**Over 60 Attend New Style Open Meeting**

We have held a number of open meetings, usually on weekday evenings, in the past, often focusing on a single theme of interest to people in Shortlands. We were keen, however to try a new approach with our meeting held on Saturday 6 October.

First, we wanted to see if holding the meeting on a Saturday morning would attract a wider audience, possibly including younger families with children; second, we held the meeting, for the first time, in the hall of the Harris Primary Academy Shortlands; and third, we were joined by (left to right)

![Councillors Mary Cooke and Aisha Cuthbert from Shortlands and Councillor Nicky Dyke from Bromley Town. They gave their views of the issues and opportunities facing the area before the session was opened up for questions.](image)

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We were delighted with the turn out of more than 60 people, despite some typically autumnal weather. Issues raised varied from (inevitably) parking, to street cleaning, to healthcare provision and how the views of businesses in “The Village” can be more effectively voiced.

This new style forum could provide a useful channel of communication between residents and our locally elected representatives, and we are keen to run similar events, perhaps twice each year. If you have thoughts about the timing of future meetings or the topics you would like to cover, please get in touch.

We were very grateful to the Councillors for giving up their Saturday morning, and the Principal and staff at the Harris Primary Academy Shortlands for the use of their facilities.

**The End of Hostilities - 1918**

Residents will be very familiar with the arrangements for the annual Remembrance Sunday commemoration centred around the war memorial adjacent to St Mary’s Church. Representatives from local organisations, including the SRA, attend to lay wreaths to mark the end of the First World War at the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month.

This year, with the one hundredth anniversary of the end of that war, the commemoration will be particularly poignant.

The national two minutes silence at 11 a.m. will, as usual, be preceded by a service in the Church starting at 10:00 a.m., to which all are welcome. Many of our readers will have heard about an initiative to mark the signing of the Armistice in 1918. The “Tommys” are life sized silhouettes representing a typical British soldier from WW1, in an initiative similar to the poppies that adorned the Tower of London in 2014. They have appeared around the country at many iconic locations. Local communities are able to host their own installations, and local organisations have worked together to purchase one of these silhouettes for Shortlands. The money raised from the sale of the commemorative figures, which are made by military veterans, will be distributed evenly between six charities including the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

In particular, and to the mark the centenary, this year our silhouette of a British WW1 infantryman will be “unveiled” in the Church grounds overlooking the memorial. Your Association was pleased to make a donation to the cost of the feature.

**Shortlands Own VC**

And as we reach the climax of events across the globe marking the end of the First World War, it is an appropriate time to remember one particular Shortlander who was killed in that Great War and later awarded the Victoria Cross.

He was Lt Commander Geoffrey Saxton White, who was born in Shortlands on 2 July 1886 and spent his early years in a house in Durham Road. He was the commander of HMS Submarine ‘E14’ which was sent to the Dardanelles in South East Europe in 1918 to attack enemy shipping.
Submarine warfare was still in its infancy at that time and many accidents occurred. One of the torpedoes that was being fired at a merchant ship exploded as it was released, causing serious damage to the bow of ‘E14’ and forcing it to surface, where it came under heavy fire from nearby Turkish batteries. With such severe damage he gave the order to steer towards the shore to give his crew some chance of rescue.

Throughout the action White remained on deck controlling operations, until he was tragically killed by shellfire. His body was never recovered and his submarine sank after running aground.

He was posthumously awarded the VC by King George V on 24 May 1919 for ‘conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty’. He is remembered in the Portsmouth Naval Memorial and on the Bromley War Memorial. Should his name not also be added to our own one in due course?

**Sainsbury’s Local for The Village?**

An application has been made to develop the area in Beckenham Lane which is presently boarded up.

The proposal is to demolish the existing buildings, which comprise three shops and a flat over the shops and to build a Sainsbury’s Local over the whole of the ground floor, with storage in the basement, and six flats over three floors above the shop. There is no provision for parking.

The SRA has expressed concerns about the effects of the development on traffic in Beckenham Lane, especially during the construction period. It is further concerned about the lack of adequate provision for deliveries to the store of which seven a day, which could last up to 20 minutes each, are planned. It points out that the width of Beckenham Lane is such that it will be difficult to overtake delivery vehicles. Furthermore, the proposal does not deal with the consequences for the bus stop immediately outside the proposed development. SRA suggests that a solution might be to create a delivery lay-by.

SRA believes that the suggestion visitors to the shop are likely to come on foot or cycle is unrealistic. Surrounding roads already suffer from over-parking. It says that if the application is to proceed, it should do so only in conjunction with a full parking plan for all the streets around the railway station.

This will no doubt be a much debated matter and you can make your own comments online by going to Bromley Planning and using the reference 18/03595/FULL1. If you wish to say something don’t delay!

**Development and Planning News**

Over the last few months we have continued to see large numbers of planning applications for extensions to properties, many of which are substantial. These are mostly approved, but a considerable number are refused by the planning department, mostly on the basis of the bulk and the effect on the amenity of neighbours.

I was aware, writes Development Office, Danny Miller, that many of the refused applications become the subject of appeals and I was interested to see what happens to these appeals. In July and August this year across the whole of the borough there were decisions on 57 appeals. 23 were allowed. Interpret this how you will; either our planners are getting some 40% of their decisions wrong or they are our protectors against overdevelopment!

