

Shortlands Residents' Association **NEWSLETTER**

Winter 2022
www.shortlandsra.org.uk

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – DIARY DATE!

This year we are planning to hold the AGM on **5 April in St Mary's Church Hall, starting at 8.00 pm.** We will cover the usual reports on our activities and finances, as well as giving some initial feedback of our membership survey. We hope for a good turnout, given the enforced cancellation of the 2019 AGM and limited Zoom session for 2020.

COUNCILLOR MARY COOKE

It was with great sadness that we learned that Councillor Mary Cooke, Ward Councillor for Shortlands, had passed away in her sleep at the PRUH after falling seriously unwell over the New Year holiday.

Councillor Cooke had been a Shortlands ward councillor since being elected in 2014, and was also Chairman of the Adult Care and Health PDS Committee and Chairman of the Health Overview Scrutiny Committee. She was committed to working with the Shortlands Residents' Association on parking and supporting residents planning issues to preserve the ethos of the Ward, as well as working closely with the Safer Neighbourhood Panel, keeping residents and their homes safe.



MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

With this newsletter you should also be receiving a copy of our membership survey. The aim of the survey is to find out what local people – members and non-members – expect of their residents' association and the kinds of issues and activities we should focus on in the coming years. The more responses we receive, the greater will be its usefulness in ensuring that we remain relevant to local needs, so we hope that you will spend a few minutes giving us your views.



JUBILEE STREET PARTIES

Local people have already started to think about organising local street parties to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. If you let us know about your street party in advance we may be able to help with some of the costs and publicity. Let us know by writing to info@shortlandsra.org.uk

And if you are thinking about how to go about organising a street party there is useful advice on the government web site at <https://www.gov.uk/organise-street-party>

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

With a change of Secretary of State during 2021 the proposal for a radical overhaul of the planning system has receded. Local councillors would largely have been removed from the planning process and we would have had planning zones established for certain kinds of development. Michael Gove is now the minister responsible for housing and it will be very interesting to see how he approaches any significant changes to planning and development.

One reason for changing the system was to find a much faster way to approval of developments, the relevant White Paper targeting 300,000 new dwellings each year. It was never entirely clear where that figure came from. Do we now need anything approaching that number?

One way to achieve substantial change outside the full planning process is to apply Permitted Development rules. In these circumstances local authorities have limited control. So, for example, conversion of offices to flats falls within rules and has been widely used across Bromley.

In some ways this is very helpful. Brownfield sites are used mostly without knocking down existing buildings which are frequently in town centres. Within Bromley Civic Centre the so-called 'Y' buildings, redundant for the purposes of local government, will be converted to 73 flats. We have seen many such conversions approved over the last year but there is a growing concern about the extent to which this is happening. Where people used to come into work in these offices and use the commercial services in our towns, we now have or will have more people living in the same buildings and to some extent commuting out of the area.

Some local councillors are proposing an 'Article 4' direction which, if approved, has the effect of requiring developers to go through a full planning process.

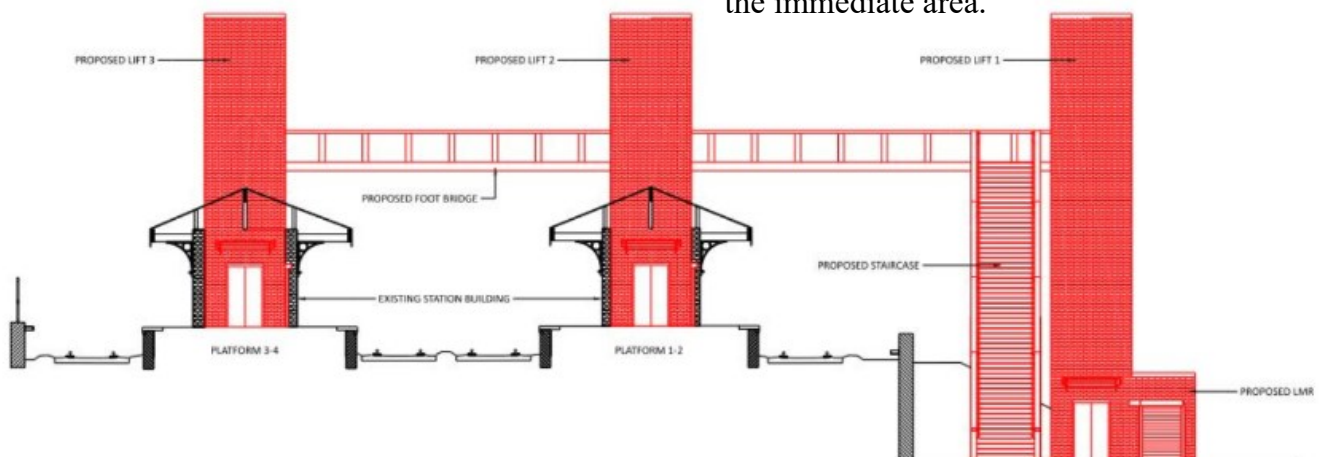
Finally, annual statistics across the Borough on numbers of planning decisions appealed: in 2021 there were 207 appeals of which 72 (or 35%) were successful. Compare this with the year to 31 December 2020 when there were 220 appeals of which 65 (30%) were successful. Are planning officers trying to avoid over development - or just getting it wrong too often?

