



December 2010

Issue No. 60



Winter Newsletter

Do you want faster Broadband?

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BT is rolling out superfast fibre optic broadband across the UK. They are not doing so very quickly and the priorities have inevitably been the areas of highest demand. Here in New Ash Green, depending on the distance from the telephone exchange in Ash and how much you want to pay for the service, it is possible to get speeds of between 5 and 9 Mb/s. This is actually better than many places and may be adequate for many people at home unless they are into online gaming or streaming video in a big way. Commercial uses may need more and undoubtedly the future will bring an increased need for high-speed access to the internet when it is likely, for example, that television will reach our homes that way. With claimed download speeds of up to 40Mb/s, this should be possible with fibre optic cabling.

If you want to see what speed you are getting, and compare your neighbours and other service providers, visit the website at www.top10.com and enter your details to test the speed of your service. Then look at the StreetStats to compare your service with others in the area.

Unless there is evidence of a significant need here we are unlikely to see much faster broadband in New Ash

Green for some time. There may be other options however and one is to register with The Race to Infinity. This is giving people the chance to vote online for their area to become one of the first to enjoy fibre optic broadband.

The five areas which receive the largest percentage of votes by 31 December 2010 will win the chance to bring fibre optic broadband to their area and BT will give computer equipment worth £5,000 to a local community project. To take part in this, visit the website at www.racetoinfinity.bt.com/home and vote for the Ash Green exchange. Encourage your friends to do so as well. Do it before the end of the year. Even if we do not win, a high score will give BT something to think about.

In the village of Iwade near Sittingbourne, the local community managed to

secure a grant from Kent County Council. This, with the help of the local parish council, has meant that all of the nearly 1,400 houses in the village will have access to fibre-based broadband for a cost starting at around £20 per month after a £50 activation fee. Iwade was lucky because they were near to the exchange at Sittingbourne which was part of BT's already announced commitment to high-speed broadband. If there is enough demand, there is no reason why the VA should not work with other local bodies to try to secure a similar result for the Ash Green exchange and other nearby exchanges. Let me know if you think it is worth trying!

Cameron Clark

Communications Director

cameron@cclark.me.uk



Ash Green Scout Group.....

.....has expanded and is now a thriving, community involved group for the young people of the area.

The group is run by a very devoted, enthusiastic group of adults; with equally enthusiastic helpers (more are always welcome!). The group is split into three, divided by age. Beavers are for 6–8 year olds and meet Tuesdays 5pm-6.15pm.

Cubs are for 8–10 year olds and also meet Tuesdays 6.30pm-8.00pm.

Scouts meet Fridays 7.15pm-9.15pm and is for 10–13 year olds.

All groups welcome both boys and girls and are open to all young people regardless of background or ability. We aim to give them a sense

of fun and adventure in a safe, well managed environment. They are taught self-confidence and friendship and are given a real purpose in life.

Recent activities (and there are too many to list!) include a fun day with the whole scout community at Detling where they met Bear Grylls, a 'back to basics' cub camp, a Halloween Beavers fun night, Scouts 8-day camp in Guernsey, trip to Howletts Zoo, swimming and activity night for scouts and cubs, 'tracking' evening at Farningham Woods, summer fete night for Beavers and much more! Forthcoming events include a canoeing and swimming day for cubs, Beaver sleepover, Christmas parties, pantomime trip, fundraising events, swimming

gala, day out to Brands Hatch, Remembrance Day parade, fireworks night event and lots of fun, games and badge work!

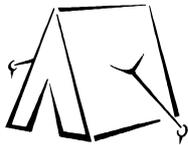
All the young people have great fun, whilst achieving badges for their efforts – and make great friends in the process.

For more details on what we do have a look on our web site:

www.ashgreenscouts.org.uk

or call Group Scout Leader Gary Davies on 01474 872981 for more information.

All meetings take place at New Ash Green Village Hall. Please note all volunteers are subject to a CRB check.



Come and join the Woodland Group—no skills required! They meet the 3rd Saturday of every month and carry out work in the Orchard and Woodlands of NAG.



A new view into the Orchard

Woodland News

Many villagers will have noticed there has been a lot of "landscape management" going on at the edge of the orchard and close to Lambardes. A number of large trees have been felled and there are several reasons why this work was necessary.

