

January 2021
Issue 1



Welcome to our latest newsletter which contains important news about our AGM.

Because of the current pandemic, it is not safe or legal to deliver paper newsletters and so this edition is only being produced in digital format. We have made it quite long so you have something to read while stuck indoors!

AGM - Thursday 4th March 2021

This year, our AGM will be on-line via Zoom and will be purely formal business. We invite Members to stand for the following posts: -

Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, Membership Secretary. The current incumbents are Clive Lees, Beatrice Osborn, Dave Wiltshire, Judy Adcock and Linda Müller respectively. Of these, all except Judy Adcock have indicated they intend to make themselves available for re-election.

We will therefore have a **vacancy for Secretary after March**. Duties are to take minutes at meetings (6 per annum – an hour each) and prepare for the AGM (basically, organising some papers). Meetings are currently by Zoom and are recorded so Minute writing is easy. If you are interested, please contact the Chairman Clive Lees.

*As the great and the good repair to their dinner,
RVR's clerk grows thinner and thinner,
wracking his brains to record and report,
what he thinks they will think
that they ought to have thought.*
(with apologies to Arthur Bryant)

It will be easier than that, we promise!

Agenda

Please note: reports will be posted on our website prior to the meeting. They will be taken 'as read' and there will be an opportunity to discuss them

1	Approval of Minutes of previous AGM
2	Chairman's Report
3	Treasurer's Report
4	Determination of subscriptions for 2021-22
5	Reappointment of Auditor
6	Election of Officers: members are invited to stand for election: please contact the Secretary

We are changing some things

Annual RVR subscriptions – payment by standing order now available

We are pleased to offer you the opportunity to pay your annual subscription by standing order. While we have always enjoyed meeting members in person when collecting subscriptions in cash, we recognise that many of you may value the convenience of the e-banking option, especially as more and more people are no longer using cash. We have started to write to members about this and more members will be contacted with details soon.

Our membership database

We have recently started to update our membership system to provide a comprehensive and accurate record of the data we hold in one place. If you would like to receive emails from us about local issues, the Society and our newsletter, please let us know [here](#). Just to reassure you, we never send marketing and spam!

And welcome to....

- Four new road reps, all of whom can be contacted via the [Chairman](#): -
 - **Jaki Moody** Farnaby Road Nos 1-81
 - **Cathy Davies** Farnaby Road Nos 82-194
 - **Linda Harvey-Shipp** Ravensbourne Avenue (Odds)
 - **Anne Lancaster** Madeira Avenue (Odds) (This is splitting the round: Judy Adcock will continue to look after even numbers)
- Our new Planning Officer (after the AGM):-
 - **Ian Fellingham** (planning.rvr@outlook.com)

We would like to express our thanks to all these new volunteers for helping to cement a sense of community.

And last but not least, we also say thank you to Anna Koffer, Kay Shaw, Sharon Miles and Paul Osborne for all they have done for RVR and the Community for years – much appreciated!

Twitter

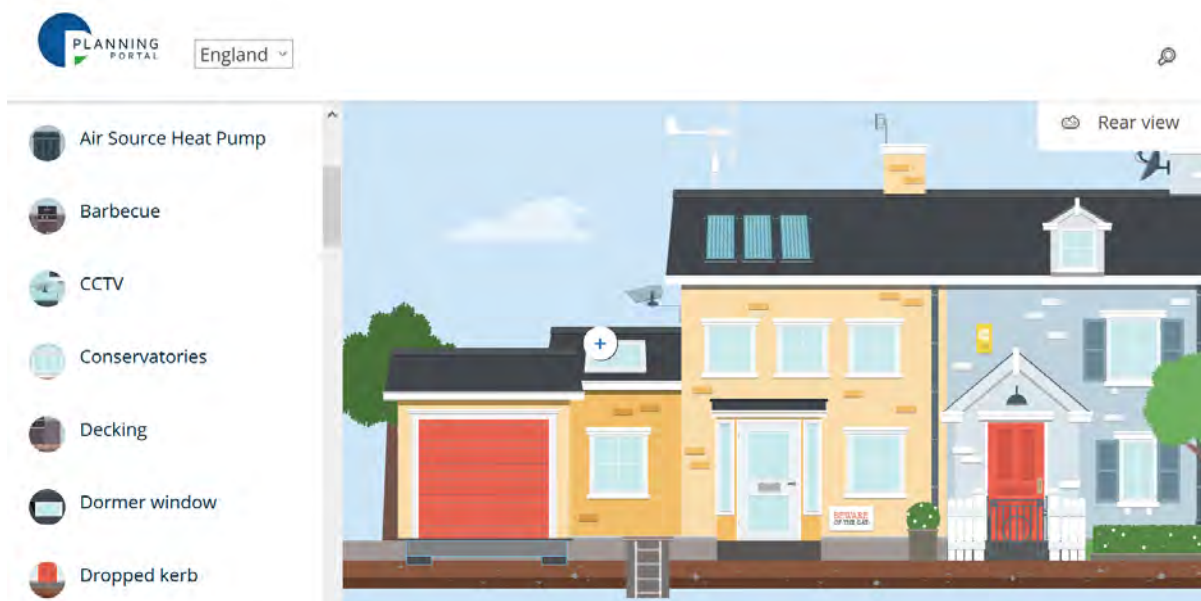
We are now celebrating ten years on Twitter, and always try to post things that are relevant, interesting – and sometimes urgent, such as burst water mains and traffic problems. We gained 200 extra followers in 2020. Join them via the link on the right.



