

Consolidated Officers' Reports for 2024 Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Chair's Report for last 12 months

When I agreed to become Chair of RVR it was with the proviso that we search for a more appropriate person to take on the role. My intention to relinquish this post was announced at the 2023 AGM but until recently, no one had come forward.

I am delighted that we may have found my replacement in Margaret Brearley. Margaret and her husband have only lived in the area for a couple of years but already they have opened up their house to RVR members and Margaret has been an active member of the community ever since she arrived. Margaret was proposed, and seconded, at the last RVR meeting on 4th January 2024. We await the results of the election of officers at the 2024 AGM but, in my view, RVR would be privileged to have her as our new Chair - I know the Association would thrive under her leadership.

I was told that becoming Chair didn't involve doing very much at all, apart from chairing the members meetings. That is true but I did a little beyond that and have done my best to help out on some of the more practical activities such as the amazing work carried out by our equally amazing and hard-working Street Friends guru - Monica Wiltshire.

Only a few weeks ago Monica arranged a Ravensbourne River wading day. Great fun. And what is more, the Project Manager for the river renewal project- Catriona Ross - is going to give a presentation at our AGM. I am sorry that I will miss this but I will be riding my bike in southern Arizona that week! We had an earlier diarised date for a river wading but inclement weather meant we were unable to do that (as you probably know the Ravensbourne turns into quite a torrent when it rains). Litter-picking is another activity (again organised by Monica) that has blossomed during the last 12 months and 10 to 15 people regularly smarten up our roads with litter pickers and plastic bags in hand.

I think I've managed to attend all last year's Safer Neighbourhood Panel meetings and I am pleased to be joined there by 2 other RVR members, Terry Richardson and Andrew Lancaster. They are usually quite lively affairs and the presence of local police and PCSO officers makes for some interesting conversations. The other nice thing about those meetings is that they provide some light refreshments.

Back in the Summer I participated in a park 'fun run' in Queensmead and was delighted to be joined by all our local councillors and local Member of Parliament, Sir Bob Neil. There were more spectators than fun runners on the day but it was still a nice little gathering and it is good that the RVR has used some of its funds to support the Queensmead recreation park rejuvenation project (if that is the correct word?). Recently I had the pleasant task of handing over the RVR cheque to the project manager at the Civic Centre. There is a photo of me doing that in the February 2024 newsletter.

RVR has also contributed some financial support to AFC Shortlands and their plans to have a defibrillator placed in the park.

I have been privileged to meet up with Mike Ricketts, Chair of Shortlands Residents Association on a number of occasions and we have had some good chats about how our associations should work together. I am pleased that this is happening and I am particularly pleased that our meetings tend to take place in the Shortlands Tavern!

And talking of Shortlands, I think we have made a very good move in now having our members meetings at Shortlands Golf Club. They have made us very welcome there. It's a good venue at a slightly lower price than the Bromley Court Hotel.

I would like to thank everyone for their support during my 2-year tenure as Chair. I am conscious that while the Chair may be the focal point at meetings it is the folk who work 'behind the scenes' who actually do most of the hard work. The RVR would simply not exist were it not for these people. Euan and Jacqueline between them seem to make most things happen. I've already mentioned Monica Wiltshire but her husband Dave also keeps our finances afloat. Clive Lees continues to be a hugely effective planning officer while Andrew Lancaster heads up our very proactive Road Safety working group. In fact Shortlands RA is currently setting up its own version of this and asked us (well Andrew really) how it is done.

I'm not going to name everyone who works on behalf of our local area - all do a great job - particularly the road reps. That is one job I haven't been able to offload in the 10 plus years I've been doing it! The nice thing about being a road rep is that you tend to get to know most of your neighbours and that has to be a good thing (most of the time!).

I'm sure I have missed things out but please forgive me. Tricia and I have 7 grandchildren (at the last count) and that is one of the reasons I am stepping down. Our children and their offspring are scattered around different parts of the British Isles and we seem to be becoming a greater source of babysitting support for those little ones! Hence attendance at RVR meetings is becoming more of a challenge.

And I suppose I can't sign off without giving a little plug to my book which was published last year. I know some of you have already kindly bought and read it but if you haven't.....it is available on Amazon . It's called The Truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth....so help me. By Peter E Saunders. Fortis Publishing.

I look forward to assisting our new Chair and the RVR in any way I can.

