

NEWSLETTER

4/2005 December 2005

SEASON'S GREETINGS

To all our readers



EDITORIAL

Every year about now, we distribute our bi-monthly Newsletter to each household in our area. The intention is to get it through everyone's letter box before Christmas and the New Year. This is also a good time to thank everyone who has supported the Society - actively or passively - over the past year.

Although the name of the Society sounds wide-ranging, we are in fact a residents' Association covering an area broadly bounded by London Road, Beckenham Lane, Downs Hill and the McDonalds at the end of Ashgrove Road. We aim to be a pressure group on issues which do or could affect us locally. That means that we deal with Councillors and Officers of both Bromley and Lewisham.

There have not been any really major issues over the year but a whole series of planning and transport matters have kept the officers and some Road reps busy. Also of course, Beckenham Place Park which continues, some 12 years after the public inquiry, to be ongoing with any long term solution still to be found.

Enclosed with this Newsletter for those residents who do not yet support us financially, is a green slip. If, after reading this issue you would like to join us, just fill in the slip and pop it through the letterbox of your Road Rep whose name is shown on the slip.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Thursday 5th January 2006 - Members' Meeting 8.00pm, Bromley Court Hotel.

Thursday 9th March 2006 - Annual General Meeting, 8.00pm Bromley Court Hotel.

All are welcome to any of our meetings, but please check the Hotel "activities" board to make sure that you go the right room.

Peter Pain (Editor)

TRANSPORT

Traffic Islands

Earlier in the year we noticed that a traffic island in London Road (A21) near the junction with Warner Road had been removed. Many members who catch the 208 bus for Bromley or visit the Londis shop in Warner Road found it a useful refuge when crossing the busy main road.

In an attempt to get it reinstated we contacted Bromley who referred us to Transport for London (part of the GLA) and we duly wrote them a letter. After several weeks without acknowledgement or reply we tried to enlist the aid of Bob Neill, the GLA member for Bromley and Bexley, again there was no response. Then to our surprise and pleasure one Sunday morning it was reinstated. A chat with the workmen doing the job threw no light on the matter - they didn't even realise that there had been one there before - although the evidence of resurfacing was clear enough.

Our best guess is that it was belated action to reduce traffic delays when lorries were delivering materials to a building site a few yards from the island. Belated because, by the time the removal took place, deliveries to the site had ceased.

Parking Oaklands Road

Following the completion of the Care Home at the junction between Oaklands Road and Grasmere Road we had hoped that the parking problems would get better - they did not. It is effectively single lane traffic between Grasmere Road and the junction with London Road. We approached Bromley asking for an extension of the Controlled Parking Zone to be considered but they had no funding available. We then asked that, as a minimum, that the yellow lines at the junction with Grasmere Road be extended to improve the lines of sight; this was also considered to be beyond their means. We returned to the attack in this financial year but received the same response. We intend to raise both matters again in the coming months in the hope that Council funds for 2006 will be adequate to meet the cost of about ten feet of yellow paint.

Shortlands Junction Traffic lights

Some years ago we pressed for better facilities for pedestrians who had to cross Beckenham Lane to get to or from Shortlands Station. Initially our arguments met with no positive response but ultimately the "sheep pen" arrangement at the bottom of Shortlands Road was installed with a pedestrian controlled crossing at the bottom of Bromley Road.

A further problem has emerged at this multiple junction which is caused by motorists jumping the red light at the junction of Station Road and Beckenham Lane. Not only does this make it difficult for cars attempting to turn right out of Ravensbourne Avenue, but can be very hazardous for pedestrians crossing Station Road. Initially we are writing to Bromley as Station Road is a minor road, although Transport For London may have to be involved later as they deal with main routes such as Beckenham Lane.

Traffic Wardens

Residents are reminded, for their own financial well-being, if nothing else, that the

Council's parking attendants have the power to levy penalties of up to £100 (£50 - if paid within 2 weeks) on motorists who park with any wheel on the footpath - unless this is allowed by signs or footpath markings.

Several residents have been fined even when their wheels were on the crossover to their own drive. Wardens have even tried to ticket a member who lives in an unmade, unadopted road for parking next to his front fence. Fortunately he spotted what was happening and accosted the warden. Eventually, after calls to his office, logic prevailed and the ticket was not issued. Had he not intervened however things would have been much more difficult.

BECKENHAM PLACE PARK

After Lewisham severed their relationship with their "preferred tenderer" for the future management of the park last year, they decided to commission yet another set of consultants to research management options and to make recommendations. The working Party was shown the consultants brief and it broadly reflected their views on the future of park management. In due course the consultants were chosen, interestingly, for the first time they actually consulted users of the park. Initially it was with organised groups like ourselves, the Friends and the Golf Clubs. Later they held several open days for the general public. By the middle of the year the consultants had written their report but Lewisham rejected it, as they felt it lacked clear options and conclusions. We have now received the rewritten document and met Lewisham officers to discuss it.

