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NEWSLETTER August 5th, 1989

Dear

It has been several months since the last newsletter, but this will show you how busy we have been. This is not just a newsletter but also an appeal for more members to take an active part in the running of the Society. The taking up of new initiatives put forward at our regular Committee meetings is being left to a decreasing number of officers and road representatives who regularly attend and there is genuine concern for the future of the Society which can only be sustained by "new blood". Anyone who is willing to take an active part is invited to attend a General Meeting to be held at 8 p.m. on Thursday, September 7th at Christ Church Hall, Highland Road.

Current Activities

There are four activities that we have covered over the past nine months.

1. RVPS Planter at Ravensbourne Station.

Our continued success with the planter at Ravensbourne Station has resulted in BR providing the finance to plant the tub by the road and provide attractive hanging baskets, which Chan, the Stationmaster has been keen to look after. We have received many compliments from the weary commuters and our thanks go to Ann Rowswell who has been instrumental in our efforts.

2. Bromley's "Clean and Green" campaign.

Following the presentation by Bromley to us last November on their "Clean and Green" campaign, we have made suggestions which have included the altering of the traffic light sequence at the junction of Ravensbourne Avenue and Beckenham Lane to allow time for pedestrians to cross Beckenham Lane safely and the tidying up of the copse of trees at the junction of Downs Hill and Ravensbourne Avenue. We have received a favourable response and have high hopes that improvements will be implemented.

Following on from the "Clean and Green" campaign, Bromley Council recently launched their "Local Action Manual" which three members of RVPS Committee attended. It proved a useful occasion to approach Councillors Wilkinson and Bloomfield about the development pressure on this area and our views were duly noted.

### 3. BR High Speed Rail Link.

At our AGM last February Mr. John Hunt MP took a "wait and see" approach to our request for his support in opposing the BR Channel Tunnel High Speed Link through Shortlands. The decision by BR to propose an entirely new route tunnelling for the most part through SE London must be seen as a success for the combined lobbying power of local societies such as ourselves. Our representatives (Mark Towse and George Hodson) on the Bromley Council Sub-Committee and the Federation of Bromley Residents Associations Sub-Committee have continued our involvement and they inform us that we should still be concerned for two reasons -

- i) the Channel Tunnel freight traffic (up to 18 trains a day) will use the Catford Loop line through Ravensbourne Station. Over half these trains will run at night. This traffic will not use the new rail link when it is built as it is for passenger traffic only. The noise and vibration will no doubt be a considerable nuisance although BR intends to weld the rails and use electric rather than diesel traction.
- ii) the Channel Tunnel opens in 1993 and all passenger traffic (up to 4 trains per hour each way for 18 hours a day) will be routed through Shortlands until the opening of the high speed link in 1998. This will no doubt have a considerable impact on domestic commuter services.

### 4. Block Redevelopments.

By far the most important of our activities is the resistance to the decimation of this valley by the increasing demands of developers for high density block redevelopments. Over the past eighteen months we have had nine sites proposed for such developments. Four of these have received approval by Bromley despite our opposition based to a large extent on criteria in the Bromley Plan (1985). The remainder are either being considered or have been rejected by Bromley. Those that have been rejected no doubt will be resurrected in a slightly different form whenever the developer chooses. The one in Lewisham (Cedarhurst, Elstree Hill) has received approval for housing.

So far the Martins Hill and Town Ward Councillors have regretfully not given local residents and RVPS much support, but we intend to keep up our campaign making them aware of local residents opinions against these redevelopments. It is in a large part the failure of these representatives to protect the environment that has encouraged developers to believe this area is ripe for redevelopment and has led to the spate of proposals which has only recently slackened due to the temporary decline on the housing market. We believe this is a short term lull in the pressure for redevelopment and we have used the opportunity to try to force Bromley Planning Department and latterly Cllr Barkway (the Leader of the Council) to change their attitudes. The opportunity for this is currently available with the requirement from the Department of Environment to produce a Unitary Development Plan for the Borough.

In our efforts to preserve local buildings of note, we have applied for Full Statutory Listing for three houses, two on Grasmere Road and Brabourne Cottage, Oaklands Road. All three are locally listed by Bromley, but this has not deterred a successful planning application to redevelop Brabourne Cottage. Unfortunately, we have recently heard that our application to the DOE has been rejected and we have yet to hear the reasons why.

### Future Activities

The fight against unsympathetic redevelopments must continue to be our major activity. We should all be grateful for the efforts of our Planning Officer Bill Jamieson and we slowly feel we are making progress on the issues that concern us. We cannot afford to relax our guard and we would genuinely wish to see implementation of guidelines for better quality developments and the creation of further Conservation Areas within the Borough.

If we cannot obtain the support from current Councillors, we should look for possible alternative candidates for the elections next May and to this aim we seek guidance and support to determine what actions are necessary.

Despite several articles and letters published notably on the BR High Speed Link, we need a regular coverage in the local press pushing our point of view. Also we should try to find support from like minded societies in Bromley.

We need to designate appropriate locations suitable to be considered for Conservation Areas or the newly defined Areas of Special Residential Character, both of which have planning restrictions which attempt to preserve the local character. Having defined areas we will then need assistance to prepare cases in support of these applications.

There is a natural turnover of responsibilities in the running of the Society and we are currently looking for replacement road representatives. We have recently appointed a new Treasurer (Alan Marks) and by the end of the year we will need a new Secretary as Paul Bennett wishes to reduce his workload and continue only as Membership Secretary.

Although it appears that we are largely involved in Bromley issues, our efforts in Lewisham can be seen as a success. The Society has achieved recognition and cross party support from Councillors in the long run battle for Cedarhurst, and even the developer chose to consult local residents on the final design for the scheme for housing which was approved last April.

Perhaps one activity we should consider is to repeat the success of the Summer Barbeque last year and organise a similar event this year.

Our Committee meetings have evolved from cosy gatherings meetings in people's houses, which some felt were unprofessional. Also, it was always the same few people who offered their hospitality. Therefore, we changed the venue to the Church Hall on Highland Road this year. Unfortunately this has resulted in a significant drop in attendance. Our analysis of this is that we no longer have the friendly environment of someone's home and also meetings this year have been dominated by two major issues, namely the BR High Speed Link and our fight against block redevelopments. The latter has become a somewhat esoteric subject. We wish to reverse this trend and appeal to those who see a future for the Society to attend the meeting on 7th September. We are still looking for Road Representatives for Coniston Road, Calmont Road and the Beckenham Lane end of Ravensbourne Avenue.

Finally, we need more Committee members to take on the interesting and diverse opportunities and tasks to advance the scope and influence of the Society.

Yours sincerely,