds have been received and are in a queue waiting to be processed leaving 13 rounds still to be received.

A facility has been programmed into the database to facilitate the recording and analysis of those leaving membership and the reasons why. A retrospective classification and analysis of reasons for leaving will be carried out as time allows and figures will be published during next year; no individual/personal details will be published. Entries are archived when membership ceases.

Interim membership statistics as of today (5 December 2010) are:

Total Paying Memberships – 1810	Total Individual Memberships – 2986
Family Memberships – 1202	Single Memberships – 582
New Family Memberships – 9	New Single Memberships – 11
Family Memberships Archived – 18	Single Memberships Archived - 24

GIFT AID

Have you Gift Aided your subscription? Just over 58% of members have gift aided their subscriptions which means that 42% of the total membership have not yet opted to claim for Gift Aid. It would greatly benefit the Society if we can maximise the number of subscriptions for which gift aid is claimed. If you are paying income tax then you need only to be paying an amount of tax at least equal to the tax which can be reclaimed by the Society. The following table shows the amount claimable by the Society for each of the levels of subscription at the current tax rate and also the potential extra revenue which could accrue to the Society.

Subscription Amount	Approximate numbers not yet registered for Gift Aid	Amount claimable per subscription at the current tax rate of 28%	Potential extra revenue
£5.00	505	£1.40	£707.00
£3.00	244	£0.84	£204.96
Total			£911.96

The Society is fortunate in having a dedicated group of over 100 volunteers who willingly serve to support the work which we do but like any other organisation we are dependent on cash flow and I am sure that you can see that Gift Aid is an important component of our finances. Your claim can make a difference!

The process of registering for Gift Aid is very simple.

1. Give me a call on 01564 779902 and I will send you a form or you can go online to the Society’s website, click on ‘Membership’ and download a form.
2. Complete and sign the form and send to me at the usual address. (See back page)
3. I will register the form on the database and send the form to our Treasurer who will then register your claim with Her Majesty’s Revenue & Customs.

If you are not sure whether you are registered already then please complete a form, send it to me and I will deal with it.

Bryan Smart - Knowle 779902

Mrs I M Ball
Mr & Mrs S Blackburn
Mr & Mrs Boucher
Mrs H Chamberlain
Mr H Hamilton
Mrs P Hill
Mr & Mrs Johnson
Mrs E Johnson
Mr & Mrs M Jones
Mr M Lambourne
Mr & Mrs L R Macdonald

Mr & Mrs C R Minal
Mr N Palmer
Mr & Mrs B Parkes
Mr & Mrs M R Passey
Mrs D C Peters
M Rhodes
Mr R Smith
Mr & Mrs Templar-Vasey
Mr & Mrs P Turner
Mrs Betty Wiltshire

A warm welcome to the 31 new members listed opposite.

The Knowle Society has around 3000 members; can you encourage your friends and neighbours to join too? This may be done either by contacting the Membership Secretary or through an application form on: www.knowledgesociety.org.uk

(Continued from page 8)

That person will seek and obtain the support of all sectors of the community to bring together all aspects of the Village of how it works today, and how we all would like to see it work tomorrow.

If you are interested, but perhaps only in some of the aspects of what will become Knowle Village Plan, please do contact us. It is not necessarily seen as a 'sole effort' but a 'team approach' where several villagers can together, achieve what has already been done locally elsewhere so Knowle will indeed, be seen to be part of The Big Society.

**Andrew Marston - Knowle 774082
Hon. Secretary**

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2011 PROGRAMME CARD

Delivered with this issue of your newsletter, should be one copy of the green 2011 Programme Card designed to be folded twice; please let Anne Smith know (details opposite) if you do not receive your copy. It contains information about all our activities in 2011 and also the officers and trustee directors as elected at the recent AGM. These aren't all our volunteers though, as we are supported by many hard-working committee members listed on Page 13, also 79 newsletter distributors.



ONLINE VIEWING OF THIS ISSUE

As always, a colour view of this newsletter may be seen on the website; follow the Membership and then Newsletters links. The password on the right will gain access for members, however no password is needed after three months.

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