Some two thirds of the report restated much of the background given in the brief and relied fairly heavily on the earlier Management Plan which the Working Party produced some years ago. The results of the various consultations by the consultants added to the preliminaries.. Eventually they identified some 6 management options none of which really addressed the issue of investment in the Mansion and the Homesteads block. However this was attempted under "Funding Opportunities". Here various sources for restoration grants were identified and these, with one exception, were acceptable although probably most would be inadequate for the task. The unacceptable option was an approach from a group called "The Manor Building Preservation Trust". They wanted the freehold of the Mansion transferred to them for £1. They would then undertake the renovation and ongoing maintenance. In addition they made a commitment to provide the capital to reinstate the Stable Block and courtyard for community use.

Despite the attraction of a restored Stable Block, together with the rest of the Working Party members, we objected strongly to the concept of giving away the Mansion as it would represent the loss of an asset as well as any form of control over the building and its use. A further meeting will be held after Christmas.

PLANNING

Bromley Unitary Development Plan (UDP's)

These plans take into account central government guidance and set the scene for all developments in the borough. The plan, when approved by the Secretary of State becomes a statutory document.

Lewisham have completed their plan and after a public inquiry and subsequent revision it was approved by the Secretary of State. No sooner had this been done than central

government decided to simplify the system by introducing "Local Development Frameworks" (LDF). Lewisham have now started writing theirs.

Bromley are not so far advanced and have just published the modifications it proposes to make to the UDP including the decisions and reasons for the various modifications they propose to make to the recommendations of the Inspector sitting as she held last year's Public Inquiry into the matter. Any representations we may wish to make about these modifications will have to be with Bromley before Christmas. Bromley's consultation procedures on their LDF are being considered - here we go again!

Planning Applications (Bromley)

2, Crab Hill: This property is in the Downs Hill Conservation area and two applications were made to Bromley, firstly for 6 three bedroom apartments and then for 10 two bedroom apartments; both were refused by Bromley, both went to appeal and both appeals were dismissed. Since then there have been two further applications; one for 2 detached five bedroom houses and another for one five bedroom house. We objected to both. In the case of the 2 houses we considered them to be an over-development and the design was weak on detail. For the single house, we considered the drawings to be totally inadequate for a proper decision to be possible. Bromley have now approved the scheme for the 2 houses - with a considerable list of conditions. The single house proposal has been the subject of an appeal which has just been dismissed.

30, Downs Hill: An application to demolish the present house and replace it with a new detached 8 bedroom house was rejected by Bromley. A subsequent application for a 7 bedroom house which also addressed the objections to the first scheme regarding the need to park in the rear of the house, has been approved.

Telecom Masts - Shortlands Golf Course: Originally there were two applications, one by Vodafone followed by one by T-Mobile. Both proposals were for masts disguised as fire trees. Bromley refused both in turn but Vodafone appealed and won. Their "tree" is now in position. Encouraged by their competitor's success T-Mobile also lodged an appeal. Their mast would be slightly higher than the existing one. The option of companies sharing one mast in such circumstances is usually preferred by the planning system. However, a shared mast would have been significantly higher than the present one and much higher than the surrounding trees. We wrote objecting to both of the masts to both Bromley and later to the inspectors hearing the appeals. Our main reason being that the masts would compromise the designation of the golf course as "Metropolitan Open Land". In the case of the second mast we also expressed concern about proliferation. The T-Mobile appeal was disallowed by the Inspector on the grounds that a second mast in the area would be too much considering the fact that the site was designated MOL.

28a Highland Road: There have been 3 applications for this site which is part of the land belonging to the Reform Synagogue. The first, which was later withdrawn after letters of objection by ourselves and many others, was for three two bedroom

apartments. Then there came one for a semi-detached pair of three bedroom houses, which was rejected by Bromley as over-development of the site. We also felt strongly that it would have seriously overlooked the rear of houses in Farnaby Road which are at a lower level. The developer lodged an appeal which has recently been disallowed. In the meantime another application had been made, this was for a single house which had been designed so that no habitable room overlooked the neighbours in Farnaby Road. This would be much less damaging to the amenities of the neighbouring properties than the proposal which was the subject of the appeal and as such we had not objected to it in such strong terms. This option has been approved by Bromley.

48, Farnaby Road: This application was for a detached 3 bedroom house at the end of the garden of 48, Farnaby Road the site is however, only accessible from Madeira Avenue. The proposal would have resulted in serious loss of privacy for several properties in Farnaby Road and it was rejected by Bromley. An interesting aspect of this site is that a previous owner of 48, Farnaby retained ownership of this part of its garden when selling the house.

