

SHORTLANDS RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Founded in 1934

NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2017

www.shortlandsresidents.org.uk

Health and Social Care in our Community 8.00 pm on Thursday 19 October St Mary's Church hall

How we manage health and social care in the light of changing demographics is a hot topic. It featured significantly in the recent General Election, and there are some key questions about how we, as a society, provide health and social support for the increasingly ageing population and other vulnerable people.

The SRA is hosting a "Question Time" style panel discussion in which local Councillors David Jefferys, Chairman of the Bromley's Health and Wellbeing Board and Mary Cooke, who chairs the Bromley's Care Services Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee and Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee will participate. Representatives from private and third sector providers have also been invited.

This will be an informative and lively session on a topic that affects all of us. All are welcome to attend.

Parking In Shortlands - A disappointing lack of progress

We have been sadly disappointed in the responses we have received from Bromley Council, to our comprehensive parking report, despite numerous meetings and written communications with the former Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services, Councillor Colin Smith. His (and the Council's) policy is not to have any more parking restrictions, especially where residents have off-street parking.

We have pointed out: (a) that many of our roads, blighted by commuter parking, do not offer off-street parking; (b) that policies should change to meet new circumstances; and (c) that the policy is unjust in that Shortlands is treated differently from other areas within Bromley. We believe that we are the only area with a train station which has virtually no parking controls and that Bromley's approach is both inflexible and inconsistent.

Members will recall that we have been campaigning for parking controls in those Shortlands streets which are jam-packed from Monday to Friday with commuter parking. We carried out a thorough survey late in 2016 which showed that residents in the badly affected streets were strongly in favour of such controls. Other responses pointed out the problems of dangerous parking particularly on corners, of inconsiderate parking making it difficult for drivers to enter and leave their own property and of the fact that a number of bus stops are not marked out which means that buses often cannot stop near the pavement and use their drop-step.

We wrote a comprehensive report and approached the council confident that we would achieve the support and assistance we need in order to improve the horrendous parking situation in some Shortlands' roads. What we are asking for is a scheme similar to that at New Beckenham Station (also an area with a mixture of housing and flats, many of which have some off-street parking). This would, perhaps, involve

a two hour period during which only residents could park.

Have we had any positive outcomes? In the matter of dangerous parking on corners Councillor Smith has agreed with us and promised that double yellow lines would be painted. When we asked for an update we were

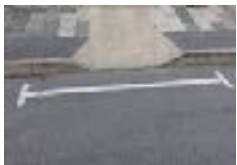


told there has to be a 21 day consultation period with local residents, which is due to begin after we go to press. We will pursue this – noting that Councillor Smith has now taken over as Leader of the Council following the resignation of Councillor Carr. The new Portfolio Holder is William

Huntingdon-Thresher and we have already contacted him to continue this dialogue.

In terms of bus stop markings we are in contact with Transport for London on the need for suitable markings to be installed in St Mary's Avenue and Beckenham Grove.

We have also been offered a white line scheme in certain roads. This would involve marking out parking spaces and providing lines in front of



each driveway. We felt that this would have a minimal effect on the problem, not least because parking on these lines is not legally

enforceable (although parking across a dropped kerb is) but agreed a trial might be useful.

Where next? We now would like to call upon you. Perhaps if every time you are inconvenienced by excessive parking, inconsiderate parking, dangerous parking on corners or difficulties in getting on and off buses you write or email your Councillors. This may have an effect by weight of numbers. If you could add a photo this would be even more effective. If you are not sure who your Councillor is go to the link on the SRA website (www.shortlandsresidents.org.uk/sra-news.html). The address for TfL is Leon Daniels, Managing Director, Surface Transport, 14 Pier Walk, SE10 0ES.

Shortlands Library

After a long period of uncertainty, the future of our library in Shortlands has been secured for at least another ten years. Under a contract awarded by Bromley Council, Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) is taking over the operation of all the public libraries in the Borough. GLL is a charitable social enterprise which aims to make a contribution to the local communities in which it operates, and it already runs library services in other parts of the country.

Among the conditions of the contract GLL cannot reduce the opening hours below their present levels. Indeed, they could be extended. It may be, too, that other uses could be made of the rooms in the Library building, beyond that of the main library hall on the ground floor. The decision to award the library contract to GLL follows a market testing exercise, with conditions including a commitment to operating the existing library service with the same number of libraries and staff.

Welcoming this decision, SRA Chair Mark Dempsey said, 'The SRA has campaigned all along to keep our local Library open, and it seems our efforts have helped to save it for years to come, to the benefit of the whole community'.

Planning And Development Update

Perhaps the most significant planning and development issue over the last couple of months was the proposal to grant a developer a long lease over the land known as Library Gardens in the centre of Bromley. This was part of a plan for a major development parallel with the High Street.

Although not in our area we all use the Bromley facilities. The SRA made a submission objecting to the plan to grant a lease in the circumstances. The lease would have been for 250 years to a selected developer whose plans for the area had not yet been approved. The proposal made no sense as the result could have been that this developer had effectively perpetual rights over a 'ransom strip' in respect of linked land which they might never develop.

Another intriguing proposal was in respect of the Chinese Garage. Planning permission had already been granted to convert this very well-known site into a retail development for two stores, a pet supplies retailer and a wine shop. The latest plan involves Tesco replacing the pet shop and requesting extended hours for deliveries and trading.

Over 400 people have submitted their own objections largely on the grounds of disruption around the roundabout which could not cope with the inevitable increase in traffic but also in



respect of the damage to the existing local shops. A decision is yet to be made.

Many of us have been concerned about the condition of the surface of the rail bridge close to Shortlands Station. Not only were there 'pot holes' but in some places it was possible to see through to the tracks and we made a submission in respect of the potential dangers. There is an issue about whether Bromley Council are responsible for this bridge, which is also a public footpath, or whether the responsibility lies with Network Rail. The bridge was closed for temporary resurfacing and we understand that it will be closed for permanent repairs over the weekend of 23 September. It is anticipated that the work will take one week.

Finally, congratulations to one of our members who ensured that restrictions to overnight parking in St Mary's Avenue were restored after considerable debate with the Highways Authority. This related to the weight of vehicles permitted to park.

Shortlands War Memorial

Good news – if a little delayed - on the restoration of the war memorial, severely damaged when a car crashed into it in July last year. Work on the restoration is progressing and is now near completion. Officers at Bromley Council hope to be in a position to confirm the precise dates of work to replace the memorial shortly, likely to be at the end of October.



When war memorials are reinstated, it is customary to have a civic re-dedication service. As the date for such a service would be very close to Remembrance Sunday, St. Mary's, Bromley Council and the SRA have agreed that it makes sense to hold a combined service on 12 November

We expect that the combined service will have a similar format to Remembrance services, with similar roles being adopted on the day by the various key local organisations.

Another Great House Mystery

Our tours of Shortlands' oldest mansion, The Great House, now Bishop Challoner School, always lead to mysteries

This year it was about the use of the House before it became a school. We knew that after WW1 it became a private hotel, the Shortlands House Hotel, serving visitors to the area and famed for its ginger puddings! We know that after WW2 it was still open. But was the hotel shut up temporarily during the Second War itself, or did it continue to function? One of the School's staff remembered hearing that people could just wander through an empty building during wartime.

If you do recall anything about the building during the war years please let us know by writing to us at info@shortlandsresidents.org.uk

This space to let

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