

SHORTLANDS RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Founded in 1934

NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2011

www.shortlandsresidents.org.uk

Our New Councillor – David Jeffreys



The election of a new Councillor to represent the Shortlands ward following George Taylor's resignation was held on 20 October. Our congratulations go to David Jeffreys (Con) who was the clear winner with a total of 1480 votes with Liberal Democrats

in second place (490 votes) and Labour third (256 votes). Turnout was a little over 30%.

Cllr David Jeffreys and now joins Cllr Ernest Noad as one of our two elected representatives. We look forward to working closely with him, and will invite him to meet the committee and attend our AGM.

New Glossy Book To Celebrate Life In Shortlands

A new fully illustrated book telling the story of Shortlands past and present has just been published and is on sale from the SRA, priced £12.50. It would make a great gift as we approach the Christmas Season! Containing over 150 plates, mostly in colour, the book, entitled *Shortlands – Celebrating 75 Years of the Shortlands Residents' Association*, was written by former SRA Committee member Lydia Buttinger (now a local Councillor) and was commissioned to mark the Association's 75th anniversary. It features personal contributions from a number of local people with long memories of our area.

The book includes a history of Shortlands and of the SRA, photos of Shortlands over the last 150 years or so, details of our local societies and businesses and amenities like South Hill Wood and Kingswood Glen, and pieces on famous Shortlands residents, like Enid

Blyton, illustrator Charles Keeping and broadcaster and journalist John Carter.

The book is dedicated to the memory of Joan Bertoya, who served devotedly as a member of the SRA Committee for many years.

Copies can be purchased by cash or cheque (made out to the Shortlands Residents' Association) from Mark Dempsey (0208 460 4060) or Mike Ricketts (0208 460 0395).

Issues Taken up

Among all of the pessimism about the economy and the impact of deficit reduction measures on local services, it is easy to forget that organisations such as the SRA really can make a difference at the local level. If anything they have an even more important role in helping to make sure that the difficult choices facing policy makers are the right ones. Our recent activities and successes include:

Re-surfacing of South Hill Road. The road surface had deteriorated significantly during last winter, but was not due to be re-surfaced for approximately two years. In the summer, we argued that this needed a higher priority. The work was completed in late July/early August. By the time this newsletter reaches you work should also have been completed on improvements to the surfaces in Kingswood Road and the patchwork quilt otherwise known as Mays Hill Road!



Shortlands Library. The SRA continues in its efforts to retain a library service in Shortlands. In agreement with the London Borough of Bromley we will be advised when there are firm proposals for changes, at which time local consultations will be arranged; (See back page for more)



Parking by commuters. Reflecting concerns raised by members we have raised issues where commuter parking has led to inconvenience and in some cases traffic hazards for Shortlands' residents. Parking restrictions are to be introduced at the junction of Green Close and Kingswood Road to address this;

Pavements and potholes. We take up a range of issues leading to repairs to dangerous potholes and improvements to pedestrian walkways. Last year large sections of Kingswood Road were re-paved as a result of the SRA's pressure

Development News

The recent Core Strategy consultation generated some interest locally. This is the long-term planning strategy for the London Borough of Bromley. Residents, businesses and developers are all being asked to put forward their views and ideas to help guide the location and nature of change around the Borough. The consultation included a question and answer section and maps of the wards, although the Shortlands map included parts of Bromley Town and Copers Cope. This is based on the UDP plan, with added community venues - one of which was the library - is this good news? We were able to correct a number of inaccuracies shown on the plan so we hope that any serious development proposals are based on a full understanding of the facts! We have responded to the issues raised in the consultation and worked with the Park

Langley Residents' Association - their interests and ours are very similar.