5 Ravensmead Road: This application was for a change of use of one of the Art Deco houses into a nursery school. A rear extension was proposed. We considered the proposal to be inappropriate to the area and a serious loss of amenity for the neighbours. The application was rejected by Bromley.

37, Ravensmead Road: This application was for a new house on a very narrow site in the garden of an existing house. We objected on the grounds of over-development. Bromley agreed and rejected the application.

100/102 Madeira Avenue: This recent application was for a four storey block of flats comprising fourteen 2 bedroom flats in place of the two existing detached houses on the site. The plan showed a large rectangular building with its lowest floor at the same level as the existing pavement and open at the front for car parking and the main entrance. The remainder of the 21 car parking spaces shown are outside in front of the building. Above this lowest level are three floors of flats. The site is steeply sloping up from the road and the building would require considerable excavation, as would the terraced garden behind which would also involve the loss of trees. These excavations could put the adjoining properties at risk. The proposal caused a great deal of concern in Madeira Avenue and nearby roads as it would be quite out of keeping with any of the properties in the vicinity. The Society wrote formally objecting and many residents also wrote to object. A well supported local petition against the flats was also submitted to Bromley. The proposal has been refused by Bromley.

So far there has been no appeal against the decision but it appears that the developer is considering various design options for seven town houses on the site, each with 4 bedrooms. They have written to us asking for our opinion on the arrangement of these on the site. There would be little to choose between them - both options suggested take up the whole of the width of the plot and would involve deep excavations right up to each side boundary similar to those of the previous scheme. These excavations understandably caused great concern to the adjoining properties when proposed before. These concerns would still be valid. We are considering our response.

8. 12 & 14 Highland Road: In fact this is 2 separate very recent applications made by the same developer and affecting 3 existing detached family houses which would be demolished. It would also affect no. 10 Highland Road as part of its rear garden would be taken for car parking. The combined capacity of the 2 applications would be 22 dwellings - of which 4 would have single bedrooms and the rest would be 2 bedroom flats.. Bearing in mind other recent development proposals in this part of Highland Road, this amounts to a significant invasion and would signal major future changes to the character of the street similar to those which we have seen in such roads as Oaklands Road, Foxgrove Road and The Avenue, Beckenham. We feel another letter of objection coming on!

ENVIRONMENT

Fly tipping / Graffiti / Abandoned Cars / Refuse Collection

We make no apology for returning to this subject as fly tipping and graffiti in particular create eyesores which, if not tackled can very quickly lead to more and destroy the appearance of local roads. Fly tipping is an offence and the person doing it faces prosecution and an unlimited fine. If a householder lets someone else take away their rubbish and that person fly tips, the householder is liable. The only safe way is to make sure that whoever takes it away is registered as a "waste carrier" with the Environment Agency. Alternatively, take it to the Waste and Recycling Centres at Waldo Road or Churchfields Road yourself. Since it has been reorganised, Waldo Road is much easier to use and the queues are much shorter.

If you have a problem with fly tipping, graffiti, abandoned cars or refuse collection telephone 020 8313 4557 or E-mail bromley.gov.uk/heatstreet

Christmas Refuse collections

Bromley households should receive a copy of Waste & Recycling News sometime in December. Most waste collections will go back a day over the Christmas period - EXCEPT - when the normal collection day is Monday - in these cases there will be no collection until Tuesday 3rd January. So, for many local roads the last collection before Christmas will be Monday 19th December and the first collection after Christmas will be Tuesday 3rd January - 2 weeks later.

Street and Footpath Cleaning

The following item has been contributed by Clive Lees the Road Rep for Warren Avenue / Calmont Road / Ashgrove Road et al:-

For the last six months Bromley has had new arrangements for cleaning streets in our area, these should now be cleaned according to the following schedule - subject to the proviso below.

Roads cleaned weekly

Monday	Highland Road, Oaklands Road, Warren Ave.
Tuesday	Coniston Road
Wednesday	Crab Hill Ravensbourne Avenue
Friday	Farnaby Road

Roads cleaned fortnightly

Monday	Downs Hill
Tuesday	Brackenhill Lane, Bromley Avenue, Grasmere Road, Hawkshead Close, Ravensmead Road, Spencer Road
Wednesday	Elstree Hill, Madeira Avenue.