Planning

Always check planning permission!

Homeowners have many rights ('permitted development rights') to make alterations/additions to their property, including structures in the garden. But building outside of these rights and without planning permission can be expensive if it becomes necessary to regularise the position after building. Bromley and Lewisham are known to require demolition of unauthorised structures and there are quite a few of these across the two boroughs each year.

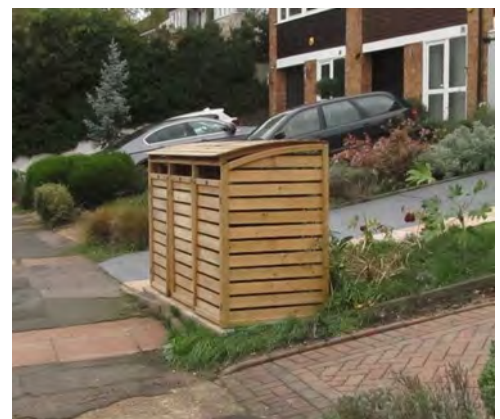


www.planningportal.co.uk is a great source of information.

Sometimes even innocuous changes need planning permission: -

- Decking more than 30cm high
- Fences at the front of a house more than 1m tall
- Sheds over 2.5m tall if within 2m of a boundary
- Many types of driveway

For example, this bin store in Madeira Avenue has been refused permission recently because 'by reason of its size and siting, [it] results in a detrimental impact on the character, appearance and visual amenities of the streetscene'.



There are numerous detailed considerations, so do please check before going ahead with your plans. You can find helpful links on our [website](#).

Councils don't always get planning law right!

Some of our Lewisham members recently complained to Lewisham Council about a development they were unhappy about. In response, Lewisham refused to take action, arguing that the development was lawful. Members asked us for our opinion and we were able to demonstrate that the Council had applied the law incorrectly. As a result of our intervention, Lewisham is now reviewing the proposal again.

Our web site has lots of helpful planning advice, to help you make or object to an application.



Heritage under threat at Bromley Civic Centre



Bromley boasts several Grade 2 listed properties at the Civic Centre. Sadly, and rather ironically, Bromley seems to have breached its own planning conditions by allowing the permanent installation of the unsightly roof railings on the Grade 2 Old Palace Building. What's more, the old Ice House (also Grade 2) in the grounds of the Palace has been neglected to such an extent that it is now on English Heritage's 'at risk' register. We hope that Bromley expedites a plan to restore it!

Councillor Rutherford has reassured us that concerns about the Ice House have been fully recognised.



The 'roof' of the Ice House is formally 'At Risk'



The Ice House even has Nazi graffiti on its ceiling

Shortlands Village Conservation Area – what's happening?

The Council is now considering the responses to its consultation as well as determining its 'engagement and sign-off processes... [which] may involve further discussions with local groups such as RVR.' The Council hopes to finalise its plans 'by sometime in the first half of 2021' but we hope that this can be accelerated to protect the area from inappropriate development.

We are also pleased to confirm that the Conservation Area does not in itself prevent many alterations including Solar Panels, but as noted above, ALWAYS check.