Thank You

Pete Saunders

Treasurer's Report for last 12 months

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER 2023

	2023	2022
INCOME	£	£
Members' subscriptions	2194.00	2105.00
LBB Madeira Ave Street Party	150.00	0.00
Interest from NS&I account	4.93	0.53
TOTAL	<u>2348.93</u>	<u>2105.53</u>
EXPENDITURE		
Photocopying & Printing	1313.94	827.90
Office supplies	0.00	212.92
Scanning	0.00	100.00
Postage	0.00	7.60
Internet costs	146.85	164.24
Meeting room hire (inc £150 for Jan 2024)	855.00	558.14
AGM	175.00	0.00
Insurance	151.84	151.84
Community Projects	50.00	564.00
Madeira Ave Street Party	150.00	0.00
Miscellaneous (road rep sandwiches)	38.00	367.82
TOTAL	<u>2880.63</u>	<u>2954.96</u>
DEFICIT	(deficit) <u>531.70</u>	(deficit) <u>849.43</u>

BALANCE SHEET

As at 31st December 2023

	2023	2022
GENERAL RESERVE	£	£
Balance at 1 st January	10216	11065
Deficit/Surplus for year	(deficit) 532	(deficit) 849
Balance at 31 st December	<u>9684</u>	<u>10216</u>
ASSETS		
Cash at National Savings & Investment Account	5301	5296
Santander Current Account	3510	4036
Cash in hand	873	884
	<u>9684</u>	<u>10216</u>

Signed by the Hon. Treasurer:

(David Wiltshire)

Date:

Signed by the Chair:

(Peter Saunders)

Date:

Report by Auditor:

I have obtained all the information I consider necessary to audit these accounts. The Income and Expenditure Account and the Balance Sheet agree with the accounting records and give a true and fair view of the Deficit for the Society's financial year ending 31st December 2023 and the state of its affairs as at that date.

Signed by the Hon. Auditor:

(Alan Williams)

Date:

Treasurer's Statement

On the Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2023

There was an overall deficit for the year of £532 and the General Reserve was thereby decreased to £9684

On the receipts side:

Subscriptions received for the year were at £2194.00.

Payments direct to Santander via 'Electronic transfer' at £1255.00 represents 57% of income for the year, which is increasing each year.

Interest from National Savings and Investment Account at £4.93 for the year was automatically added to that account.

On the expenditure side:

There has been a slight decrease in expenditure as compared to 2022 at £2905.

Much of the costs revolved around printing costs at £1314 and hire of meeting rooms at £1030. In addition, having to pay for our January meeting here at Shortlands Golf Club a month before the meeting in December 2023. In addition £150 received from the London Borough of Bromley was paid for the Madeira Avenue Street Party and there was an overpayment of £25 subs.

The 2023 accounts have been audited and passed by Mr Alan Williams.

At £9684 the General Reserve remains in a very healthy state and the Society is committed to seek opportunities to spend much of this reserve to support local projects and charities.

As such, there is no requirement to increase our income and I therefore recommend that the present level of subscriptions, at £5 per household, be maintained with senior citizens and members in special financial circumstances subscribing as they feel appropriate.

Planning Officer's Report for last 12 months

Shortlands Village Conservation Area

In the last year we have clearly seen how the Conservation Area designation is impacting on developments.

On the one hand we can see a clear trend emerging in how the council's planning department makes decisions in the context of the Conservation Area and how these are supported by the Planning Inspectorate when planning refusals are taken to appeal. In particular, 'hip to gable' roof extensions are not, in general, going to be permitted and appeal decisions at both 18 and 100 Ravensbourne Avenue demonstrate this.

On the other hand, residents/developers do not yet appear to be fully aware of what the Conservation Area designation means for developments that would normally be permitted development. For example, we are aware of a number of cases where doors and/or windows have been replaced (normally allowed without fuss, under permitted development) but which are now under investigation by the council on account of the replacements not being appropriate for the Conservation Area.

Planning enforcement

We continue to see cases where developers fail to build in accordance with their approved plans (for example 13 Madeira Avenue and 18 Ravensbourne Avenue) or build without any permission at all (100 Ravensbourne Avenue and 79 Coniston Road). We also see a steady stream of cases where Conditions are not complied with, a particular example being 61 The Avenue where 80 plus trees and shrubs have not been replaced as required. We can't emphasize enough that owners and developers should get advice before embarking on any project and as ever, we stand ready to give guidance to members.

We also currently have two active S215 (untidy site) cases where the council is seeking to improve the appearance of the site. One of these is The Chalet in Kirkstone Way and the other is in Farnaby Road.

Planning Applications

The most significant planning application this year has been in Hillbrow Road where two proposals for a block of flats have been refused by the council. At the time of writing, the matter has gone quiet but an appeal is possible and a further application is almost certain.

Planning permission was refused for a proposed pair of 4-bedroom dwellings at 14 Highland Road. This would have set a very unwelcome precedent if it had been approved.

Planning permission was also refused at 2 Warren Avenue - the third such submission at this site. It is likely that the future of this much loved and unique property has now been secured.

On the other side of things, building is currently in progress at 2 Bromley Avenue. Time will tell whether the outcome is acceptable.

Finally, our Planning Officer was awarded the Wilkinson Cup in November for 'outstanding contributions to planning in the local community'. This means that he has not annoyed the Council too much in the last year!

Street Friends Report 2024

We have had another enjoyable year meeting as a group 6 times with individual litter picking in between time. Our work continues to focus around litter picking and clearing overgrowth from fences, pathways and pavements. A new area this year was in Madeira Avenue near Highland Road and after 5 bags were filled you could walk along the pavement without walking into branches. We plan to do more bulb planting this autumn. Sessions usually start with a coffee at Ravensbourne station.

