

# NEWSLETTER

Summer 2026  
[www.shortlandsra.org.uk](http://www.shortlandsra.org.uk)

## OUR NEW COUNCILLOR TEAM

Following the local elections in May the Ward Councillor team for Shortlands and Park Langley Ward has changed. New Councillor Serena Gupta has been elected to succeed Felicity Bainbridge, who had stood down from the Council, though she still retains a strong interest in road safety across Shortlands. Serena joins the existing team of Councillors Adam Grant and Gemma Turrell, who were re-elected.

Serena was born and raised in Bromley. Her career has ranged from retail to art creation, and from communications and social media to fundraising. On the Council she is Vice Chair of the Renewal, Recreation and Housing Policy Committee.

Adam Grant has become Chair of the Council's Environment Scrutiny Committee and Gemma Turrell is now on the Development Control Committee and is Vice Chair of the Health Scrutiny Sub-committee.

In the local elections across the borough the Conservatives retained overall control of Bromley Council and Councillor Colin Smith remains the Leader.

## 2026 AGM AND HUSTINGS

This year's AGM and the hustings we organized with RVR featuring candidates for our local Ward election were both very well attended and highlighted issues of greatest concern to our residents.

After the usual reports and elections the AGM had focused on scams and how to beat them led by the Council's Head of Safer Communities Rob Vale. His talk inspired lots of questions, especially on doorstep crime. In the Open Forum that followed questions ranged from the future of Shortlands Library (currently based in St Mary's Choir Vestry every Monday) to inadequate street lighting, from concerns about the long empty shop site at 87 Beckenham Lane in the Village to the future of the land previously occupied by Bishop Challoner School.

As to the hustings, all parties standing were represented except for Reform UK, who chose not to attend. An audience of 80 or more at



Shortlands Golf Club heard one candidate from each party represented set out their stall, and then residents were given the opportunity to cross-question them. Excellently chaired by our own Vice Chair Keith Mills, it proved to be a really lively and informative evening.

## AUTUMN OPEN MEETING HAVE YOUR SAY

As usual, this coming Autumn the SRA is planning to hold one of its themed Open Meetings on an issue of importance and concern to Shortlands' residents – members and non-members. We have one possible subject in mind at the moment, 'Saving Energy and the Environment', but we are keen to hear from you if you have a particular idea for a theme for the Meeting. It may be you like the environmental idea, or that you have another subject in mind. Either way, please let us know your thoughts by 30 August by emailing [info@shortlandsra.org.uk](mailto:info@shortlandsra.org.uk) Many thanks.

## NEW ROUND OF SRA COMMUNITY GRANTS

The SRA is launching a new round of 'community grants' each worth up to £250 to support projects throughout our area - an increase of 25% over the level of the first round of such grants made last year.

We are looking for local organisations and causes which would benefit from a donation, including our primary schools and the voluntary sector.

If you have a community project or cause in Shortlands that you think we could help, or if you want to discuss an idea with us, please email us at [info@shortlandsra.org.uk](mailto:info@shortlandsra.org.uk)

Please ensure in your application that you set out the benefits the grant would bring to the community, the amount you are applying for, and what you would specifically use the donation for.

Our deadline for applications is 30 September. Any funds granted under this initiative would be subject to the resources of the SRA.



## MEMBERSHIP

We would be delighted to have your support not only as a member, but also as a Road Liaison Officer to deliver the newsletters and collect subscriptions every quarter.

Membership is only £5 a year and can be paid by standing order or bank transfer...or in cash (though we prefer the first two options). Details of our account are provided in this newsletter.

We are working closely with local Councillors to achieve improved road safety and many other aspects of our daily life. We look forward to hearing from you at [membership@shortlandsra.org.uk](mailto:membership@shortlandsra.org.uk)

## SRA MINUTES SECRETARY JOB SHARE

Our search for a secretary to minute our monthly Committees and Open Meetings during the year continues...but we are, we hope, halfway there.

One volunteer has kindly come forward who is happy to minute six meetings, and we need a second volunteer who could help us by taking on the other six. If you are interested, please email [info@shortlandsra.org.uk](mailto:info@shortlandsra.org.uk) or call Mike Ricketts on 07896998975.

## DEVELOPMENT

### Cooling homes naturally through greener gardens

As temperatures rise, it is becoming increasingly important to consider how our homes and gardens can help reduce overheating. One of the simplest and most effective ways to keep a house cool is to provide shade, particularly on south- and west-facing elevations that receive the most direct sunlight during the day.

Trees are especially valuable for this purpose. Planted in appropriate locations, they can shade walls, windows and surrounding ground surfaces, helping to reduce heat gain and lower indoor temperatures. Deciduous trees are particularly beneficial because they provide cooling shade in summer while

allowing sunlight to reach homes during winter when their leaves have fallen.

The type of landscaping around a property also has a significant impact on local temperatures. Gardens containing lawns, shrubs, flower beds and trees help to cool the environment naturally. Vegetation absorbs less heat than hard surfaces and releases moisture into the air through evapotranspiration, creating a cooler and more pleasant microclimate.

In contrast, large areas of concrete, paving or tarmac can increase temperatures around homes. These materials absorb and store heat throughout the day before slowly releasing it during the evening, contributing to hotter surroundings and making buildings more difficult to cool. Extensive hard surfacing can therefore exacerbate the urban heat island effect, particularly during periods of hot weather.

For these reasons, retaining gardens and planting trees wherever possible can provide significant environmental, ecological, and amenity benefits. Green spaces not only enhance biodiversity and improve air quality but also play an important role in creating cooler, more comfortable and climate-resilient neighbourhoods

## **Solar Panels, Solar Tiles and Permitted Development Rights**

Generating renewable energy at home is becoming increasingly popular, helping households reduce energy bills while supporting the transition to a low-carbon future. In many cases, the installation of solar panels can be carried out under Permitted Development Rights, meaning that planning permission is not required, provided certain conditions are met. However, additional controls may apply to listed buildings, properties within conservation areas, or where planning conditions restrict permitted development rights. Speak to your Council or visit websites such as the Planning Portal for further information.

For homeowners concerned about the appearance of traditional solar panels, solar

tiles offer an attractive alternative. Designed to resemble conventional roof tiles or slates, they blend more seamlessly into the roofscape while continuing to generate renewable electricity. This can be particularly beneficial on prominent roof slopes or on buildings where maintaining architectural character is an important consideration.

## **Fire Safety in Hot and Dry Weather**

With recent hot and dry weather, open spaces, parks, gardens and grassland are becoming increasingly vulnerable to fire. Dry vegetation can ignite easily, allowing fires to spread quickly and potentially damage wildlife, property and the local environment.

Everyone can help reduce the risk by taking extra care outdoors. Cigarettes should be fully extinguished and disposed of responsibly, while barbecues, fire pits and other open flames should never be used on dry grass or near vegetation. Litter should also be removed, particularly items that could contribute to fire risks.

By staying vigilant and acting responsibly, residents can help protect valuable open spaces and keep communities safe during periods of prolonged dry weather.



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