On 9 June last year Decentralisation Minister, Greg Clark announced a reissue of *Planning Policy Statement: Housing*, with amendments removing private residential gardens from the definition of previously developed land and removing the national minimum density requirement. While this is a welcome change, a lot more needs to be done about density which is driven by the London Plan and is proving ineffective in supporting spatial standards which are a key local amenity value. That we are still in the development doldrums can be seen by the number of non-starter sites and applications to extend the three-year limit, for those schemes dating before 1st October 2009. Private housing development saves public cash (or at least it did until recently) but is profit driven and when paying customers are thin on the ground, it's not going to happen.

Bromley South Central

In September we organised a meeting for committee members and LOs to hear more about the proposals for this Public/Private Partnerships between Bromley and the developers Cathedral Group, due to be formally lodged with the planning authorities in October. Briefly, the plans involve the demolition of the 600 space Westmoreland Road car park and developing the surrounding area to include: a multiplex cinema; 25,000 sq. ft. of café and restaurant space



(about 6 outlets); a 150 bedroom hotel; 173 private and affordable apartments; and a 400 space car park.

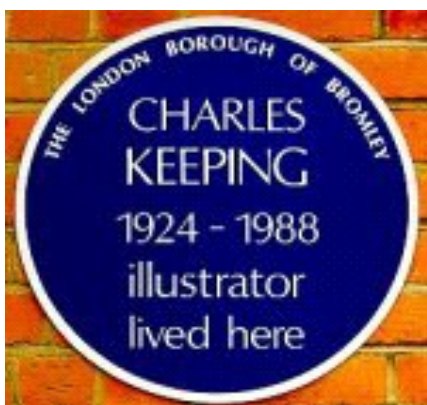
This would be a major development, very much on our doorstep and we wanted to consider the implications before formal processes were started. Among the



concerns raised (and which we will include in formal responses when the time comes) were the density of the development - it will cram a lot into a confined site; reducing parking places while increasing the demand (cinemas, apartments, hotel etc.); impact on the immediate area; and spatial considerations, especially the height of the proposed apartment block. The Bromley Civic Trust is aware of our interest and shares our views on the outline that we have seen.

Keeping Gallery Visits 2011

This Summer we organised two, highly successful, visits to the Gallery devoted to the works of the late,



internationally famous, book illustrator Charles Keeping and his widow Renata, at 16 Church Road, just down from the War Memorial. At a specially reduced charge, groups of a dozen or so SRA members toured the Gallery ably

led by Renata, who has a great gift for explaining simply the mysteries and techniques of the art-forms on display.

Charles' most famous work was done between the 60s and 80s, illustrating new editions of books as varied as Charles Dickens' novels to Rudyard Kipling's *Just so Stories*, via *Black Beauty* and Noyes' well known poem *The Highwayman*. Illustrations from these and many other books are on show in the Gallery, as are some of Renata's own collages and 'soft sculptures'. It is a fascinating two hours, ending in a refreshing tea and pastries!

We are hoping to run more such visits next Summer. We shall advertise in the Spring Newsletter about prospective dates.

School Crossing Patrols

Plans to remove the four patrols in Shortlands, Hayes Lane, South Hill Road, Westmoreland Road and Beckenham Lane, serving three local primary schools, are scheduled early next year. Schools have been asked to contribute while at the same time seeing their budgets cut. The routes are also used by the "walking bus", three out of four are across busy main roads so there are clearly road safety issues. In some cases there are islands which can be used but the school crossing lights are manually operated and will not necessarily continue to be visible to motorists. It is apparent that these patrols have been cost effective in avoiding the need for expensive light controlled crossings, which would otherwise be a consideration bearing in mind the traffic volumes on the main roads.



Customer Champion 'Dee'

Shortlands station's own Denise James - Dee to many of us buying tickets - has been crowned 'Customer Champion' in this year's National Institute of Customer Services awards.

Customers and passengers have long appreciated Dee's work at the station for the excellent service she gives. She is always smiling and goes the extra mile to help,



including recently helping two seriously ill passengers and organising a charity sale in the station car-park. This is the highest possible accolade for customer care she could receive.

