

Shortlands Residents' Association Open Meeting
18th November 2023, 10:30 – 12:00 at Harris Primary Academy Shortlands
Road Safety in Shortlands and the State of Our Roads

Panel:

Chair: Mike Ricketts, Shortlands Residents' Association Chair
Councillor Adam Grant, Shortlands and Park Langley Ward
DWO Chris Brown, Shortlands and Park Langley Ward
PCSO Adam Charles, Shortlands and Park Langley Ward

Chairman's Welcome

Mike Ricketts thanked everyone for attending and introduced the panel. Councillor Adam Grant, Vice-Chairman, Environment & Community Services PDS Committee for Bromley Council and Dedicated Ward Officer PC Brown and PCSO Charles, our local police representatives.

In his opening comments Mike said road safety is an issue that affects us all every day. Shortlands is not a high accident area. However, its residents include a number of vulnerable people. The SRA organises meetings to address issues raised by Shortlands residents and these regularly include "speeding", "potholes" and "overgrown trees and shrubs" obstructing pavements. To illustrate one aspect of the council's work, Mike said that in Bromley Borough over 2,000 tons of fallen leaves are picked up annually.

The panel members would introduce themselves and give a flavour of their priorities to make Shortlands' roads safer, followed by the main part of the meeting, which is questions and suggestions from the attendees.

Finally, SRA is setting up a working group to lead the campaign for better road safety in Shortlands Ward. If after this meeting anyone feels that this is something he or she would like to contribute to, please leave your name and contact details.

Cllr. Adam Grant

Thanked the attendees for coming to the meeting. He, with Cllrs. Aisha Cuthbert and Felicity Bainbridge represent Shortlands and Park Langley Ward at Bromley Council.

Today he would speak about two strands of that work: Highways and Road Safety, noting that Bromley borough has 537 miles of roads, equivalent to the distance between Bromley and Zurich. The strategy for highways divides into planned renewal and reactive repairs. This year the renewals included taking up and relaying the road surface in Westmoreland Road and Beckenham Lane. Due to the harsh winter of 2022/23, more road surfaces had deteriorated with the freezing and thawing of water getting into the surface, creating potholes. These can only be "patched" during the winter, as the new road surface needs to "cure". Therefore, renewal is carried out in the summer months. This year, in addition to Bromley's contractor, Riney's 14 gangs, a second contractor was engaged to complete the renewals and repairs. This leaves us in a better situation going into this winter.

If residents see a pothole or other damage to the roads, please report it using FixMyStreet. If this is not resolved satisfactorily, please contact your councillors who can escalate the matter.

The second strand, road safety, often comes down to the speed of traffic on our roads, which is a Police matter, but road layout is a council matter. Bromley has put in 20mph zones around schools and between Bromley Market Square and the Magistrates' Court, but does not plan to introduce Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, which it feels only displaces traffic to other routes. Bromley's approach to road safety spending is data-led, assessing trends and developing schemes to present to Councillors. Details of three schemes were circulated to the attendees for their comments after the meeting: Zebra Crossing at Mays Hill Road/Hillside Road (work due January 2024), Farnaby Road/Beckenham Road (consultation open now) and Junction Improvement at the "Chinese Garage" Roundabout (consultation to open soon). Cllr. Grant thanked the Shortlands police team for the work that they

do, working long antisocial hours on local issues while also being deployed anywhere in London as needed.

Dedicated Ward Officer PC Chris Brown

The Shortlands and Park Langley Ward team perform traffic stops including known hot spots at the Ravensbourne Avenue/Crab Hill Junction, Queen Anne Avenue, Kingswood Road and Glassmill Lane and do so regularly twice a month, barring “abstractions” (moving police officers to duties outside their designated area e.g., to Whitehall during the National Service of Remembrance). A team of 6 PCs, 3 PCSOs and a sergeant cover Shortlands, Copers Cope and Eden Park area, operating in pairs perform checks in various locations for speeding, use of phones while driving and tax and insurance checks. For infringements, a Traffic Offence Report is sent by the officer to Marlow House, Sidcup who advise the driver of the penalty incurred. After a second offence, the details will be added to the Police National Computer (PNC). Following training on Radar Speed Guns, from January 2024 Chris will be able to issue tickets for speeding, which is hoped to further deter motorists from excess speed on our roads.