SHORTLANDS STATION

A major new development for Shortlands railway station has been planned for some time. There has been much discussion about the construction of lifts and an application for approval has been made to the Council by Network Rail. This will involve erecting three 16 person lift shafts, one on each platform and one to the side of platforms 1 and 2, with a footbridge between lifts and the construction of a staircase also to the side of platforms 1 and 2. The plan below shows the scale and impact of the current proposals.

For engineering reasons, the proposed location of the structures is beyond the covered areas of the platforms. However, because of the elevated nature of the station the new structures will tend to dominate local views – a particular concern given the recent granting of conservation area status to the Village. With Councillors and the Bromley Civic Society we are involved in discussions with Network Rail about the design.

We all want to see better access to the station for people with mobility problems or young children, so our objective is to ascertain whether the work can be carried out successfully while having less of an impact on the immediate area.



GUIDED WALK OF SOUTH HILL WOOD

Many people choose to live in Shortlands because of the pleasant environment of tree-lined roads and lanes and our local woodlands, of which the biggest is South Hill Wood. So, in partnership with the Friends, we are bringing back for the first time in three years our guided walk through this beautiful wood to explain its history, flora and fauna.

This year we are bringing forward the timing of the walk to show off some of the best of the Spring woodland flowers. So, the walk will start at **3pm on Saturday 2 April** from the South Hill Wood Bowling Club at 2, Tootswood Road.



SHORTLANDS LIBRARY

Shortlands Library offers activities for local adults and children alike. They have a weekly Tea and Topics session with guest speakers and refreshments on Mondays at 2.15pm, a monthly Play Reading Group and are able to supply books if you would like to run a reading group from home. Children's activities include Baby Bounce, Rhyme, Spanish Club and Craft Club.

They have, as ever, collections of children's and adults' fiction and non-fiction to borrow, as well as the Times newspaper and Which magazine to read in the branch. You can access the internet free from their computers and use their free wifi. They can also do printing and photocopying for a small charge.

The Library is wheelchair and mobility scooter accessible and has a small car-park and unrestricted street parking outside. It is open Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays 9.30am-1pm and 2pm-5.30pm and 9.30am-1pm and 2pm-5pm on Saturdays. It's based at 110 Shortlands Road and can be contacted on 0208 460 9692 or by email at shortlands.library@gll.org

MORE DIARY DATES - HUSTINGS

In the run-up to the last local authority elections, the SRA was the first local association to arrange a local "hustings" event where we invited candidates from each of the political parties to set out their agenda for the area and listen to local peoples' concerns. The elections in May will be the first for the new, larger, Shortlands ward, as it expands geographically to take in the Village and goes from two to three elected representatives.

That event proved popular and we are planning to repeat it on the **evening of 26 April at the Shortlands Golf Club**. More details will follow in our next newsletter.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

If you have forgotten to pay your membership subscription for 2021, please do not worry, as this can easily be rectified by making two payments in 2022...ideally by a bank standing order to aid our accounting system.

Our bank details are: Account – Shortlands Residents' Association; Account number – 82504600; Sort Code – 09-01-55.

Please include your name and address as the reference and email details of your payment to Robert French at robertfrench3@outlook.com or send by post to our Treasurer Peter Berry at 50 Mays Hill Road, Shortlands, Bromley BR2 0HT.

OPEN MEETING ON AIR POLLUTION

November's Open Meeting on 'the Problems of Air Quality in Shortlands' proved a striking success in raising questions and some solutions to an issue which affects us all.

Key speakers included Dr Adrian Fowle, a consultant neurophysiologist, Parisa Wright, founder of 'Cleaner and Greener Bromley and Beyond', as well as Jane Dutton of 'Mums for Lungs', and Orpington resident Stephen Sangster, founder of 'Ban Bromley Bonfires'.

The audience at Harris Primary Academy Shortlands were enlightened as to some key questions on pollution in Shortlands like lack of sufficient monitoring, and some possible solutions such as School Streets and 20mph speed limits.

The SRA aims to keep a close watch on developments in improving local air quality in the future.

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