A new venture this year was a river clean up on 6th February led by Catriona Ross, Beckenham Place Park Engagement Officer and James Allen, Lead Ranger Beckenham Place Park. Full size waders and poles were provided and we took our own litter pickers. We meandered carefully down the river which in some places was shallow and others nearly waist high. In addition to a relatively small amount of litter we removed a supermarket trolley and microwave from the river.

I continue to work as a mentor in litter picking on the Duke of Edinburgh Award, this year for a student from Newstead Woods School on the Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award and for 3 students from Harris Academy on the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award. Our youngest litter picker has been a 10 year old daughter of an RVR member. For our next session on Sunday 24th March at 2.00 pm we hope children and grandchildren will come along too.

We continue to attend the quarterly meetings for Street Friends with the London Borough of Bromley and Veolia, the next one is on Friday 19th April 4.00 – 5.30 pm.

Roads & Traffic Group report

Traffic issues in the area which have given rise to increased levels of concern in respect of road safety, parking and traffic movements through our streets have continued to rank high on the minds of residents. Whilst the Group only held one formal meeting (May), members have continued to be actively involved in various issues through the year, amongst them:-

- residential streets being used as “rat runs”, involving high volumes of traffic, speed and poor driver behaviour along, for example, Bromley Avenue, Calmont Road, Crab Hill, Foxgrove Road, Ravensbourne Avenue;
- parking in Ravensbourne Avenue (specifically the unadopted section);
- parking across residents’ driveways on Farnaby Rd by parents of pupils at Valley School;
- sight line problem at the junction of Madeira Avenue and Highland Road;
- concern regarding the Shortlands Road traffic lights at the junction with Bromley Road as instances have been noted of vehicles passing through the left filter even though it shows red, placing at risk the safety of pedestrians using the light-operated crossing;
- engagement with the police, especially through the Community Road Watch scheme and the Safer Neighbourhood Ward panel.

The London Borough of Bromley (“LBB”) has had public consultations, in which residents have been encouraged to participate, in respect of:-

- a zebra crossing in Station Road – installed later during the year;
- amendments to the junction of Farnaby Road and Beckenham Lane – outcome awaited.

Unfortunately, our proposal for a traffic Quiet Zone to reduce rat-running was dismissed by LBB as it was viewed as being tantamount to the creation of a Low Traffic Neighbourhood (“LTN”), with LTNs and camera enforcement being contrary to LBB’s Traffic & Road Safety policies. Whilst naturally disappointed by this response, this matter has merely been “parked” for the moment as opposed to dropped altogether.

During the year LBB approved the installation of a roundabout at the Foxgrove Road/Park Road/Southend Road junction, although the timing for completion of this project is currently unclear as there are problems regarding underground cables owned by Virgin Media. Once completed, however, we will be liaising with our counterparts from the Copers Cope Area Residents Association to assess whether traffic movements through our residential streets have increased and whether any additional action is required to enhance safety.

A roundabout at the junction of Albemarle Road/Westgate Road has also been agreed by LBB although funding is awaited.

As the year progressed it seems that the RVR area received a little more coverage by way of vehicle speed checks although the police still seem to struggle to meet the minimum 2 per month per ward official police speed checks promised by the London Mayor, ostensibly due to the police being redeployed on other duties within the wider Metropolitan Police area.

Some RVR members have, however, been able to join the Community Road Watch programme (run under the auspices of Transport for London), assisting PCSOs with vehicle speed checks in several parts of the borough, including Farnaby Road and Foxgrove Road.

The Road Safety Group is committed to continuing throughout 2024 the investigation of traffic problem issues and making proposals for the improvement of the life of residents within the RVR area. We look forward to working with our LBB Councillors and the Police in achieving this aim.

If residents have any specific concerns which they wish to draw to the attention of the Group these can be submitted by email to roadsandtransport.rvr@outlook.com

Beckenham Place Park report

Progress continues since November last year to the East side of the Park. The playground is shaping up and foundation for the Café. The large retention pond is full due to the latest rain. Trees have been felled and the riverbank is emerging from the brambles.

I went to the Community Day in April last year with various stalls and activities on Lake such as paddle-boarding being promoted. There was a bike check stall and WWF and nature walks too. Community gardeners sold me a plant and some honey.

Usually there are Park-led walks throughout the year, and Saturday morning Fun runs.

In March there was a Food and Farmers market and in April “So Last Century” vintage clothing returned and furniture as well. A new idea “Books in the Park” was doing a brisk business.

Come the summer months more outside Sunset screenings in the Courtyard and the Dog show, always a crowd pleaser was postponed until September due to extremely hot weather.

Vinyl records of 70’s and 80’s music held a ticketed park disco, and will return again.

Hospitality in the Woods staged their annual event in September of music and with careful planning there was little ambient noise and few complaints. Another concert or two due this August.