Brilliant, Dee!

SRA Annual Quiz Night

Our annual quiz, held on 15 October, was another outstanding success, attracting no less than 12 teams – with more than 80 people involved. We have had very positive feedback on what a well organised and enjoyable evening it was, largely due to the efforts of Sally Guttridge and the quiz master's team. It was a close contests right to the end – with result hanging on the question of how many eyes a box jelly fish has!

Bromley Community Engagement Forum

The next public meeting of the BCEF is being held on 30 November at 7.0 p.m. at Bromley Football Club, Hayes Lane BR2 9EF. The meeting will include:

- an update from the Police on the disorder arrests and a discussion about local policing issues;
- a presentation by a Magistrate explaining the sentencing process and how magistrates reach their decisions;
- an opportunity for questions relating to community safety in the Borough (advance notification of any questions would be helpful to ensure the answer can be given on the night);
- Bromley's Trading Standards staff will also be in attendance at this meeting from 6.30 p.m.

Refreshments are available from 6.30. Everyone is welcome to attend this event, but to assist with catering/seating it would be helpful if you could let Amanda Evans know if you will be attending: amanda.evans@bcef.org.uk;

Telephone: 020 8658 7168.

SHORTLANDS LIBRARY - THE NEXT CHAPTER

Your Committee continues in its efforts to retain the existing library service in Shortlands Road. We are in regular contact with the Council stressing the various needs which our members and their families have indicated to us are of value to them.

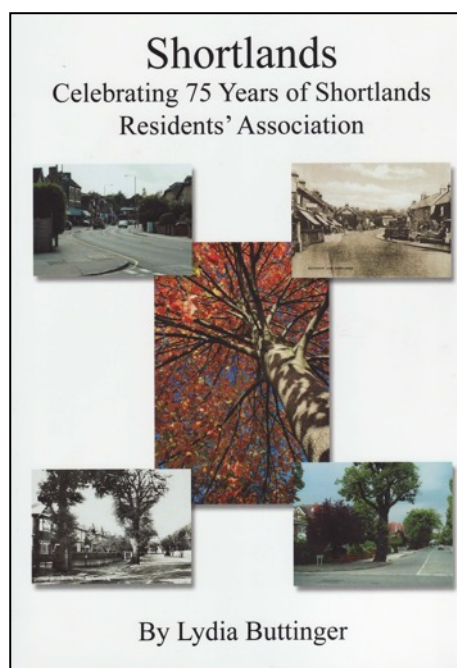
As a cost cutting exercise, Bromley Council is progressing with its plans to merge the library administration and delivery services with those of Bexley Council. However, to date, no proposals have been accepted for consideration

by the Council, which seeks to change the present level of service provided by our local library.

At the time any such proposals are tabled, the Council has agreed that your Committee will be advised to allow local consultation to take place. This approach conforms to the Government guidelines. There is, of course, need for Bromley Council to achieve budget reductions and examine expenditure levels in all areas. We have though suggested that the savings sought from the library budget, which it is anticipated will emanate from the merger of operations with Bexley, should be accepted as a sufficient contribution, so enabling the libraries themselves to continue to operate as at present.

As you may expect we have promoted many other recommendations which we believe the Council could consider as alternatives to any possible programme of closures, in addition to stressing the wide spread of activities currently offered by the Shortlands' library staff and the importance of each to a broad range residents. We feel that in so many ways the library serves our community from a child's early learning right through to satisfy adult education and enjoyment.

You can be assured your Committee will continue to persevere and do all in its power to keep Shortlands Road library, 'our library', fully open for business. And in the meantime we are making sure that we are well represented in the round of consultations being conducted by Bromley on the difficult choices that they, along with other public sector organisations, face over the next three years or so.



Available, price £12.50, from Mark Dempsey (0208 460 4060) or Mike Ricketts (0208 460 0395)