PCSO Adam Charles

Adam’s duties include visiting schools to discuss road and personal safety with the children. He is also available to discuss residents’ concerns at “Cuppa with a Copper” sessions at locations including Shortlands Library. The next “Cuppa” will be on 16th December between 10 and 11am. Adam also assists with traffic speed and drivers’ document checks with colleagues, when PCs can issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) for use of mobile phones and failure to use a seatbelt.

Q&A Session

Mike Ricketts invited questions and apologised for the unfortunate technological problem meaning that there was no microphone system available.

Question 1: Wendy, Park Hill Road

The zebra crossing at Station Road has only one zigzag marking between the crossing and the parking spaces, which obscures the view of both drivers and pedestrians. Could the first parking bay be removed?

A Station Road resident confirmed that she had observed traffic from Beckenham Lane/Bromley Road approaching the crossing at a fast pace. Mike Ricketts confirmed that similar concerns had been posed to SRA, which had taken up the issue with Cllr. Aisha Cuthbert. Cllr. Adam Grant took the question back to obtain a response from the appropriate council officers.

Question 2: Helen, Madeira Avenue

The Beckenham Lane zebra crossing in the village is used by many school-aged children. She has observed that drivers fail to stop when children have stepped onto the crossing. This may be due to drivers having been held up at the traffic lights and approaching the crossing too fast.

Another resident confirmed that during peak times it is impossible to see past the queuing traffic to see if anyone is waiting to cross. Others confirmed that they felt that traffic approached the crossing at inappropriate speed.

Two further issues were raised: first, regarding the light phase for the right turn filter from Ravensbourne Avenue meant that only 2 cars could turn under the bridge causing several drivers to turn right from the lefthand lane in order to get through the phase and second, drivers from Beckenham Lane regularly “jumping” the red light. Both actions result in the junction being blocked and potential for collisions to increase.

Brian Reading called for a wholesale review of the junction including the possibility of a right turn filter on the junction from Bromley Road into Shortlands Road to clear the junction before the traffic is released from Beckenham Lane into Bromley Road.

Cllr. Grant said that the visibility was generally good at the zebra crossing, with no parking allowed. He considered that it may be a case for making the crossing more visible to approaching

drivers, for instance, by raising the height of the yellow “Belisha” beacons. A traffic light crossing was probably not feasible so close to the 6-way traffic lights around the railway bridge junctions. He would take away the suggestion for the traffic lights to be changed to respond to the weight of traffic flow to discuss with the Highway Department Engineers.

Mike Ricketts confirmed that the sequencing of the traffic lights is complicated and has been reviewed and adjusted many times over several years. He referred the issue of jumping red lights to PCSO Adam Charles, who advised that it was possible for pedestrians or drivers witnessing traffic offences, like jumping red lights, to pass the details of date, time, location and number plate to the police. Without camera evidence or police witness it is only possible to issue a warning under Section 59 of the Police Reform Act 2002 (Vehicles used in manner causing alarm, distress or annoyance) against the driver and the vehicle, which lasts for 12 months. If the same driver or vehicle is reported again within that year, the vehicle can be seized. Contact details for the Shortlands Safer Neighbourhood Team are printed below.

Question 3: Keith Mills

'The narrowing of the road under the railway bridge has been a problem for decades. Would it be possible to divert HGVs via Scotts Lane and Hayes Lane to approach Bromley from Westmoreland Road?

Mike Ricketts suggested a diversion may be at odds with the desire to rejuvenate Shortlands Village and attract greater footfall to the businesses, which were listed in the Shortlands Village Directory delivered with this quarter's SRA Newsletter. Cllr. Adam Grant felt that the left turn onto Hayes Lane from Scotts Lane is too sharp for HGVs, so did not think that redirecting them down Scotts Lane would be viable.

