

SRA Shortlands Residents' Association **NEWSLETTER**

Spring 2022
www.shortlandsra.org.uk

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

With this newsletter you will also be receiving your invitation to the AGM which includes the relevant details about the agenda. It will be our first face to face AGM for three years as we emerge from COVID. Given this, we have decided not to arrange a talk from a guest speaker, but to make sure that our members have an opportunity to discuss the work of the SRA based on the recent survey of local residents. Mike Ricketts will give a summary of the findings, alongside reports on finance from Treasurer Peter Berry and development and planning from Danny Miller.

Let's hope that we get back to pre-COVID levels of attendance!

LOCAL ELECTION HUSTINGS

Local elections take place in May - the first in the newly enlarged Shortlands and Park Langley Ward. Members will recall that we argued successfully for these changes that bring Shortlands "village" into the ward, which will now have three, rather than two, locally elected representatives.

At the last local election we arranged a Hustings event where a candidate from each of the political parties was invited to set out their priorities for the area and answer questions from the floor. The SRA was the first residents' association to organise such an event in Bromley.

This year the Hustings will take place at the **Shortlands Golf Club on Wednesday 27 April, starting at 7.30**. All are welcome.

MEMBERSHIP

If you are not yet a member of the SRA, but care about Shortlands and keeping up the quality of life here, why not join the Association and support our work, for only £5 per household per year. There is a membership/subscription form with the attached AGM Notice. Please complete the form and send it to our Membership Secretary Robert French at robertfrench3@outlook.com



PLATINUM JUBILEE STREET PARTIES

So far, we know of only one street party planned for HM the Queen's Platinum Jubilee over the weekend of 4 and 5 June. At one stage a larger gathering was planned for Queensmead, but it seems as if this is unlikely to happen. If you are planning a celebration, please contact the SRA – we could help to publicise it and may be able to help with some of the costs.

GUIDED WALK OF SOUTH HILL WOOD

There is still time to join us on our guided walk through South Hill Wood to learn more about its history, flora and fauna. The Walk will start **at 3pm on Saturday 2 April from South Hill Wood Bowling Club, 2, Tootswood Road** and will last about an hour. If you would like to come along, please call 0208 460 0395 or email info@shortlandsra.org.uk



QUEENSMEAD PLAYGROUND IMPROVEMENTS

Local Councillors Aisha Cuthbert and Nicky Dykes of the Shortlands and Bromley Town wards respectively have been successful in securing £20,000 from Bromley Council towards improvements to the much-loved community playground enjoyed by so many local children. The playground is in need of refurbishment and this grant represents a significant contribution to the overall costs of the project – but more will be needed. Councillors are now looking for volunteers who want to help manage this project and secure more funding.

A committee is being formed to manage the project. The SRA will take part and contribute to the fund-raising effort once an overall budget has been agreed. Tom, the owner of Winston's Coffee van has also offered to collect donations!

If you would like to get involved please contact Aisha Cuthbert (Aisha.Cuthbert@bromley.gov.uk) or Nicky Dykes (ClrNicky.Dykes@bromley.gov.uk).

SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS

With the expansion of the Shortlands Ward from the local Council elections on 5 May - see above – Shortlands “village” and Queensmead, as well as some extra roads in Park Langley will form part of the new Shortlands and Park Langley Ward, with three Councillors rather than two.

With this enlargement the police team that currently covers Shortlands Ward will widen its role to work throughout the new Ward. The Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panel, which is made up of representative local residents along with the local police and helps decide with them the key priorities for local policing, is holding its first ever meeting in Shortlands

Village and is keen for residents, businesses and group representatives to attend. **The Panel/Public meeting is to be held upstairs at the Shortlands Tavern at 7.30pm on Tuesday 7 June.**

Do come along and meet your local police team, local Councillors and constituency MP Bob Stewart

SRA ACCOUNTS 2021

Our annual SRA Accounts for 2021 will be published on our website in advance of our 5 April Annual General Meeting.

These accounts show that the Association received £2559 last year, mostly in the form of subscriptions and donations, one of the highest income levels on record. This can be attributed partly to our increasing minimum household subs to £5 a few years earlier and to widening our payment options to include standing orders and bank transfers.