The trees were planted on the north facing slope in the late 1970s/early 1980s, but as far back as 1985 it was recommended they be lifted and planted elsewhere in the village, otherwise they would cast too much shade over the orchard. Unfortunately that work was never carried out, the trees grew and, as feared, were having a very detrimental effect on the venerable orchard trees which have much higher amenity and wildlife value.

Some people may regret the loss of the bigger trees. We do to, but there are benefits from this work, even if the land-

scape does look rather stark at first. Firstly, there will be lots more light getting into the orchard – so the old apple trees will really benefit. Secondly, this stretch of footpath near the Minnis was becoming a dark and forbidding place – it is now much brighter and wonderful new views have opened up across the orchard and onto the Minnis. Thirdly, coppicing – where trees are cut back to the ground but allowed to re-grow naturally – has many wildlife benefits, with many species of butterfly and birds in particular thriving on the new sunny open spaces. The felled trees will re-grow from their stumps and so become multi-stemmed specimens over the coming years

How has the work been done? It has been a joint effort by the VA workforce and the Woodlands Group. The Workforce have felled the

larger trees close to the footpath (there are more to be done near the top of the steps that lead down to the orchard and these will be felled over the winter). The Woodlands Group, during September and November have felled several more trees, and are converting these into a new dead hedge. This is very much work in progress and the group will be back working there over the winter - 18th December/15th January/ 19th February - when they expect to complete the dead hedge. If you would like to get involved or get in touch with the Woodlands Group please do so via their website: www.nagwoodlands.btck.co.uk

It is also hoped to plant additional trees across the slope, especially lower growing species like Hazel and Wayfaring trees which also thrive on this sort of coppice management, where trees are felled every 7-15 years.

VA Review Underway

It is evident that the policies announced by the Government to reduce public spending will hit everyone. The Village Association and Resident Societies, will be affected directly by the 2.5% increase in VAT. We cannot reclaim the VAT element of the goods and services that we buy so our costs will rise by that amount.

The VA is very conscious that there is likely to be substantial financial pressure on individual Village residents. Many people will face higher costs and reduced spending power. Redundancy or income reductions will affect others.

In recognition of that, VA subscriptions have been kept at the same level for the last two years, but inflation continues to increase the cost of the materials and services that the VA buys. That means that it has less to spend in real terms on maintaining the Village and providing a service to residents. The challenge now is to keep up the level of Village maintenance and service provided to residents in this difficult financial climate.

How are we responding?

First, spending will be held down. Budgets have been frozen at their 2009/10 levels until the end of next year, which is a significant reduction in real terms given the present level of inflation. We are also looking at everything we do to see what can be done more economically without reducing the quality of maintenance and service.

Second, a fundamental review is being made of how the VA is organised and operates the design of New Ash Green, with its large open spaces and communal areas, meant that it would never be cheap to keep it looking good and much has changed in the 40 years since the Village was founded. As the Village matures, and more and more regulations must be met, the job of managing and maintaining it has got larger and more complicated.

The object of the review is to make sure that the systems that were set up by Span when they developed New Ash Green, are still fit for purpose in the 21st century. The starting point is the strong belief that it is in all our interests to have a well maintained village that

enhances the value of our homes. With that in mind we are looking at how to improve the management of the Association so that we are focused on using our resources to the best effect, achieving better results and making savings wherever possible.

The review is not only about cost cutting. It is about getting value for money; making sure that resident's subscriptions are used to maintain and improve the Village so it remains an attractive place to live whilst protecting and enhancing the investment we have made in our homes.

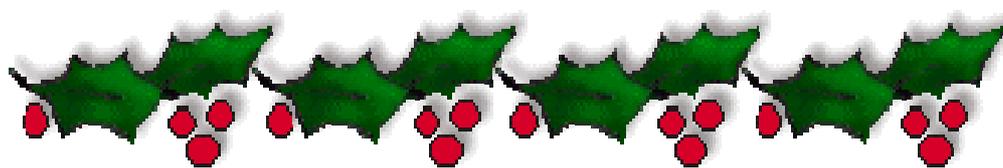
The review may recommend some "spend to save" measures if it can be shown that the long-term advantages are greater than the short-term costs and the savings that we have already made put us in a good position to be able to afford that. Our aims are unchanged; to use your money effectively, to maintain the Village to a high standard and to have that reflected in the value of our homes.