Question 4: [no name]

Could cameras be installed at the traffic lights to catch drivers driving through red lights or speeding?

Cllr. Adam Grant suggested that it may be possible to use Police mobile camera vans to raise awareness and act as a deterrent. PCSO Adam Charles took the question away to make enquiries.

Question 5: Styles Way resident

Crossing the Hayes Lane/Shortlands Road/Scotts Lane junction from Whitecroft Way with a 3-year-old is dangerous, as there is no safe crossing point. Also, cars approaching from Pickhurst Lane direction indicate, but there is no way of knowing if they are turning into the first road or further on into Scotts Lane. A crossing or roundabout is needed.

Patricia Braithwaite advised that the request for a roundabout, as has been installed at the Bromley Road/Scotts Lane junction, has been dismissed in the past, as the junction is deemed too tight. Mike Ricketts said there are existing pedestrian refuge “islands” at intervals along Hayes Lane at Brabourne Rise/Romanhurst Gardens, Shortlands Road, Shortlands Road/Scotts Lane/Hayes Lane, Scotts Lane, Tulse Close and the Chinese Roundabout. Reducing the speed limit from 30mph was suggested. It was observed that people preferred to drive from Langley to Shortlands due to the dangers of crossing Hayes Lane as a pedestrian.

PCSO Adam Charles agreed that it is a problem but, due to the issues above, it is difficult to pull cars over safely. Cllr. Adam Grant agreed that it is a difficult road for pedestrians and drivers due to poor lines of sight at the point the road bends at Whitecroft Way. He would take the item away and send his findings.

Question 6: Resident with children attending Highfield School

Another road that is dangerous to cross and used by young school children and parents is St Marys Avenue/Cumberland Road. There is no signage to indicate to motorists that there is a primary school nearby and only two narrow pedestrian refuges either side of Highfield Drive,

which barely protect an adult and buggy from passing traffic including buses. Who in Bromley Council is responsible for the safety of vulnerable road users in the area?

Cllr. Adam Grant asked the person to talk to him after the meeting to clarify the issues and suggested that Flasher Lights could be used at the junction on rotation to raise awareness. He advised that the Portfolio Holder for Road Safety is Cllr. Nicholas Bennett. PCSO Adam Charles asked when the issue occurred and noted the times for school drop off and pick up to be included in the schedule of speed checks during those times.

Question 7: Paul King, Kingswood Road

The parking outside Harris Primary Academy Shortlands between Hillside Road and Mays Hill Road often blocks the 367 bus in both directions along Kingswood Road, causing the bus driver or other drivers to reverse to clear the centre of the road. Other residents had a motorist park on her private drive without permission to take a child to the school and another added that the War Memorial was used as a turning place for drivers, which causes the potential for further accidents where Church Road divides.

PCSO Adam Charles would issue advisory warnings when parking is hazardous for other users. Charley Coles, Community Liaison & teacher at HPAS, would discuss communication with parents on considerate parking with Mike Ricketts. Cllr. Adam Grant took away the suggestion that one side of the road be marked with double yellow lines in addition to the school zigzags.

Question 8: Robert French, SRA

Many motorists passed their driving test before the driving theory test was introduced in 1996. He recommended that drivers access the free DVSA practice 50-question test, which is available online, as he had done. At the end of the test the score is given and it is possible to see the correct answers to any that had been marked as wrong.

Go to: www.gov.uk/take-practice-theory-test, or enter “Practice Theory Test” in your search engine for other links. The pass mark is 43/50.

Question 9: Downsbridge Road resident

Who is responsible for the railway bridge and the unmade road either side? Over-height vehicles that are diverted away from Shortlands Bridge regularly get stuck for hours until a recovery truck removes them. Can SatNav be amended or better signs put up?

Cllr. Adam Grant took this item for investigation and response.