Other income included interest from our building society account and an increase in revenue from selling advertising space on the back page of our quarterly Newsletter. Main spending was on printing and stationery, our website and indemnity insurance, and initiatives like the Village Christmas lights and the Shortlands Station Nature Trail.

Our Treasurer Peter Berry will be on hand at the AGM as usual to answer any questions about the accounts.

A WALK THROUGH SHORTLANDS' HISTORY – 18 JUNE

Come and join us for our annual guided walk around Shortlands to learn more about its history from the Iron Age up to today. Hear about the famous figures who have lived in or passed through Shortlands in one way or another, from writers to pop stars, from Judy Garland to Oliver Cromwell!

We start off at **2.30pm on Saturday 18 June from Shortlands Station Ticket Hall** and for a leisurely hour and a half Mike Ricketts will lead you through the many phases of our history, picking out sites of special historic interest, finishing off over tea and cakes in a (hopefully) sunny, but well shaded garden.

If you would like to join us on the Walk, please call Mike on 0208 4600395 or email him at info@shortlandsra.org.uk

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

87 Beckenham Lane: The row of shops behind the hoarding in the middle of the Village remains a great concern to us. Recently, we considered with Bromley Town councillors the possibility of a compulsory purchase order. Officers advised councillors that, amongst other hurdles to overcome, there must be a compelling case in the public interest to do so and the local authority may need to justify its position in court. The local authority would need to demonstrate how it intended to use the land and that the resources required to do so were in place; in other words it would need to establish a business case.

The threshold would be high, the council needing to show that the site was 'derelict, neglected and unsightly' while the owner would reply that it was their intention to renovate.

The owner of whom we were aware was a company called Buildline Ltd and our understanding was that this company had sold its interest. We did make contact with the company secretary who explained that a sale had been agreed but that the purchaser had a family bereavement and that had caused a delay. He hoped there would be progress in the next few months and also added that it was unlikely that there would be a further planning application as the proposed purchaser intended simply to renovate the existing units. We will keep a regular watch on developments and chase this matter up.

Upward extensions of blocks of flats: Current regulations permit the upward extension of blocks of flats by one or two storeys without a formal planning application. It is regarded as deemed permission. Nevertheless the developer does need to run a number of other factors past officers and councillors. We have been very concerned by the growing use of this power to develop but we have seen officers apply imaginative use of the powers which they do have to refuse applications.

So, for example, a proposed development in Hayes Lane was rejected on the basis that the plans involved engineering operations beyond those considered reasonably necessary to construct the additional storey, would involve extensive reconstruction of three existing flats and that was outside the permitted development rules. In addition the height and scale made the proposed building incongruous

and over dominant.

Bromley Town Centre: We continue to see regular applications for tall buildings in or near the town centre. In February there were applications involving three large developments.

There is a plan to develop an area between Ringers Road and Ethelbert Road which would comprise two buildings, one 12 storey and the other 14 storeys to create 94 residential units together with working and commercial space. There would be no car parking space. This would involve demolition of some existing buildings.

There are plans for two substantial blocks adjacent to each other in Elmfield Road, overlooking Kentish Way. The first is to demolish a vacant 4 storey building, Conquest House, and replace with a 9 storey building plus a basement and contain commercial space and 64 flats. The other proposal is for the demolition of Devonshire House, currently 5 storeys, and replace this with a 10 storey office block offering grade A office accommodation.

Both of these proposals have been the subject of previous applications and appeals and will be of particular concern to the occupiers of the Palace Estate. Whatever the merits of these three proposals our particular concern has been what appears to be haphazard applications for development and an absence of a master plan for the town centre. We have taken up this issue with Councillor Peter Morgan, the portfolio holder for regeneration, who accepts that there should be an overall plan through the medium of a Supplemental Planning Guidance.

We believe there must be greater cohesion in the design of the buildings and a clear plan for how to cope with infrastructure issues which will inevitably arise. Councillor Morgan has said that a draft supplemental planning guidance will be published shortly for public responses.

It seems to us a great pity that this is not already in place. Very clearly the centre of Bromley is commercially attractive but there exists right now no overall plan.

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