Mike Rose

Chairman, VA Finance & Strategy Committee



The review is not only about cost cutting. It is about getting value for money.....



Wassail with Us!

New Ash Green Woodlands Group invite you to their 5th annual Wassail!

Meet at The Village Hall at 4.30pm on Saturday 8th January 2011 for mince pies and mulled cider and wine.

Bring torches or lanterns for the short procession to the village orchard, and something to make a noise!

Accompanied by West Hill Morris, this revival of an ancient tradition is not to be

missed. Free entry but donations needed to cover our costs.

For more information, please contact Jerry on 879 897 or Carole on 874 976 or visit www.nagwoodlands.btck.co.uk



Neighbourhood Watch News



**Kent
Police**

Following several calls from residents in and around Northfield, New Ash Green, who were concerned about a bike being ridden anti-socially in the area, police officers on patrol located the bike and four young people. A section 59 notice was issued.

This means that if the rider is seen on another occasion driving in a similar way, the vehicle will be seized by the police. It does not matter if it is not the same vehicle. Similarly, if the vehicle is seen again in the same circumstances with a different driver, it will be seized. The four young people were all taken home

to their parents.

Local police officers carried out three speed checks on Ash Road, Hartley recently. 11 motorists were given advice about their driving, four received speed awareness notifications and two drivers received £60 fines and three penalty points.

Kent Trading Standards has received reports from residents in the Longfield area of unsolicited telephone calls from a man claiming to be from the Council. The caller advised that residents could claim back between £800 and £1,600 from being in the wrong council tax band

since 1993. In one case however, the home owner explained that the house was not built until 1995. If you receive an unexpected call like this, please be careful how you respond. Many callers will try and extract personal information from you or try to sell you goods and services which you may not need. While some businesses may not be acting illegally, they often cause distress or alarm. If in any doubt or for further advice please contact:

Consumer Direct on

08454 040506 or visit www.consumerdirect.gov.uk

Graffiti Vandals

Graffiti continues to be an all too frequent fact of everyday life in NAG with costs escalating on a daily basis. When it occurs, it is highly visible and has a detrimental impact on amenity values.

Graffiti is not just an isolated nuisance but can be linked to other forms of enviro-crime that demean and spoil our neighbourhoods, the shopping centre and open spaces.

Graffiti is a costly and annoying expression of anti-social behaviour that can undermine our sense of well-being, making us feel uncomfortable in our own neighbourhoods. Recent clean-up costs were approx. £3k and we are all paying for it!

The problem is far worse than previously believed and now calls for "zero tolerance" towards graffiti vandals. The

VA is working with the Police to actively tackle the nuisance and will take appropriate action against the culprits once they have been identified.

Ultimately, the growing costs caused by this behaviour impacts on YOU the resident, i.e. it is your money that pays for the removal!



Lights Out!

The Village Association maintains street and path lighting throughout New Ash Green (with the exception of the Shopping Centre).

If a light near you is out, contact your Residents Society Lighting Representative who will report it to the VA Office. You can of course report it yourself, please give

exact details of the location (nearest house number), type of light (column, bollard, or wall light), and what appears to be wrong (light out, damaged, or timing issue).

If no one else is doing so, you could always volunteer to patrol and report the lights on your neighbourhood!



Please do not misuse dog waste bins!

It is essential that only small dog waste bags are used in the appropriate containers.

NAG Fencing Club News

Jonathan Farmer and Lorianna Forni-Lucey recently both competed in the Elite epee fencing competition. Jonathan came third out of a strong field losing to the eventual winner and number 2 ranked England fencer. Lorianna finished fifth in the U13 girls competition – Lori

started strong winning the first 4 of 6 fights in the group, before winning her first knockout fight 15–4 before going out in a close fight 15–11.

Both Jonathan and Lorianna attend the New Ash Green fencing club held at the New

Ash Green Village Hall on Wednesday's from 5.30–7.30pm. Run by fully qualified coach and British international fencer Taran Nicholls. If you are interested in learning fencing feel free to contact Taran on either 07543 507 851 or taran@epeefencing.eu



Jonathan Farmer is second from the right.

