

SRA Shortlands Residents' Association **NEWSLETTER**

Summer 2025
www.shortlandsra.org.uk

BISHOP CHALLONER SCHOOL

The sudden closure of Bishop Challoner School is a very sad day for Shortlands. It has been a part of the fabric of our community for 75 years.

Started as a primary school for boys by Father Byrne, Beckenham's parish priest, in 1950, it took secondary pupils just a few years later, became co-educational in 1992, adding a pre-school only a few years ago. In 2013 it became a company limited by guarantee and registered as a separate charity under the oversight of trustees. Prior to COVID student numbers were around 400, though they have declined since then. Their pupils came not just from Bromley, but Lewisham, Greenwich, Croydon and elsewhere further afield.



The trustees closure announcement pointed to the rise in employer NI contributions and the introduction of 20% VAT on private school fees as the main causes for the closure, which happened on 4 July. Thankfully, we gather that most of the students have already found places in alternative schools, though there are still placement problems for some 'special needs' pupils.

The building that was the 'core' of Bishop Challoner, 'The Great House' is the oldest existing mansion in Shortlands, going back to the early/mid C18. For a decade (apart from during COVID) the SRA has run guided tours around the Great House and its grounds, though these are now populated with many school outbuildings and sports facilities. We were set to have another one this coming August. And the SRA is most concerned that, whatever the future holds, the original building should be respected and the best possible use made of the site.

We wish the students and staff all the very best for the future.

SRA COMMUNITY GRANTS

Over the last few months the SRA has made a series of 'community grants' up to the value of £200 to support local schools. These have been used for IT equipment and improvements to outdoor facilities.

We are now widening this programme, asking all local residents if they have projects in the Shortlands area which would benefit from a similar donation. If you have a community project that you think we could help, or want to discuss an idea with us, please email us at info@shortlandsra.org.uk setting out the benefits the grant would bring to the community, how much you are applying for, and what specifically you would like the donation to be used for.

We shall also be advertising this new programme on local social media. Our first deadline for applications is 31 August.



DEVELOPMENT

Restoring the River on Queensmead.

The SRA is establishing a relationship with Thames21, who are working with Bromley Council and the Environment Agency to transform the River Ravensbourne in Queensmead Recreation Ground. The project aims to replace the concrete channel with a more natural, meandering river to boost wildlife, reduce flood risk, and enhance the park. The SRA is concerned to ensure the measures proposed don't actually increase the risks of flooding both to surrounding houses and to the Queensmead fields themselves, much used for sporting activities and recreation. Public consultations are expected in summer 2025. Please look out for dates and have your say. More information about the project and next steps are available at thames21.org.uk. Alternatively, you can get in touch with us via planning@shortlandsra.org.uk and we will try to answer your questions.

Preventing Fires in Our Parks

With rising temperatures and dry conditions, the risk of fires in our parks increases significantly. At the start of July, a fire broke out in Church House Gardens, believed to have been started by local schoolchildren. Fortunately, it was quickly brought under control, but it highlights the need for extra care during heatwaves. Please avoid using disposable barbecues, never drop cigarettes, and speak to young people about the dangers of fire. If you see smoke or suspicious behaviour, call 999 immediately. Together, we can help protect our green spaces for everyone to enjoy safely this summer.

Shortlands Station Lifts

The lifts at Shortlands Station have now been in service for a few months. Whilst we have criticised the configuration of the lifts, which means most passengers have to use two lifts, instead of one, to get to and from platforms, the finished product is good and easy for use by those who need it most. The bridge linking the lift towers is lit at night and access stairs are provided to all levels.

LAW AND ORDER

The Metropolitan Police have launched a new initiative to help them communicate with Londoners more effectively. 'Met Engage' will allow those who sign up to choose what kind of information they want from the police, see what events are happening in their area, or contact the Met with useful intelligence. It's a two-way platform, so, for instance, if there is a car theft in a given road, the Met need alert only the population in that given area and invite them to get back with any evidence (like doorbell footage).

To learn more search 'Met Engage' online. You can learn more about Met Engage or sign up to the system by visiting www.metengage.co.uk and completing the 'sign up now' field.

The new system is not a crime reporting tool – please continue to report crime in the usual way by using 101, or, in an emergency, 999.

Police advice

Always take sensible steps to safeguard your property. Make sure windows and doors are locked even when popping out for a few minutes. Lock your side gates and garden sheds.

With vehicles, don't leave valuable items which can be seen in ungaraged and locked cars. Ideally, remove such articles altogether. Use a steering lock, if necessary, for added protection and use a Faraday cage indoors for your car keys. Warn builders, gardeners or others doing work for you to lock their vehicles.

Don't leave out unwanted stuff for people to help themselves; it can simply attract possible criminals to the area, who are always wandering around looking for easy targets.

Keep rubbish bins away from upstairs windows or neighbouring fences to stop criminals using them for access or to jump over.

As a community we remain one of the lowest crime areas covered by the Met – but we really want to keep it that way!



AGM 2025

This year's AGM at St Mary's Hall was attended by about 70 local residents. Guests attending included the then Mayor David Jefferys (who spoke about the 60th anniversary of the London Borough of Bromley), local Councillors Gemma Turrell and Adam Grant, and our GLA Assembly Member Thomas Turrell.

Our main guest speaker was Councillor Will Rowlands who spoke about the Council's environmental policy and priorities. Subsequent questions were wide-ranging, including concerns over the proposals to let the River Ravensbourne flow in the open through Queensmead, the safety of the ponds in Kingswood Glen, and lighting on the footbridge over the railway at the bottom of Mays Hill Road.

As to the AGM election of officers to the SRA's Committee, we bade farewell to our long-serving Development Officer Danny Miller and welcomed his successor Patty Ploch, and also elected a new Secretary Janine Austin.



Councillor Will Rowlands

NEWS FROM SHORTLANDS VILLAGE

Litter is one of those issues that concern our residents more than most, and late May saw a special litter-picking operation across Shortlands Village involving teams of local people led by Bromley's mayors past and present, Deputy Mayor Gemma Turrell and Councillor Adam Grant. Their foraging ranged out from Beckenham Lane as far as Queensmead and Farnaby Road.

Sadly, installation of the long awaited new benches and planters to beautify the Station end of the Village appears to have been delayed once again. We and local Councillors, especially Felicity Bainbridge, are pressing Council officers for a new start date.

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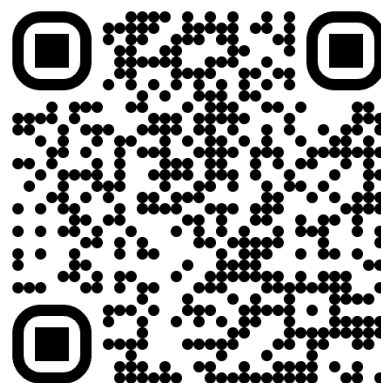
RECEIVING OUR NEWSLETTERS

At our recent AGM, many residents expressed interest in switching to an e-newsletter. We'd now like to hear from everyone. Would you prefer to receive our newsletter by email or as a printed copy?

Please take a moment to complete our short survey by scanning the QR code. Your feedback will help us shape how we stay in touch.

We are not intending to stop delivering our Newsletters to your door, if that's what you prefer.

And don't forget, you can also follow us on Facebook and on our website for updates between newsletters!



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