

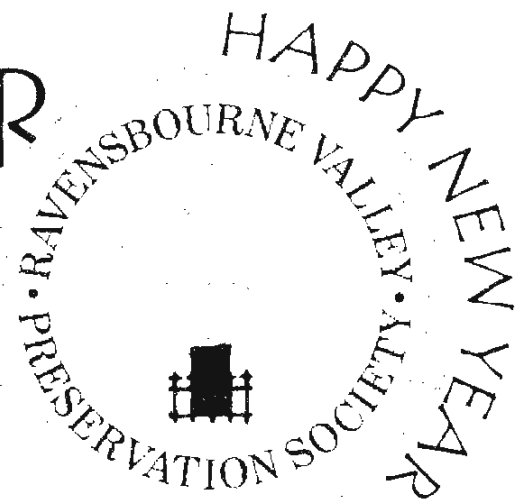
# NEWSLETTER

January 2011

1/2011

Web Site: [rvpsbromley.org](http://rvpsbromley.org)

E-mail: [RVPS@talktalk.net](mailto:RVPS@talktalk.net)



## EDITORIAL

Despite the continuing economic situation,  
***we wish all our readers a very Happy New Year.***

At this time of year our bi-monthly Newsletter becomes an annual round-up of the year's activities and is distributed to every household in our area. For those residents who are not familiar with us, it should be explained that, although the name of the Society might give the impression that we take in the whole length of the Ravensbourne River from Keston to Deptford, we are in fact a local Residents' Association covering the area roughly bounded by London Road, Beckenham Lane, Ravensbourne Avenue, Downs Hill, Calmont Road and the McDonalds at the end of Ashcroft Road. Beckenham Place Park is also included.

We aim to be a pressure group on issues which do or could, affect us locally. This means that we deal with Councillors and officers of both Bromley and Lewisham Boroughs.

The Society is strictly non-political and everyone involved is an unpaid volunteer (except for expenses). If you do not yet support us, but after reading this Newsletter you would like to do so or you just wish to tell us what issues you think we should be addressing - just fill in the enclosed Green Slip to join for half price and drop it through the letterbox or post it to your Road Representative. You will find their name and address on the green slip.

In the last New Year Newsletter we reported that our Secretary, Tom Griffin, had been forced to stand down due to ill health. Sadly he died during the year from lung cancer caused by working in an asbestos environment during his early years. At the wish of his widow we made a substantial contribution to St. Christopher's Hospice where he spent his final days. Tony Morton who had recently moved into the area following his retirement, volunteered to fill the vacancy and is already proving a great asset to the Society.

Last year our Auditor, Wally Carloss, also decide to stand down due to health problems. Fortunately we again have a volunteer to fill the position. Pura Atkinson has been co-opted until the AGM in March when she will stand for election. All being well, we hope to be able to make a presentation to Wally at the AGM as a thank you for his 18 years as our Auditor.

During the year our final vacancy was filled. That was for a Roads and Traffic Representative. Brain Atkinson, the Road Rep for Madeira Avenue, volunteered to take on this additional work and, as you will see later, he has made a good start.

Over the past year we have been particularly indebted to one of our new Councillors. Since her election Councillor Diana MacMull has been very supportive and active, often influencing the outcome in both Planning and Roads and Traffic

issues. Whenever possible both she and Councillor Michael Tickner attend our Members' meetings. We are grateful to them for giving their time and for sharing their knowledge and experience with us.

There have not been any really major issues during the last year but a whole series of new and repeat planning applications / appeals - many seeking to increase existing approvals. There has also been much correspondence with Bromley on roads and traffic matters in which, earlier in the year, potholes figured largely. With the recent bad weather we can expect that this matter will soon be rearing its head again. Last year's hopes for a sensible solution to the problem of the future management of Beckenham Place Park to emerge have not yet been realised. Perhaps we are approaching the "beginning of the end" but somehow I doubt it. Finally, a sincere thank you to everyone who has supported the Society, either actively or passively over the past year. With your continuing support we hope that we can be as successful in 2011 as we have been in the past.

**Please note our new web site address - see on our banner at top of page 1**  
***Dates for the Diary:***

Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2011 - Annual General Meeting, 8.00pm, Bromley Court Hotel

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> May - 2011 - Members' Meeting, 8.00pm, Bromley Court Hotel

Peter Pain (Editor)

---

## **PLANNING**

**113, Foxgrove Road** This house, which is just within the Downs Hill Conservation Area, has been the subject of six planning applications. The first, for a block of 5 flats, was refused, went to appeal and was again refused. The second application attempted to overcome the reasons for the first refusal but failed when Bromley again refused to approve it. Another appeal was then lodged but before it could be heard the developer made a third application. Both the second and third were heard by the Inspector at the appeal hearing and one was allowed. Having been granted an approval the developer then made a fourth application, this time to put an additional flat in the roof space plus enlarging a previously approved flat in the roof. We objected and Bromley refused the application. An appeal was lodged and we gave evidence at the hearing and attended the site visit. The Inspector upheld the appeal but refused the developer's claim for costs. Since then there have been two further applications. The fifth was for a change in the number and size of some windows, which we did not oppose. The sixth is for an alteration to the roof profile to accommodate a lift shaft. This we intend to oppose as the end result is getting worse and worse. A typical case of "salami slicing" - which the developer has tried in the past.