We also regularly see applications to demolish a single existing property and replace it with a block of, say, six flats, sometimes more. These are refused, surprisingly frequently, on similar grounds. This is the kind of application that arouses the greatest interest and it clearly affects the street scene. We often submit our own objection and continue to raise issues about failing to provide an adequate plan for parking additional vehicles. It is not just that the number of cars relating to that property increases but also the number of visitors and deliveries. There are traffic hotspots which are routinely ignored when the question of redevelopment is raised.

We know that parts of the St Marks Square development in Bromley will open this autumn and that it is part of the greater plan for the massive redevelopment of the area up as far as the Churchill Theatre. The proposed developers of what will be called Churchill Quarter have submitted an application which has drawn a very large response from the public. A presentation was recently held in the Glades. My concern was that the representatives had very little knowledge about integrating the plan with the whole subject of infrastructure and provision of services.

Bromley has a unique opportunity to integrate a large-scale development with proper planning for such matters as doctors’ surgeries, schools, community activities, travel services and so on. The danger has always been separating planning from infrastructure. We have already made our own submissions, not opposing what is proposed but commenting on the height and bulk and stressing the need for integration.

One benefit of all this activity is that developers see Bromley as a place to be; so, after being closed for many years an application has been made to re-open the Royal Bell as a hotel with a new nine storey block at the back.

Many thanks to one of our members for drawing our attention to the problems of vehicles parked on pavements and overnight parking of large lorries. She has very helpfully reviewed the illegality of such activities. Some roads already have parking restrictions overnight and...
there is no reason why application should not be made to the Council for these to be extended. Although a local authority can exempt certain roads the general state of the law is that parking wholly or partly on footways is not legal. The Highway Code says something similar.

There are similar rules for parking across a residential driveway and too close to a road junction. Some of these problems could amount to criminal offences.

As I stated above, this links with our own views that with extra demand for accommodation there must be proper parking policies in place to deal with additional traffic.

Parking Update
The SRA has continued to press for improvements on parking and road safety issues. The subject featured strongly at our open meeting on 6 October. Double yellow lines have been installed on some dangerous junctions such as that between Church Road and Shortlands Road to deter commuters from parking irresponsibly. Some residents are also arguing for double yellow lines to be painted at other junctions.

As far as double yellow lines at the top (St Mary’s) end of Church Road are concerned, it has been agreed that these are necessary but at the time of going to press no action had been taken to get them actually painted. Our two Councillors are pressing for these to be in place in time for the Remembrance Sunday service.

Stories from The Great House
Around 30 of us went on the visit to Shortlands’ 300 year old ‘Great House’ in August. Arising from that visit, we are learning more and more about the families that lived in the house before it became a hotel and then Bishop Challoner School in the last century and the unusual events that took place there.

In August 1881 Sir Stevenson Arthur Blackwood, Secretary to the General Post Office (GPO) the then owner, together with the Duchess of Manchester, held a gathering at the House for 300 telegraph messengers! During his residence he erected a Temperance Hotel in Crayford, while his son, Algernon Henry, who lived there until 1891, became a well-known writer of supernatural fiction.

In the early years of the last century there was obviously a great deal of fruit grown on the estate. During the First World War Jessie Klaber from the family of German millionaire A D Klaber, then owner, was fined £10 for breaking the law – the Sugar (Domestic) Preserving Order – to acquire more sugar than was due to her at a time of national shortage to preserve ‘about 4000 lbs of fruit’.

Upgrade to Police 101 Phone Line
Trying to call the police for non-urgent issues on phone-line 101 many of us have been frustrated by the long delays in getting through. Hopefully this will soon be a thing of the past. At the recent Bromley Police Summit we learnt that the police are now working to get to grips with the 101 problems.

At the Summit Assistant Commissioner Martin Hewitt announced improvements to the 101 system by not only increasing staffing, but also by the introduction of a telephone menu system to divert calls to the correct area, as, often, calls made to 101 and indeed 999 have nothing whatever to do with policing!

In addition, there will be an on-line system introduced for reporting Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) which will enable relief of many incidental reports clogging up the 101 operation, bringing together intelligence on crime hotspots, all without detracting from the seriousness of ASB incidents…see https://www.met.police.uk/ro/report/asm/antisocial-behaviour/

So, please never hesitate to report suspicious behaviour of one sort or another and do try to do so without any undue delay, using 101, or, of course, if a crime looks imminent or actually in progress, call 999. This is an important aspect of neighbourhood policing in helping to keep us all safe and secure.

At the Police Summit we learned that there is now a new vision in Policing, working much more in partnership with communities and crime prevention and that wards will maintain a minimum of 2 DWO PCs and 1 PCSO. The Met has been recruiting extra police officers who will be focused on dealing with Schools and Youth Offending, and Neighbourhood Tasking Teams which will provide further backup to DWOs as required.

If you wish to join the Shortlands Ward community email listing for regular local crime updates and advice from our DWOs, please contact Graham Pyefinch, Chairman, Shortlands Safer Neighbourhood Panel, e-mail: graham658@hotmail.com.

Regular public meetings are also held every two months for all Shortlands residents and are publicised via the email network. If you would like to become a Shortlands Ward Panel Member representing your local neighbours or organisation, please also let Graham know.
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