Question 10: Patricia Braithwaite, Kingswood Avenue

Annually gardeners, hired or resident, sweep fallen leaves from their properties into the gutters, causing blocked drains and slippery pavements. It is illegal to dump domestic garden waste on the highway and people should be made aware of this. A resident of Mays Hill Road advised that she had swept wet leaves from the pavement to the roadside for collection by the roadsweepers, but this had not been done.

Mike Ricketts proposed this could be added to the regular Bromley Environments Services Newsletter delivered to all Bromley residents and SRA and RVR add information to their newsletters to raise awareness. Instances of “littering” can be reported to the police. Brian Reading emphasised that grounds maintenance companies working for communal properties are often instructed to do this and, if seen, residents should report the contractor’s company and management company. Cllr. Adam Grant suggested that the gardener should be advised of the Purple Sack Scheme for leaves to be taken to the tip or collected by Environmental Services (details below). PCSO Adam Charles gave an example of a hired gardener burning leaves on his employer’s instructions causing smoke to drift across the railway lines. An Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) order was issued to the aggressive gardener and the resident was left a note to make them aware of the issue of causing a nuisance or danger on the railway. Cllr. Adam Grant said he would look into the leaf collection schedule for the road in question. Mike Ricketts advised that Purple Bags could also be used by Street Friends to

collect fallen leaves from pavements and roads for collection, as these are contaminated by petrol fumes and have to be incinerated, not composted.

Question 11: Suzanne Ricketts, Queens Mead Road

Safer Transport Team (STT). speed checks on Queensmead Road have not reduced the problem. The downhill speeding warning signs (past Glassmill Lane/Ravens Close) are triggered by 1 in 3 vehicles. Fellow resident Lorraine added that there is an issue of poor sight lines at the park gate opposite the Glassmill Lane/Ravens Close cul de sac at the bottom of the hill from Church Road Bromley. There is no pavement on the recreation ground side of the road and parking spaces right up to the zigzags outside the gate on the uphill side. The issue of lighting on the railway bridge at Mays Hill/Queensmead was also raised.

PCSO Adam Charles confirmed that he was aware of the issue and that the Safer Transport Team had made speed checks at the location. Cllr. Adam Grant suggested that that gate be locked and the crossing point be moved towards Station Road where the sight line is clearer and further from the hill. The issue of the lighting of the railway bridge is under review. Cllr. Grant will take these items and report back.

Mike Ricketts brought the meeting to a close and invited attendees to stay for refreshments and to speak to the panelists. He urged anyone who felt that the issues raised were important to consider signing up for the SRA Road Safety Group. Mike thanked everyone for attending and especially HPAS Head Jordan Hollis for allowing us to host this meeting at his school and Charley, George and Michelle for setting up the hall and refreshments. He also announced that St Marys choir would be leading a community carol singing event at Shortlands Station Ticket Office from 4pm on Wednesday, 20th December 2023. In closing he thanked the speakers for their input [applause].

Questions raised with Cllr. Adam Grant after the meeting:

- 1. Traffic Island at Park Road/Bromley Road - can this be reinstated now the cycle lane is gone?**
- 2. Can traffic lights be installed at Scotts Lane/Shortlands Road, Hayes Lane, Whitecroft Way junction?**
- 3. Shortlands Grove/Shortlands Road junction drain needs repair, as deep water collects across the road and pavement after heavy rain and takes some days to drain.**

Cllr Adam Grant took these questions away and will respond through SRA.

Useful contacts:

Shortlands & Park Langley Ward Councillors:

Felicity.Bainbridge@bromley.gov.uk

Aisha.Cuthbert@bromley.gov.uk

Adam.Grant@bromley.gov.uk

Met Police Shortlands Safer Neighbourhood Team: 020 8721 2614 ShortlandsSNT@met.police.uk

Street Friends Purple Sack Scheme: 0203 567 4095

Report It: www.bromley.gov.uk/report

Shortlands Residents' Association: www.shortlandsra.org.uk

Ravensbourne Valley Residents: www.ravensbournevalley.org