We asked for the sign to be cleaned but the contractor damaged it in the process

Tree news

Yet again, an insurance company is alleging without any evidence that a protected tree in the Downs Hill Conservation Area is causing the subsidence of a nearby house. We have been supporting Members to refute this allegation and as a result the insurer has withdrawn their application to fell the tree. Many thanks to Cllr Tickner and especially Cllr Mellor for support here.

In addition to supporting members in this way, we [strongly recommend](#) that you do not undertake any tree work unless you are sure you do not need planning permission to do so. In the local area, Bromley either has or is considering issuing 'Tree Replacement Orders' and prosecution at more than one property. You have been warned!

Transport Issues

Traffic offences – how you can take action

The Metropolitan Police welcomes videos from the public showing evidence of driving offences. As they prosecute most of the offences reported, it really works!

Examples of offences: -

- Holding a mobile phone while driving (the video must provide evidence of 'communication', not just browsing, but the law is due to become much stricter, so any hand-held use will be illegal)
- Red light jumping
- Speeding (new technology will enable speed to be calculated from video film)
- 'Cutting up'



Typical red light jumping at Shortlands

You can see an example of video being used for enforcement [here](#). Videos can be uploaded to the Police [here](#). You need two minutes of footage before and after the event and the incident must be less than ten days old.

Traffic problems – have your say

Following a further multi-vehicle crash on Farnaby Road in November, and growing dismay about traffic on some other roads, we have launched a survey specifically aimed at Farnaby Road, Bromley Avenue and Ravensmead Road. If you live on these roads or are affected by the traffic on them, please complete our survey which can be found [here](#). We would welcome your views by 28th February and we will use the feedback to make appropriate representations to Bromley Council.



One of the more dramatic crashes in Farnaby Rd in 2017

A traffic problem solved

Pedestrians and especially parents with children going to school will have noticed the new crossing in Beckenham Lane between Farnaby Road and Highland Road. It comes with an anti-slip surface, a planter on the exit from Farnaby Rd and, we believe, a 20mph advisory school zone will be introduced to ensure that cars can actually stop in time.

Many thanks to Cllr Nicky Dykes, Council Officer Stephen Oliver and RVR member Parisa Wright who pushed for this safety measure and were instrumental in making this happen with support from local residents and the Valley School community.



Community Issues

Local couple (Farnaby Road!) help NHS staff through Covid crisis

Seena and her husband Vishal (a doctor at King's) set up the 'NHS Wellness Boxes' project to send boxes with snacks, goodies and toiletries out to very hard-pressed staff members in the Covid and A&E wards of our local and other hospitals. Between March and September, 7,000 boxes were delivered to help doctors and nurses get through very difficult days. Of these Seena packed 1,500!

Seena also raised over £4k on a Just Giving campaign to fund this project – many appreciative thanks to everybody who contributed. The impact of these boxes in terms of the support they provide, both on a physical and emotional level, cannot be underestimated. Indeed, the project was so worthwhile that King's Hospital took it over and now administers it itself. Wonderful!

You can support Friends of King's [here](#).



Covid Support and childcare bubbles

Detailed rules on how these work can be found [here](#)

We're supporting those in need because of Covid

This year we have made donations in excess of £700 to support Covid related charities and more directly, nurses at the PRUH and now that shielding has been reintroduced as part of the latest national lockdown, we are happy to provide support for those who need shopping done for them so please contact us if necessary.

Friendly Bench Investigation

Following a suggestion from one of our members who spotted an idea for a RVR funded "Friendly Bench" community project [HERE](#) we are investigating whether such a scheme is feasible in our area and affordable.

Christmas efforts by residents



Door 15, seen in Farnaby Road

There were some great festive efforts that added some cheer to the challenges of the 'Tier 4' Christmas. Farnaby Road and Coniston Road both created 'Living Advent Calendars'. For the uninitiated, these are just like the Advent Calendars where you have fun trying to find each day's door to open and wondering what lies behind it. The big difference is that each day's 'door' is a house window which is decorated on the chosen date.

For those who were keen to contact Santa, the Ravensmead Road Community Garden helpfully provided a special post box to ensure that all requests for presents were received by the Big Man himself. And last but not least, a big thanks should go to all other residents for lighting up and decorating their houses so wonderfully in what has been such a challenging year.