**119, Foxgrove Road** This house has had two applications. The first was for a substantial extension which was withdrawn after discussions with the Council's planning officers. The second was for a smaller extension without a dormer window. Bromley refused the proposal but it was upheld on appeal. No work has commenced on site so far.

**17, Spencer Road** This is on the corner of Spencer Road and Oaklands Road and is on the end of a terrace of 6 town houses. There have been five planning

applications - the first was for the demolition of a flank garage and the erection of a detached house in the side garden. Then followed an application for a slightly smaller detached house. We objected to both applications and both were refused. The next (third) application was for a look-alike town house added to the existing terrace of six. Although we objected, Bromley approved the scheme. A fourth application was made for the reinstatement of the garage on the side of the yet to be built seventh house. We again objected and Bromley refused it. The fifth application was to build a further town house which would extend the terrace from six to eight. Again we objected and Bromley refused to grant permission. The developer then decided to appeal against both of the two last refusals. The Inspector dismissed the appeal for the eighth town house but approved the garage. One suspects that that may have been the aim all along.

**Travelodge, London Road, Blyth Road** This is the site previously occupied by the Blyth Road Hotel and the snooker hall. It abuts the Kwickfit premises in London Road. An earlier application for a three storey block of flats in place of the hotel and a four storey block in place of the snooker hall was approved. Travelodge then submitted a proposal for a 5 /6 storey budget hotel with 97 bedrooms covering both sites. We objected on the grounds that it would be an over-development as it filled the two sites and was taller than any nearby buildings. In addition there were only 34 car parking spaces in the basement. Bearing in mind that there were 97 bedrooms this could lead to overflow street parking in local roads which already had parking restrictions. Bromley refused permission. After some delay Travelodge submitted a slightly reduced proposal. This was for a 4 /5 storey hotel with 92 bedrooms and 33 parking spaces. Despite our objections that this was still an over-development, bigger than the previously approved flats and taller than the surrounding buildings, Bromley approved this application. We understand that Bromley was in favour of an hotel in the Bromley North area as it broadly fitted in with the Bromley Town Centre Action Plan and would provide economic benefits. After approval Travelodge moved quickly and the entire site was flattened. Doubtless building work will begin soon.

**Bromley Town Centre Action Plan** By coincidence, shortly after the Travelodge hotel was approved, Bromley signed a development agreement with the Cathedral Group for the redevelopment of the Westmoreland Road multi-storey car park. In outline, the intention is to build a 100 bed hotel, a multiplex cinema and leisure centre, 200 residential apartments and a 400 space replacement car park. The Cathedral Group have a year to submit their planning application.

**"Billingford", Elstree Hill** This saga started with an unauthorised flank extension which overlooked an adjacent property. After complaints an officer was sent to inspect. Whilst there he noted that both the front and side boundary walls were higher than permitted. After two retrospective applications for the extension had been refused it was finally demolished but only after an enforcement notice had been issued by Bromley. However, the walls remained. After a long delay an application to reduce the height of the walls was approved. The flank wall was reduced but the front wall remained untouched. Bromley then began new enforcement proceedings. Shortly before the court hearing a further application for the front wall was made after a couple of courses of brickwork had been

removed by the owner. However, because the plans submitted were unclear, Bromley decided that the enforcement hearing should continue. In an attempt to create a further delay another application has been lodged asking for approval of the wall as now existing. Bromley have decided to continue with their action in spite of this. We now wait to see whether the wall is reduced as Bromley have demanded or if the matter does end up in Court. We have noted that the ground on the road side of the wall has recently been raised to give the impression that the wall has been lowered. Bromley have also noted this and have photographic evidence which shows what has been done in an attempt to deceive.

***"Trees", Coniston Road*** Thanks to vigilant neighbours it is reported that the owner of this compact detached house has had the site surveyed with a view to building 7 town houses on the site. An application for planning permission has not yet been made. If it is, it would almost certainly be an over development and out of character with the street scene. Meanwhile several of the best trees on the site have been given a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) by Bromley.

***Trees in Madeira Avenue*** After a long wait the Council has finally made TPO's on six mature trees in the southern end of Madeira Avenue. They are next to the footpath but actually in the rear gardens of houses in Farnaby Road.