Youth Club Sees Record Numbers!

Over the last year a lot has been going on with the young people of New Ash Green. Our Monday night youth club has begun to flourish and we have seen numbers rise from 9 per week (this time last year) to 35 and over per week (this year).

It is an exciting developmental time for the club and we hope the success and growth continues.

At the club we offer a range of activities, Table Tennis, Pool, Table Football, Arts and Crafts, Stop Smoking programmes, C-Card condom distribution, Cooking, Football, Basketball and guest

speakers covering representatives from Kent Police to Her Majesty's Prison Service (and I don't mean the wardens!).

There is a lot going on at NAG Youth Club but we want to be providing more for the young people and I am delighted to say that Cllr David Brazier has kindly donated money for the second year running from his Members Community Grant. We are incredibly grateful to David for the support and will be using the money to provide better equipment at the centre.

We also have good news about a link formed with Longfield Academy, where a

large number of our young people attend school. Through forming partnership working links, the HAWK youth project has had a brand new Table Football Table donated to us by the Academy. We are very excited about this arriving and the young people are looking forward to yet more closely fought contests!

New Ash Green Youth Club runs from 7pm-9:30pm on Monday evenings. If you have any queries please email me at hawk youth@live.co.uk or call 01474 702 760.

Mathew Butt



Come and get active with NAGARA contact the Membership Secretary on

01474 871513

Get Active with NAGARA!

During 2010 'New Ash Green Active Retirement Association' has had a very busy and enjoyable year.

The Club is for active persons over 50 years of age, so if you are interested please contact our membership secretary on 01474 871513 for details.

We meet monthly (generally 1st Friday), when we display and take bookings for various events like Holidays, Coach Outings to many places of

interest, Walks usually followed by a pub lunch, Lunches, Theatre trips some by coach to the West End of London and BBQ's in the summer months. We normally have a speaker each month with many varied topics. We also play the game of 'Petanque' and 'Bat and Trap'.

On Monday afternoon we have a 'keep fit' class from 2pm-3.30pm where Yoga and Pilates are carried out, followed by a game of

Scrabble and Cards.

Once a month a 'Knit and Natter' group meet.

We are looking forward to our Christmas Party during December and in January our Yearly Celebration Dinner.

We have much more on the Agenda for the future including holidays, a Jamboree and a Celebration Cruise.

We are a very busy and happy Club!



Snow & Ice Responsibilities



The law changed in 2003 as detailed below:

“Highway Authorities in England and Wales have a statutory duty under Section 150 of the Highways Act 1980 and **The Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 section 111**, “..in particular, a **Highway Authority is under a duty to ensure**, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice”.

As far as New Ash Green is concerned, the public high-

ways are the carriageways of Ash Road, Church Road, North Ash Road, West Yoke Road, Millfield Lane, Ayelands Lane, Redhill Road and all of the estate roads **except** Over Minnis, Punch Croft, Knights Croft, Lambardes and Millfield. These last five private roads are the responsibility of the street manager, namely the relevant Residents’ Society.

The vast majority of footways are the responsibility of the relevant Residents’ Society, with some link paths being the

responsibility of the VA. There are a number of Public Footpaths which run along some part of the RS or VA network, but the reality is that KCC, as Highway Authority for public roads (which includes bridleways, footways and footpaths) are never going to get round to doing them.

Footways within the **Shopping Centre** are the responsibility of the landlords of Phase 1, Piperton Finance, through their managing agents, Richmond Lodge 0208 686 8884.

Salt & Salt Bins

Salt provided by the VA in the Salt Bins should ONLY be used on carriageways. It is not provided for use on footpaths or private dwellings!

We are fortunate that KCC has been prepared to treat the VA (and through that, the RS) as being a ‘Parish Council’, so has provided free salt to the VA, as available. In general, that means that we can normally get salt prior to the frost/snow season, but at times of peak demand re-supply can be unlikely (i.e. when most needed!). **Please note that this is not a right.**

The salt is provided to the VA (and distributed to the RS bins when requested, and when available) on the understanding that it is to be used on carriageways (i.e. roads) only. The footpaths, being ‘private’, are excluded from this arrangement.

