

## **Thank you RVPS**

We should like to publically thank RVPS and in particular Clive Lees, planning officer (East), for their unflagging support in the case to protect our two oak trees. This was heard at the Development Control Committee on 7<sup>th</sup> January and won with a 13:1 majority vote.

WE HAVE NO DOUBT that this could not have been achieved without the support of RVPS and it shows the absolute importance of such an organisation. They have served as advocates at a time of need. It was a great shock to us to be shown by our neighbour the planning application to remove the tree preservation orders and fell our oak trees at the front of our property in October 2012 - we were never sent this letter! This was followed by many threatening letters from the insurance company's agent including liability threats; poor communication from a Council employee who from our point of view did a good job for the insurance company; DNA testing; deferment at two sub-plans committees and finally presenting the case to the Development Control Committee.

Throughout this two year period RVPS stuck with us either leading or following, added clarity in all the confusion, linked us to councillors and the workings of the London Borough of Bromley's structures and systems; unravelled important details and critically analysed reports, including the independent report commissioned by Bromley at the request of the second sub-plans committee meeting in September 2013. It was a tall order to take on for which we will always be grateful.

This is a victory indeed. Not just for us in preserving the status quo of our property, but also for the street scene in Beckenham which makes it a nice place to live. It is very gratifying to have been understood by the Development Control Committee in Bromley who have now used our case to set a precedent that mature trees will not be randomly felled at the behest of an insurance company for totally the wrong reason. Hopefully Bromley is leading the way and this will spread to other London Boroughs giving them sufficient weight to stand up to the bullying tactics of insurance companies and preserve the beauty of mature trees in our environment.

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