---

## **ROADS AND TRAFFIC**

***354 Bus Route:*** During the course of last year we learnt that Transport for London (TfL) had decided not to divert the bus from Downs Hill and Ravensbourne Avenue to Crab Hill and the northern end of Ravensbourne Avenue. The decision is particularly encouraging for those who fought against the proposal as it was beginning to look like a "fait accompli" especially after TfL had funded the making up of Crab Hill and the unmade section of Ravensbourne Avenue. The Road Rep for Downs Hill and all those who supported her are to be congratulated for their persistence against what, at the time seemed to be overwhelming odds. The making up of Crab Hill has created a further problem - commuter parking. Previously there was only one narrow footpath on the Ravensbourne station side. With cars parked on both sides of the road it was still wide enough for two-way traffic, (if you braved the potholes). Now, with a wider pavement, and grass verges on both sides, traffic flow has been reduced to one way at a time. In addition the improved surface has tempted more traffic to try to use Crab Hill. Most locals have learnt to avoid the new road until some necessary parking restrictions have been introduced. We have asked Bromley's Highways Division about their plans for parking restrictions and we understand that the Police are also concerned about the present situation. We now learn that the matter has been settled by Bromley and was due to be carried out before Christmas but was delayed by the snow and frost. Work should begin at any time, if the weather allows.

***Grasmere Road/Oaklands Road junction.*** Our request for an extension of the yellow line in Oaklands Road to improve the sight line when exiting Grasmere Road has been going on for several years. At last, after our new Roads and Traffic rep got stuck in and kept up the pressure with many e-mails plus supporting photographs, we have success. The line will be increased to 10 metres. Possibly

two things helped closure on this issue. One was our offer to pay for the Traffic Order and the painting of the line, and the other was the involvement of our Ward Councillors - in particular Councillor MacMull.

### ***Ravensbourne Avenue Junction with Beckenham Lane/Station Road***

Problems with turning right out of Ravensbourne Avenue into Beckenham Lane have been with us for years - some locals say, for decades. It has caused concern and irritation, not only to our members but also to members of Shortlands Golf Club and shop keepers in Shortlands Village. The problem is essentially twofold:- a) the very short green phase for Ravensbourne Avenue and b) drivers from Station Road jumping the lights at red, leaving cars wishing to turn right from Ravensbourne Avenue stranded in the middle of Beckenham Lane after its traffic should be able to flow freely. In an attempt to be constructive we have made several suggestions that could improve traffic flow.

Not necessarily in priority order they were:-

- Separate Ravensbourne Avenue into two lanes, one for turning right, the other for turning left or going straight on. Initially this was dismissed because of insufficient width for the two lanes and the existing cycle lane marking. However we took measurements to show that it was possible. That was also dismissed because of the need for the unused cycle lane and / or the cost of making the footpath slightly narrower. We returned to the debate by pointing out that the 2 lanes in Highland road were even narrower than our proposal for Ravensbourne Avenue. We will continue to press on this one.
- Introduce a green filter arrow for right turning from Ravensbourne Avenue. Both Bromley and TfL advised strongly against this on safety grounds as drivers from Ravensbourne Avenue could proceed on the green filter without waiting for Station Road traffic to stop. Apparently the arrangement has caused accidents at similar junctions elsewhere.
- Reduce the green time for Station Road. Again turned down for the same safety reasons as the green filter.
- Increase the green time for both Station Road and Ravensbourne Avenue. This was agreed subject to the overriding need to keep the Beckenham Lane traffic moving. When this was implemented the timing seemed to be all over the place. To remedy that TfL installed more sensitive queue sensors as the existing ones did not recognise slow moving traffic. Once this was done the green did stay on longer within the overall constraints of this complex junction where five roads and two pedestrian crossings need to be synchronised.
- Install cameras to catch traffic crossing at red or at least a warning sign. Neither Bromley nor the police could justify cameras as there had not been enough serious accidents and traffic light cameras do not have warning signs!
- Get the police to observe and prosecute drivers crossing on red. The Local Safer Neighbourhood Team were sympathetic but did not have the resources. They did refer us to two Inspectors who might help. One was no longer doing the job and the other did not have the resources either. We will have to keep pursuing this matter - perhaps the best option will be to keep on to the police.

Overall some improvements but not as many as we would have liked.

**Road damage due to Frost and Snow** Last year we had some success in getting pot holes repaired by promptly reporting damage as soon as it was noticed, in some cases with supporting photographs. The same will apply following the recent cold spell. Either report directly to Bromley using their "green card" (available from libraries or the Council offices) or by telephoning the Bromley Help Desk on 8313 4557. Alternatively telephone Brian Atkinson our Roads and Traffic Rep on 8460 5079 or e-mail [b.atkinson037@virginmedia.com](mailto:b.atkinson037@virginmedia.com) It is important that we keep on top of pot holes as traffic can quickly make small ones into bigger and deeper ones..