Salt must be used very sparingly. Excess use produces no benefit in dealing with snow or frost, and uses what limited supplies there may be much more quickly. The salt also accelerates damage to concrete, so where used or carried onto exposed aggregate paths can shorten the period between expensive replacements.

N.B. Misuse, with residents carting off supply from the bins for use on their own properties, places the whole ‘free supply’ arrangement in jeopardy. RS would then have to make their own arrangements for procuring and storing the salt!

KCC only salts Ash Road,

Chapel Wood Road and Redhill Road under normal circumstances, though North Ash Road, and sometimes Ayelands Lane and Millfield Lane have also been treated on occasion. The VA will endeavour to treat the last three if KCC don’t, and deal with the paths at road crossings, to make crossing safer.

The responsibility for other roads and paths lies with either KCC (08458 247247) or the appropriate Residents’ Society. Where these remain untreated during a longer period of inclement weather then complaints should be directed as appropriate, NOT to the VA office.



Businesses – Keep it Local

If you live in the village and have a business would you like to register with us to help promote your company?

The VA would like to provide a list of businesses in NAG that could be handed out to residents. Many residents seek local contractors and this is a way of promoting your company and making use of the huge resources located in NAG. A link to the list would also be placed on our website, which is due to go live early 2011.

Should you wish to register please provide the following to admin@nagval.com
Your Name/Company Name/Type of Business/Contact Telephone Number

NAG Film Society Returns

Following recent maintenance and inspection work on the projections and screen systems, NAG Film Society will be returning to the Village Hall early in 2011. Some work was necessary to bring both the equipment and the projection room up to modern health and safety requirements. That has delayed our re-launch but has now been successfully completed.

Local community cinemas are currently growing in popularity with many venues having increasing frequency of performances and growing numbers of members. We intend to show a mixed programme of classic features/art films and shorts with the evenings being presented as a social meeting place perhaps in some instances with discussion on the films seen.

There will be an opportunity for members to suggest titles for future programmes. Whilst primarily intended for

New Ash Green residents, all from surrounding areas such as Stansted, Ridley, Hodsel Street and Hartley will be welcome.

The first show will be Saturday evening 5th of February 2011.

Main feature will be "The Draughtsman's Contract". Anthony Higgins, Janet Sultzman, Dir. Peter Greenaway. BFI comment "Lavish 18th cent. costume drama... Loaded situation presented in witty, barbed dialogue assuredly delivered by a talented cast. The costume and settings are superb".

Tickets £5 on the door. Doors open 7.45pm. Supporting film starts at 8pm.

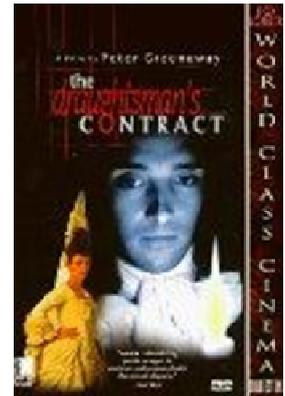
Current intention is to open first Saturday of every month. Future shows will be advertised on posters in centre, on our website at www.fonagvc.co.uk or by e-mail enquiry to fonagvc@hotmail.com

In order to make this a success we need two

groups of people to be active in the Society. The core group will be the projectionists and admin staff who will operate the equipment, choose and book films mainly from British Film Institute Library. The core group currently consists of Mark Scanlan, Gill Lockett, Hugh Marley, Mark Copping, David Tsigarides, Frank Locket and Stuart Richardson. We think we need a further two to give flexibility.

The front of house team needs to be larger and is likely to be involved on a less frequent basis, perhaps only on the evening of a performance. Their tasks will be box office, serving tea, coffee, ice cream, biscuits in the interval from the kitchen hatch, seat layout, ushers, fire escape monitors.

Anyone who would like to help with either of these groups please contact Stuart on 01474 874140 or by e-mail at fonagvc@hotmail.com.



The first NAG film society showing is on 5th February 2011. Tickets £5 on the door. Doors open at 7.45pm.

Lunch Club

The Age Concern Lunch Club meets every Friday at 11.30am in the Youth and Community Centre. Over 55's welcome.