Downs Hill / Crab Hill street party

Residents of Downs Hill and Crab Hill celebrated Christmas Eve with refreshments and carols: (Photos courtesy of Emma Fagg)



Environmental Issues

Bromley's Open Space Strategy 2021

Bromley has just completed a consultation on its draft Open Space Strategy. This caused concern through the use of phrases such as: -
"Being brave enough to recognise when open space should be repurposed", and
"Identify open spaces that require alteration, investment or reassignment (including development or disposal)"

Subsequently, Cllr William Huntington-Thresher confirmed that 'parks and parkland' were not for sale.

Overall, many residents were pleased to have an opportunity to contribute to the consultation (there were 800 responses) and for this we have Cllr Will Harmer (Chairman, Environment and Community Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee) to thank as without his intervention, we understand, there would not have been a public consultation.

We asked that the Strategy should include a mechanism to ensure Warren Avenue Playing Fields are properly administered by Lewisham. (For weird historic reasons LBL looks after WAPF even though they are actually in Bromley Borough! Residents will know that WAPF have often not been well maintained)



OPEN SPACE STRATEGY
2021 - 2031

Ashgrove Road and Shortlands nuisance areas



Residents have been unhappy that a site on Ashgrove Road next to Coral's and opposite McDonalds has become what amounts to a permanent fly-tipping spot. We have complained to Lewisham Council which has reassured us that it is working on an effective solution to the problem.

Residents may have noticed these unsightly cages and other rubbish outside the shops in Shortlands. Both RVR and Shortlands Residents Association have complained about them as they detract from the area (especially as it is intended to be a Conservation Area!) Unfortunately, the Council's power to intervene appears limited although some improvement has occurred after the intervention of Cllr Nicky Dykes. **We have just learned that the shop forecourts are actually owned by LBB which may give Bromley much greater powers to manage this area.**



FixMyStreet

Fed up with potholes, graffiti, unswept streets? Don't forget to use [FixMyStreet](#) which is an excellent way of reporting issues to the Council.



A big thanks to all our residents who go out litter picking to create a clean and tidy environment. Please contact us for a free litter picker if you would like to get stuck in as well! Every bit of effort – large or small – makes a difference.



Wood burners and open fires

New research reported in [The Guardian](#) showed that in real life situations, wood burners and open fires release large amounts of harmful particulate matter into the room they are actually in and not just into the external environment. Do be careful and help protect the air we breathe! A [further report](#) from Asthma UK and British Lung Foundation Partnership calls for people to use alternative, less polluting heating options if they can and ask politicians to raise awareness of health risks.



Recycling

Bromley Council Environment Matters leaflet is available [HERE](#) if you did not receive one.

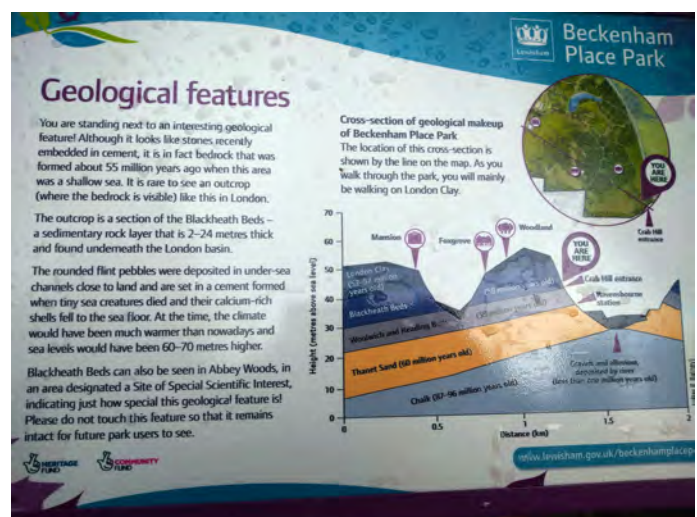
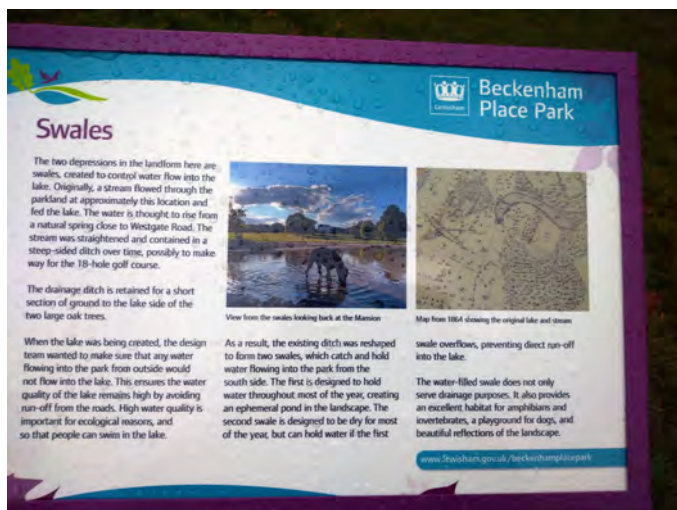
Waste collection calendars are available [HERE](#).