---

## **BECKENHAM PLACE PARK**

**Park Maintenance and Golf Course Management** Land Use Consultants were commissioned by Lewisham in 2008 to report on, and recommend, future options for the Park and Golf Course including the Homesteads and Stable Block. The report was completed in 2008 and was fully covered in our January 2009 Newsletter. That report formed the basis for the renewal of the contract for maintenance and management of the Park (except the Mansion). The tendering for the contract started in March last year with an advertisement for expressions of interest. There were 13 responses. These were reduced to 7 after pre-qualification questionnaires and submissions of outline proposals. There was then a series of competitive dialogues, resulting in a short list of 5 who were invited to submit formal tenders. After evaluation and perhaps further dialogue a 10 year contract will be awarded. The planned start date is September 2011. Meantime Glendale, whose contract ran out in 2010 is continuing to manage the Park on a short term extension.

**Mansion** In 2009 Lewisham commissioned two firms of consultants to advise on the future of the Mansion. Rees Bolter, architects, reported on the fabric and Ken Burlton Consultancy reported on options for future use. These reports were fully covered in our Newsletter of January 2010. As in the maintenance and management contract for the park, advertisements were published inviting expressions of interest. There were 25 replies. The procedure was the same as the management contract and after the pre-qualification questionnaire and outline proposals there were only two remaining. Both are now in the competitive dialogue stage and both have had to be called back for further discussions. The next stage will determine if one, or both or neither will be invited to submit a formal tender. At this stage of the tendering for both contracts the material involved with these is classified as confidential business plan information, so only general progress can be reported.

In parallel with the contract procedures Lewisham is funding some urgent repairs to make the Mansion weather tight, essentially this involves work to the guttering, the roof and the portico. The latter should result in the removal of the scaffolding which has allowed thieves to access the lead roof and remove much of it.

**Compost Heap on the Old Burning Ground** Glendale were given permission to build a giant compost heap on the old "Burning Ground" which is just west of the bridge over the railway. The intention was that green waste from all of the Lewisham parks and gardens would be transported there in Transit sized vans and

the resultant compost would be reused in the parks and gardens. The actual result was that the compost rapidly overflowed the space allotted and had to be turned by a tracked digger. In addition the vans tore up the paths turning that part of the Park into a quagmire. After heated exchanges between The Friends of the Park and Lewisham / Glendale, work has at last been stopped. However, it is feared that the whole matter may be resurrected when the new 10 year contract is awarded.

**Sensory Garden** The Friends application for funding to create a sensory garden has been approved. The plan is to put it in the rose garden using planters, a water feature, bird feeding station and sensory planting (grasses, herbs, blossom / fruit trees etc) Work will not start straight away as they still have to meet the conditions of the grant - ie tendering and appointing a contractor for the major work. The most significant work will be for new disability access because the existing ramps do not meet present standards.

---

## COMMUNITY MATTERS

**Valley School** The new pond project has been delayed now for over a year. Our offer to support the purchase of aquatic plants for the pond is on hold until we hear from the school.

**Queens Mead / Martins Hill** This project, which we were ready to support, was for reprofiling the river and some new landscaping, has ground to a halt. It was being steered by the Environment Agency, Bromley and the Friends of Bromley's Parks and Gardens. In the present economic climate it is unlikely to proceed for some time, if ever.

**"Snow Friends"** Following the recent snow, Bromley is recruiting residents as "snow friends" who would be willing to clear snow from the pavements in their roads after the fall of fresh snow. The Council will provide a snow shovel and salt. If interested contact 8464 3333 or Google Bromley snow friends.

**Pavement Parking** Please remember that Traffic Wardens have the power to issue tickets to cars that are parked on the pavement (including crossovers to drives) except for those roads that are specifically marked

**Wood Burning** Anyone who burns wood in the home, unless it is in an approved stove, is liable to be fined for contravening the Clean Air Act.

**Security** In these days of cuts many will have to struggle to make ends meet. The police advise that we should realise that this means that the light fingered members of society will also be sharpening up their act looking for bargains. Ladies should keep their handbags securely closed and preferably over a shoulder and under an arm. For men the advice is to keep wallets and mobile phones out of sight and in a secure pocket. Don't make life too easy for them!

**Scams** Following various raids the Financial Services Authority (FSA) found a list of the names and addresses of nearly 100,000 people who either had been, or were about to be targetted by financial fraudsters. All have been contacted and warned. That information prompted Age UK to issue their own general warning. Both institutions stress that "if it seems too good to be true, then it probably is".