Lunch costs £3.50 plus a charge of 40p for membership. Come along and have some freshly cooked food in a warm and friendly atmosphere – you can also enjoy a game of Bingo! The team leader is Ann, who along with her team of volunteers, go all out to ensure you have a great time. Be sure to come along and we look forward to seeing you soon!
Contact Ann 872314

VILLAGE WALKS 2011

Your 'cut out and keep' guide

- Our seasonal walks will take place quarterly, as follows:
 - Sunday 6th Feb - Winter Warmer**, 'Beating the Bounds of New Ash Green', meet 10.30am at the Royal Oak pub
 - Sunday 1st May - Spring Bluebell walk**, meet 10.30am in the orchard
 - Sunday 7th August - Summer walk**, featuring meadows, hedgerows, Northfield and Chapel Wood, meet 10.30am in the orchard, finishes at the Royal Oak pub
 - Sunday 6th November - Autumn walk**, featuring Ash Church, Ridley, and village views, meet 10.30am in the orchard
- For a full description of these walks provided by your local Tree Wardens, or information about the New Ash Green Woodlands group, please visit www.nagwoodlands.uk.com. Alternatively you can phone Carole on 874976 or Jerry on 879897



AGE
Concern

New Ash Green Village Association Limited

Centre Road
New Ash Green
Longfield
Kent DA3 8HH
Tel: 01474 872691
Fax: 01474 872409
E-mail: admin@nagval.com

VA OFFICE OPENING HOURS

The VA Office is open to residents
9.00am-4.00pm Monday to Thursdays —
Closed to residents on Fridays
The office is closed for all statutory holidays

If you would like to write an article for our next Newsletter, either as a member of a Club or Society or to write an article of local interest, please provide it to VA Office no later than 5th June 2011.

Xmas Tree Recycling

Any resident looking to dispose of their Christmas tree environmentally friendly and hassle-free way after this year's festivities have ended can do so by using the Council's fortnightly garden waste collection service throughout January.

Residents who have trees with a trunk less than 89mm (3.5" in diameter) should put them out by the kerbside the night before the scheduled fortnightly garden waste collection day in their road. Trees should not be decorated or in pots or stands.

SDC will collect the trees so that they can be shredded and turned into environmentally friendly compost.

Trees with a trunk more than 89mm (3.5" in diameter) are not suitable for the green waste collection service.

However, they can be taken to the Household Recycling site at Pepper Hill.

Residents are advised that the refuse crews do not collect Christmas trees with the regular, weekly black sack rubbish, but with a special garden waste collection vehicle that will likely arrive as early as 7am on the day of the scheduled collection.



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Thinking of Building?

Are you thinking of having building work done? Due to the covenants in the Village you will know that to change the external appearance of your property in any way at all (extension, conservatory, doors, windows etc) you need to obtain approval in writing from the Village Association before starting work.

The Amenity Committee that considers such applications meets throughout the year at around 6 weekly intervals. However on the first Saturday of each month members of the committee are at the VA offices from 10.30am until noon to give anyone informal guidance on their proposed works. It always pays to talk first before finalising your designs! Although these sessions cannot grant approval they can steer you away from solutions that are unlikely to be accepted and towards those that are. So why not come along and talk to us?

DESIGN GUIDANCE WORKSHOPS - 2011

FIRST SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH - 10.30am - 12.00 midday

Saturday 8 January 2011	Saturday 2 July 2011
Saturday 5 February 2011	Saturday 6 August 2011
Saturday 5 March 2011	Saturday 3 September 2011
Saturday 2 April 2011	Saturday 1 October 2011
Saturday 7 May 2011	Saturday 5 November 2011
Saturday 4 June 2011	Saturday 3 December 2011



PAPER AND CARDBOARD COLLECTION

RECYCLE AND SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY ALL AT ONCE!!

Ashgreen Scout group are collecting all your used paper and cardboard (inc shredding).

This will be a monthly collection on the 3rd weekend of each month. The bin is a large blue bin which is located at the back of the Co-op and will be open between 10am and 10pm Friday, 10am - 5pm Saturday and Sunday. (Next date 17th Dec)

This has proved to be a very profitable collection for other scout groups - so we'd like to try it! This will raise much needed funds for the group and will greatly benefit the youth of the village by providing more funding for productive and challenging fun!

If you would like to collect but have trouble taking your collection to the bin on these dates please let Gary Davies know (01474 872981) and we will arrange collection for you.

Thank you all for your support!