

NEWSLETTER

July 2011

4/2011

Web site: rvpsbromley.org

E-mail: RVPS@talktalk.net



EDITORIAL

This Newsletter marks the beginning of the Society's financial year and also of the beginning of the subscription collecting season. Some Road Reps may have already started, but most will wait until the end of the holiday season. If you are out when your Road Rep calls they may put a reminder through your letter box. Please respond to it and save them another visit - they are all volunteers.

Dates for the Diary

Thursday 1st September - Members' Meeting 8.00pm, Bromley Court Hotel

Thursday 3rd November - Members' Meeting 8.00pm, Bromley Court Hotel

Peter Pain - Editor.

COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Valley School

The pond project has now been completed and we await the opportunity to visit it later in the year when the planting should be well established.

In our last donation to the school we had financed the purchase of aquatic plants for the pond plus the provision of nesting boxes and various insect refuges.

Bench Seat The Common, Beckenham Place Park

Following agreement at our Members' Meeting in May to accept Glendale's quotation (Glendales are Lewisham's maintenance contractors for the park) we arranged to meet their representative on site to discuss details such as the seat's exact location and type. The Manager who had suggested the date and time of the meeting failed to show up! However we later resolved these details. The seat, known as "Forest Saver" has a strong metal frame supporting seat and back planks of very hard plastic which is virtually vandal-proof. It does not burn. We placed our order in mid June and have just been advised that the seat may be available for fixing by the end of July and could be fixed during the first week in August. We hope this last stage will not take as long as the previous negotiations have done.

Warren Avenue Playing Fields

For over a year following the progressive loss of a considerable number of trees round the perimeter of these Playing fields we have been trying to persuade Lewisham to replace them. The waters were muddied somewhat because the last boundary change put the whole of this field in Bromley but it continues to be used and maintained by Lewisham. This was finally sorted out and Lewisham agreed to plant 7 replacement Lombardy poplars. Many more than these had died and been felled by Lewisham previously. Unfortunately they arrived and were planted well outside the accepted planting period and, as it turned out, during the driest spring experienced for many years.. This was compounded by Lewisham not instructing Glendale to water them. None of the young trees had watering pipes and one was not staked. Two of our members watered them until Glendales took over. They also staked the one which had not been supported as it had developed a pronounced lean.

Some 20 - 30 more trees would be needed to fill the remaining gaps left by those removed by Lewisham and we are considering to what extent we could, or should fund all or part of this. The type of tree will also need careful consideration as just to replace a Lombardy Poplar in an existing row of mature trees could never result in a unified line as some of the mature specimens could well die before the next generation is fully grown. Such gaps would be better filled with trees with a greater and more normal spread. Another significant uncertainty is whether Lewisham are willing to pay for the planting and maintenance of the new trees even if we provided them.

No decision can be made until we know more about the costs involved and in any case, we are unlikely to offer to pay for all the trees needed to replace those missing. At most we might suggest a modest trial - say next year - we shall report back to members when more details are known.

ROADS AND TRAFFIC

Yellow Line Oaklands / Grasmere Road Junction

The extension of the yellow line to improve the sight line when exiting Grasmere Road has been agreed by Bromley (after much long term lobbying and debate). We have been assured that it has not been forgotten and should be done July / August.

Red Line Oaklands Road / London Road junction

Following a surprisingly short correspondence with Transport for London (only one e-mail got lost in the system). Having consulted their GLA Side Road Designation Order 2007, TfL found that the red line should be longer by about 6 metres. They will instruct their maintenance contractors to extend the line on the south side of Oaklands Road. When done it should make entering and exiting from London Road much easier. All we lack is a timescale.

Ravensbourne Avenue / Station Road / Beckenham Lane Junction

In the last Newsletter we reported that we were writing to Commander Griggs about the flagrant red light running from Station Road. To our dismay our letter was referred straight back to the Local safer Neighbourhood Team with whom

we had already got as far as we could. Further exploration into the provision of a safety camera also ran us into a brick wall, not only on grounds of cost but mainly because there had not been a sufficient number of serious accidents at the junction. It therefore did not meet the very inflexible criteria needed before a camera could be justified. We are now trying a new tack, which is to move back the stop line in Station Road. This solution was said to work well at a junction in Dulwich and we were told that Bromley Highways Engineers are seriously considering it here. However their initial reaction was pretty negative, citing possible congestion further back where the road narrows near the pub and where parking is allowed. We do not see this as a problem as tailbacks already happen here now in each rush hour and vehicles still manage to get through.

BECKENHAM PLACE PARK

Park / Golf Course / Homesteads

This tender involved maintenance, golf course management and the bringing into use of the Homesteads. Of the 5 firms that were invited to make a formal tender, only one made a submission. However that tender was unaffordable as they wanted money from Lewisham for the Stable Block / Homestead redevelopment. The process has now been terminated. Now Lewisham are negotiating a variation to their existing Parks and Open Spaces contract to temporarily transfer the management of the Park and Golf Course to Glendale. The variation will be for a relatively short period (up to 3 years) as Lewisham want to retain flexibility for any future options. Up to the 2nd of July this had brought the situation back to square one - a place we have been in quite a few times before! Since that date a new factor has intervened - the stable block has suffered a fire and is gutted along with the cottage which adjoins it. The other slightly separated cottages within the Homestead group seem to have been spared but may have suffered some heat or water damage. The police are working on the assumption that its cause was arson as some youngsters were seen running off as the first smoke was seen. The action which Lewisham will now take will be determined by English Heritage (the buildings were Grade 11 Listed), by structural consultants and by their insurers (if any). Our overriding reaction is that this fire is a disaster but, who knows, It might be the event which leads to some positive action at last.

Mansion

Neither of the two tenderers for the Mansion met the criteria. The Mayor and Cabinet decided to ask the two tenderers to explore combining their bids. Neither agreed to do so which is not surprising, as The Beckenham Place Park Community Trust intends to operate on a not for profit basis and the other party is a purely commercial one. There is a real danger that another "back to square one" situation will result for the Mansion.

PLANNING

Billingford The council will not pursue the question of the front wall height any further after its last reduction by the owner although technically it could as it is still higher than shown on the approved drawings. We accept this.