In the leaflet, Bromley Council is reminding residents about other messages, including the ongoing pandemic and its anti fly-tipping campaign.

If you are interested about where recycling goes, There is information on the LBB website [HERE](#), with a snapshot of where recycling collected in October has gone.

Beckenham Place Park

There are new signposts in the Park, highlighting local features, such as these two examples. Larger ones, of more general interest, are located outside the Gardeners' cottage and at the Ravensbourne Station entrance, among other places.



Lewisham Council has updated its webpages relating to BPP. There is some interesting information [HERE](#).

There appear to be events scheduled to take place at the Mansion. You can get an updated schedule [HERE](#). It is not clear if they will go ahead during the current lockdown.

Meeting Dates

In normal times, meetings are held on the first Thursday, every other month, at 8pm at Bromley Court Hotel. While social distancing is necessary, meetings are held via Zoom, complemented with much-acclaimed slide show to illustrate the issues, which makes them more interesting than watching a dreary Zoom screen! All members and prospective members are welcome. The meetings normally last about 60 minutes and focus on local community and planning issues. There is normally at least one of our local councillors in attendance to answer questions and log concerns. Forthcoming members' meetings are as follows:-

Thursday 4th March 2021—The Annual General Meeting;

Thursday 6th May 2021;

Thursday 1st July 2021.

If you are registered for email delivery, you will receive minutes of completed meetings, agendas for forthcoming meetings and a ZOOM link for the forthcoming meeting.

Current Officers

Chairman	Clive Lees	chairman.rvr@outlook.com
Vice Chairman	Beatrice Osborn	vicechairman.rvr@outlook.com
Secretary	Judy Adcock	secretary.rvr@outlook.com
Treasurer	Dave Wiltshire	treasurer.rvr@outlook.com
Planning Officer	Paul Osborne	planning.rvr@outlook.com
Planning Officer (elect)	Ian Fellingham	planning.rvr@outlook.com
Membership Secretary	Linda Müller	membership.rvr@outlook.com
Newsletter Editor	Euan McMaster	editor.rvr@outlook.com
Webmaster	David England	webmaster.rvr@outlook.com
Roads and Traffic	Brendan Donegan	roadsandtransport.rvr@outlook.com
Tree Warden	Monica Wiltshire	trees.rvr@outlook.com
LBBR Delegate	Judy Adcock	secretary.rvr@outlook.com
BPP Rep	Liz Logan	bpp.rvr@outlook.com
Hon. Legal Advisor	Richard Thomas	
Auditor	Alan Williams	

Road Representatives

Bracken Hill Lane and Close / Highland Road
Bromley Ave / Grasmere Rd
Calmont & Ashgrove Roads / Belgravia Gardens
Coniston Road / Ullswater Close
Downs Hill / Crab Hill
Elstree Hill / Erin Close / Hillbrow Road
Farnaby Road (1–81)
Farnaby Road (82–194)
Madeira Avenue (Evens)
Madeira Avenue (Odds)
Oaklands Road / Spencer Road / Hawkshead Close /
Lullington Garth
Ravensbourne Ave. (Evens)
Ravensbourne Ave. (Odds)
Ravensmead Road
Warren Avenue

Linda Müller
Quinton Schönknecht
Rita Smith
Sandra West
Wendy Watmore
Mick Pinson
Jaki Moody
Cathy Davies
Judy Adcock
Anne Lancaster

David Page
Monica Wiltshire
Linda Harvey-Shipp
Peter Saunders
Clive Lees

If you wish to contact your road representative please email the RVR Secretary or write to:

**RVR
38 Warren Avenue
Bromley**