

NEWSLETTER

3/2009

April 2009



EDITORIAL

The AGM was well attended but, regrettably, none of our Councillors for Bromley Town Ward came.

Our guest speaker this year was Councillor Michael Tickner who is Councillor for Copers Cope Ward (part of which is in our area). More importantly from our point of view was his length of experience as a Councillor. His talk fell into four parts; Planning, the effects of the recession on Bromley, his time as Mayor and his present role as Chairman of the Audit Committee which scrutinises all aspects of Council business.

Planning: He was emphatic that his policy was never to speak at a Plans Sub-Committee in support of developers despite many requests to do so. All too often developers were keen to maximise profits regardless of the effect their proposals would have on the neighbourhood. He emphasised that over the last five years less than half of the planning permissions granted had resulted in new homes being built. This meant that Bromley was more than fulfilling its obligation to grant permissions so that centrally imposed housing targets could be met. However some house builders were simply not building - even before the recession began to bite. Unfortunately that was something to which some Planning Inspectors were not giving due weight.

Turning to the recession he stressed that Bromley was keeping the Council Tax bill as low as possible. Recognising that there will be an impact on many individuals, Bromley also gives support to the three Citizens' Advice Bureaux and there were other projects in hand which had not been finalised. (a recent announcement in the News Shopper refers to an information and advice day at the Central Library which will also be accessible on-line. The subjects to be covered are: money matters and benefits; housing; energy efficiency; health & fitness; getting back into employment; and sustaining your business.)

Finally he dealt with the separate, but rewarding, experience of being Mayor - a non political role - opening fetes etc. hosting visiting dignitaries and supporting local charities. Transparency and value for money are the watchwords for his current position as Chairman of the Audit Committee.

At the end the questions came thick and fast until the break for refreshments. Councillor Tickner also stayed on for the AGM.

The main decisions taken at the AGM were:

- Subscriptions remain at £5 per household with Senior Citizens and members in special financial difficulty subscribing as they thought fit.
- Our finances remain healthy and the continuation of community projects was confirmed.

- All the present officers of Chairman, Secretary and Auditor were prepared to stand again and were re-elected.
- Following the sad death of Miss Frenkel, which we reported in the last Newsletter, we understand that the policy of the hotel Management Board toward us will be unchanged. Our thanks to Miss Frenkel and the Management Board for their loyal support were strongly endorsed and recorded.
- Clive Lees has created a web site for the Society. It covers a range of subjects such as - planning matters, views of the local area, general household information, Councillors, MP's, emergency contact numbers and more. It can be accessed on <http://rvps.synthasite.com>

Volunteers Wanted

We need volunteers for two Road Representatives and a Roads and Traffic Representative..

Firstly the Road Reps. In essence both jobs involve delivering 5 Newsletters a year and collecting subscriptions once a year.

Following Jon Casey's decision to stand down, his roads have been taken over by Linda Muller who is also Membership Secretary. This means that Linda's previous roads need a new representative. The roads are Calmont and Ashgrove Roads and Belgravia Gardens. Compared with some this is a very light load of about 20+ members.

The second one is Daphne Robeson's roads. After two falls, one of which broke her elbow, and the other caused lacerations, Daphne has decided to hand the job on. Her roads are Oakland and Spencer Roads with some 25 members - again one of the lighter Road Rep loads.

If no one volunteers it is not clear how these roads will be represented or their Newsletters be delivered.

I hope someone cares enough about their road to take on these not very onerous jobs.

Finally, after Jon Casey stood down we no longer have a *Roads and Traffic Representative*. As those who have read previous Newsletters will know, to date this has not been a very big job. What it does need however is someone who, after drawing the attention of the officers in Bromley's Highways Dept. to a problem, will follow it up when nothing appears to be happening. In short, a non-progress chaser.

Jon Casey will make available his earlier correspondence and e-mails and Clive Lees can give contact names and numbers of the Highways people he has dealt with as a result of planning applications.

So come on - no false modesty, please volunteer. Your Society needs you!

Dates for the Diary:

Thursday 7th May - Members' Meeting, 8.00pm, Bromley Court Hotel

Thursday 2nd July - Members' Meeting, 8.00pm, Bromley Court Hotel

Peter Pain (Editor)

PLANNING

8 Madeira Avenue: The Informal Appeal Hearing was held on the second of April. Our Planning Officer and Vice Chairman, with the support of many local residents made it clear that we were against the development. However we were left with the feeling that the Inspector was leaning towards the developer. The result should be available late April / early May.

10 Madeira Avenue: The occupants have applied for permission to add a storey to part of the existing building. As the property is set up the hillside and is well screened, subject to a closer look at the plans and consultation with nearby members, this may not be a problem.

17, Spencer Road: An application has been made to add a flank garage to the recently approved addition to a terrace of town houses. It could be argued that this would restore the balance of the terrace. Again our views will be decided after a closer look at the plans and local consultation.

Billingford, Elstree Hill: Bromley have imposed an enforcement notice requiring the reduction in height of the front and side walls. We understood that the notice to act has expired but nothing has happened. Watch this space (or wall).

33-35, Farnaby Road: We have objected to an inappropriate application to erect a hanging sign on a pole by the front garden wall of this Care Home. A better solution in a residential area would be either a sign on the house itself or at low level in the garden.

ROADS & TRAFFIC

Crab Hill / Ravensbourne Avenue: Work is nearly complete on the work of making up Crab Hill. Ravensbourne Avenue will follow immediately afterwards. As yet there is no news about any diversion of the 354 bus route.

New Beckenham Station: members who may use this station for access to London Bridge, or other stations on the route, should be aware that Bromley is proposing parking restrictions and/or meters on all of the nearby roads.

POLICING

The Safer Neighbourhood Team continue to be active. They have been liaising with Transport Police who now have an office at Bromley South and later this year they plan to have an office at Shortlands station. They are actively promoting the Neighbourhood Watch scheme, helping to create new ones and making regular visits to Watch Coordinators.

The Team sergeant and two constables have now been trained to use Laser speed guns and would like feedback on any problem roads.

ENVIRONMENTAL

If any members are having problems with refuse collection, including recycling boxes, the following telephone number should get better results than calling Bromley's Help Desk: - John Bosley, Waste Contracts manager 020 8313 4852 - or e-mail John.Bosley@bromley.gov.uk

The equivalent contact for Street Cleaning problems is Michael Cronin, Central Area Monitoring Officer on 020 8464 3333 ext. 3235 or e-mail michael.cronin@bromley.gov.uk