

NEWSLETTER

5/2008

October 2008



EDITORIAL

Quite a few things have happened on various fronts since the last Newsletter and it is timely to bring members up to date.

Firstly, in the last Newsletter we sought a new Planning Officer for the part of our area within Lewisham as Paul Bennett wished to stand down. Happily we have a volunteer. He is Mike Mielniczek who lives in Ravensbourne Avenue. If anyone in the Lewisham part of our area has any problem on planning issues, he can be contacted by telephone on 8460 4330 or by e-mail on mike_mielniczek@hotmail.com

For those of you who do not attend our meetings regularly, our new chairman has settled in as to the manner born - of course he has previous experience - the meetings are running very smoothly.

Dates for the Diary

Thursday 6th November 2008 Members' Meeting, 8.0pm at Bromley Court Hotel.

Thursday 8th January 2009 Members' Meeting, 8.00pm at Bromley Court Hotel.

As usual check the hotel's activities board as, depending on the hotel's bookings, our room may be changed from the usual Ravensbourne Suite.

Peter Pain (Editor)

POLICING

In the last issue we referred to the "Safer Neighbourhood Team" for our area. At the last Safer Neighbourhood Panel meeting at which Daphne Robeson is our representative, it was reported that:-

They continue to patrol the town centre and parks on a daily basis, they always include Church House Gardens which is a robbery hot-spot. They also stop potential suspects and advise potential victims. The team were also involved in the London-wide Operation Blunt where railway stations are targeted using knife search teams and drugs dogs. Immigration, transport and revenue officers were also involved.

On a lighter note, during the summer they had 4 stands in the Pavilion Leisure Centre when they gave youngsters advice on personal safety and crime prevention; at the same time offering to mark their mobile phones and other property with ultra violet pens,

To refresh your memories, their telephone numbers are 020 8721 2857 or mobile 07887 826 502. They emphasise that 999 should always be used if there is any danger or risk to life or if a crime is in progress. The Metropolitan Police have recently introduced a new non-emergency contact number - 0300 123 1212.

PLANNING

8 Madeira Avenue: A third application has been submitted for flats on this site. The first was for a 5 storey block of 9, 2 bed flats which was withdrawn. Then came an application for a 4 storey block of 7, 2 bed flats which was refused by Bromley. The latest is still for a 4 storey block but with 4, 2 bed flats. The main reason for the fewer flats is that the below ground flats of the previous application have now been omitted. However, we consider that it would still be an over development of the site with poor amenity and living space for the occupants. It is also much nearer to the street and, being on a curve in the road, would over-dominate the streetscape. Being the only 4 storey building in Madeira Avenue it would not only be out of character but would also create a precedent for other flatted developments.

La Capannina, Grasmere Road: This site is near the junction with Highland Road and is a bungalow between Cameron House and Townend Court. A further application has been made for a block of flats. This time for 7 flats in a 4 storey development. We, and local residents have objected prior to the Plans Sub-Committee meeting on 23rd October at which the proposal was resoundingly rejected after virtually no debate.

17, Spencer Road: The third application to build a house on the end of a terrace of town houses was permitted. This was disappointing but at least, it was an improvement on the earlier application.

113 Foxgrove Road: This is on the border of the Downs Hill Conservation Area. The first proposal was refused by Bromley and refused on appeal. The second submission was also refused by Bromley and has gone to appeal. That appeal will be an "Informal Hearing" on 4th December at 10am in one of the Council Committee rooms. A third application was submitted and, contrary to expectations, Bromley refused it. Technically this may be seen as a "perverse" decision. Very great efforts were made by the Conservation Area residents to organise opposition and Councillor Wells of Copers Cope Ward also spoke cogently against it. Inevitably an appeal has been lodged.

14 Highland Road: This is a locally listed building. The first application for a flank and rear extension to create 9, 2 bed flats was refused by Bromley and an appeal was lodged. That appeal will be heard as an "Informal Hearing" on 16th December in one of the Council Committee rooms. A second application was submitted before the appeal was heard. It was still for 9 flats but with no side extension and a larger one at the rear. This application was also considered by the Plans Sub-committee on 23rd October but was narrowly approved after much discussion.

Billingsford, Elstree Hill: The front wall of this property is too high and was built without permission. Subsequently the owner made an application for a reduced height wall. That was approved subject to the reduction being made by 30th August. It did not happen. However, the owner has apparently changed his mind and we understand that he has advised the Council that a revised further application will be made soon. If it is not, the Council will be taking enforcement action to reduce the height of the wall.

The owner is also in conflict with the Council over a side extension, barbeque and dining area. A retrospective permission for this had been refused and it should have been demolished by 10th August under an Enforcement Notice. Again, it did not happen. The Council has agreed a stay of execution provided that a new revised application is submitted very shortly. We await developments.

75, Calmont Road: Following a threat of enforcement by Lewisham, skips are no longer being parked alongside this property in Hillbrow. The notice in the front garden advertising bathroom replacement services has also gone.

Bromley Town Centre Regeneration Plan: This plan which has been the subject of two earlier public consultations has been revised and copies can be seen in libraries and at the Planning Enquiry desk in the Civic Centre. It will be considered, together with any changes following the public consultation, by the full Council in the Spring of 2009.

COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Queen's Mead / Martin's Hill & Ravensbourne River

The Environment Agency have commissioned a feasibility study by Arup to improve the section of the river downstream from the mill pond off Glassmill Lane to the culverted section under Shortlands Village. Their initial proposals are:-

- Remove the weir at the pond, dredge it and introduce fresh planting plus wildlife observation areas.

- Open up the culvert in Glassmill Lane and make it more natural with a footpath partially over the revealed river.

- They listed 4 options for the part of the river crossing Queen's Mead. The one favoured by Arups is to retain the existing channel and also create a new meandering channel within the left bank flood plane with ecological variety and observation points.

Two of the other options included either the retention of the eastern wall of the river channel and divert the river to a more meandering line or remove the existing concrete channel entirely and create a meandering route for the river.

A meeting is to be arranged to discuss these proposals involving Bromley, the Environment Agency, the Friends of Bromley Parks and Gardens and ourselves. Whilst the principles of the scheme are generally welcome there will be a number of details which will require discussion. A lottery grant will have to be applied for - even if this is successful, nothing will happen on site for some time.

Flood Defences Ravensbourne Avenue: The Environment Agency has written to a series of properties backing onto the river seeking permission to inspect the earlier GLC inspired flood defences at the end of these gardens. The purpose is to identify what is, or is not, there and to assess the extent of Japanese knotweed. Future action will depend on what is found.

BECKENHAM PLACE PARK

As the public consultation on the future of the park is taking longer than expected the next Working Party meeting date is still uncertain. The Consultant's report is not expected until 7th November - and could be later. Despite assurances that all residents abutting the park would be included in the consultation process, as far as we can tell Lewisham only sent the questionnaire to Beckenham Library.

Recently Lewisham decided to enlarge the old "burning ground" just west of the bridge over the railway to take all of the green waste from their parks and gardens throughout the borough. Unfortunately there was no consultation with either the Friends of the Park or the Working Party. The old burning ground is not an easy place to get to and Lewisham intend that transit type cage vans will enter by the gate in Beckenham Hill Road and use narrow tarmac and unsurfaced paths to reach the area. There are potential problems with this use and the access arrangements.