However, in the first instance the Contractor will inspect the street and if he deems it acceptable he will not sweep it in that week / fortnight. Clearly this can lead to unacceptable collections of litter both on pavements and in gutters. If this occurs, you can telephone the Council's Customer Service Centre on 020 8313 4557 and they should immediately pass on the complaint to the contractor. The contractor will then make a particular inspection of the road and, if in his opinion the road is dirty, it will be cleaned on the next scheduled date. If the contractor thinks the road is acceptable, it will not be cleared on the next scheduled date but will be re-inspected prior to the next scheduled date after that - and so on! This procedure can obviously result in unacceptable situations where residents think a road needs sweeping while the contractor does not. Further, by missing just one date, some roads may not be swept for a month and with autumn leaves falling this could lead to very dirty roads. If a road has repeated complaints however, the situation will be investigated by the Council and if the contractor is found to be failing in his duty he will be issued with a default notice which may result in a financial penalty.

An appropriate strategy for keeping your street cleaned may be to report untidiness the day before the scheduled sweeping. This should ensure the best possible chance that the road will, in fact, be swept.

With regard to fouling by animals; if this is reported to the Council, they say it should be cleaned up that day. If there is a repeated problem with fouling, residents can request additional lamp post signs for the relevant area by telephoning the Council and quoting the number of the lamp post (each post has its own number).

Extra litter bins can also be requested for litter hot-spots, again quoting a lamp post number. Finally - make every effort to put out rubbish for collection at the last minute to reduce the possibility of foxes attacking it and making a mess. Otherwise use old fashioned dust bins rather than the more vulnerable bin liners.

For roads in Lewisham Borough:

According to Lewisham your streets and pavements should be cleaned each Tuesday and Thursday. If not, please ring Lewisham on 8314 7171.

COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Since our millennium project of marking the line of the Greenwich Meridian in Farnaby Road, we have provided seats at 2 bus stops and have funded projects at the Valley School. Our current project there is the funding of a mural for the playground. The children have prepared designs which we have been asked to judge.

The winner's idea will form the basis of the final design - which will be carried out by the children - under the direction of a member of staff.

R.V.P.S. OFFICERS (December 2005)

Chairman	Elizabeth Davies, 12 Ravensmead Road, BR2 OBT
Vice Chairman	Peter Pain, 74 Madeira Avenue, BR1 4AS
Secretary	Tom Griffin, 9 The Chestnuts, Oaklands Rd. BR1 3SJ
Treasurer	Brian Sanders, 41 Farnaby Road, BR1 4BL
Auditor	Wally Carlross, 28a Parkhill Road, BR2 OLF
Planning Officer-Bromley	Leslie Tucker, 5 Bromley Avenue, BR1 4BG
Planning Officer-Lewisham	Paul Bennett, 12 Elstree Hill, BR1 4JE
Membership Secretary	Paul Bennett, 12 Elstree Hill, BR1 4JE
Newsletter Editor	Peter Pain, 74 Madeira Avenue, BR1 4AS
Railway Rep.	George Hodson, 20 Ravensbourne Avenue
Roads & Traffic Rep.	Arthur Barwell, 14 Grasmere Road, BR1 4BA
Tree Warden	Arthur Barwell, 14 Grasmere Road, BR1 4BA
LBBRF Delegate	
Police Consultative Com. Rep.	Elizabeth Davies, 12 Ravensmead Road, BR2 OBT
BPP Joint Working Party Rep.	Peter Pain, 74 Madeira Avenue, BR1 4AS
Hon. Legal Advisor	Richard Thomas, 118 Ravensbourne Ave, BR2 OAX

ROAD REPRESENTATIVES

Bromley Ave./Karen Ct./ Grasmere / Highland Rds. Brackenhill Lane	Leslie Tucker, 5 Bromley Avenue, BR1 4BG
Coniston Rd / Ullswater & Hawkshead Closes	Barbara Price, 85 Coniston Road, BR1 3BZ
Downs Hill / Crab Hill	Barbara Brown, 34 Downs Hill, BR3 5HB
Elstree Hill / Erin Close / Hillbrow	Roger Legg, 39 Madeira Avenue, Bromley BR1 4AP
Farnaby Rd (1-108)	Audrey Burford, 90 Farnaby Road, BR1 4BH
Farnaby Rd (109 +)	Maureen Johnson, 69 Farnaby Road, BR1 4BN
Madeira Avenue	Brian Atkinson, 94 Madeira Avenue, BR1 4AS
Oaklands / Spencer Rds.	Daphne Robeson, 2 Lynton Court, London Rd.
Ravensbourne Ave. (evens)	Ann Rowswell, 164 Ravensbourne Avenue, BR2 OAY
Ravensbourne Ave. (odds)	Ann Freiter, 128 Ravensbourne Avenue, BR2 OAX
Ravensmead Road	Elizabeth Davies 12 Ravensmead Road, BR2 OBT
Warren Ave./Calmont Rd / Ashgrove Rd./Belgravia Gdns	Clive Lees, 38 Warren Avenue, BR1 4BS