

Q3 2026 Issue 3



Welcome to our latest newsletter. You can access the web links by downloading a pdf version at www.ravensbournevalley.org

We issue the Q3 newsletter to all households in the area. For those of you who are not familiar with us, Ravensbourne Valley Residents (RVR) was founded in 1987 and we now have around 500 subscribing households. We aim to maintain and improve the green and built environment for the benefit of residents. We meet every two months at Shortlands Golf Club where we usually have some of our local councillors in attendance to take questions and provide updates. We also invite guest speakers – 2026 talks include the work of Bromley Samaritans, the history of Crystal Palace and Bromley Little Theatre. Take a look at our website to find out more, including details of how to join.

Membership benefits and highlights

- Regular meetings with interesting speakers and the opportunity to question local councillors
- Social events, including summer garden party and visits, eg to Bethlem Museum of the Mind
- Cleaner streets through the efforts of the [RVR Street Friends team](#)
- Access to our knowledge of the local planning system to avoid some of the common pitfalls of building and development projects
- Support for our campaigning activity for the benefit of the wider community, eg we secured permanent public use of the footpath across the Goan Field linking Warren Avenue Playing Fields to Beckenham Place Park

Join us and help us to help the community!.

And just to remind you of our hot, dry summer, here is a view of Warren Avenue Playing Fields in August 2026. Hopefully, I can include a similar picture in the next edition with greener grass.



Not so green playing field

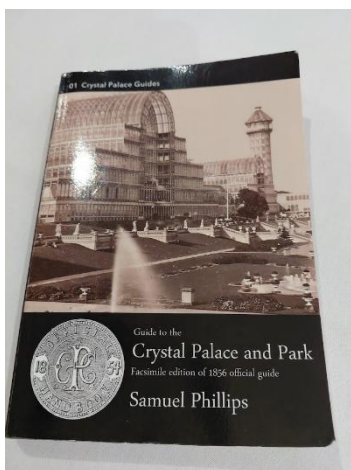
Gillian Lees (RVR Newsletter Editor)

Meeting report – July 2026

Uncovering the Lost Crystal Palace – a whistle-stop tour



Sam Brearley, a teacher and historian (also our Chairman's son) provided a fascinating insight into what Crystal Palace would have looked like in 1854 once it was relocated to Sydenham Hill after the Great Exhibition of 1851. Apparently, the South East London location was chosen for its good air quality and views as well as its railway station – but it was also considered to be well away from the temptations of drink in Central London.



Perhaps what was most striking was the sheer diversity and ambition of features and activities that took place over the years, ranging from musical concerts, circuses and the 1911 Festival of Empire where one could travel on a miniature railway to tour such 'sights' as the Indian and Australian parliaments. Sam played what is considered to be the earliest surviving recording of live music-making in the world, recorded at Crystal Palace in an 1888 concert with 4,000 singers (and yes, it was a bit scratchy).

Sam also told us about the Victorian craze for geology and dinosaurs which spawned the creation of the Grade 1 listed dinosaur models as well as the sporting legacy with, for example, the hosting of the FA Cup Final between 1895 and 1914. It is great to see that both these aspects of the park will

continue into the future with the [recent regeneration project for the dinosaurs](#) and approval for the £130m redevelopment of the [Crystal Palace National Sports Centre](#).

Sam's talk was based on an audio walking tour that he created for [VoiceMap](#) and the slides from the talk have been posted on the [RVR website](#)

Introduction to new Bromley councillors

Both new and returning councillors came to introduce themselves and to take questions on matters of concern to residents. Thanks to Councillors Gita Bapat, Adam Grant and Serena Gupta for taking time out of their busy schedules. The ability to speak in person to councillors is much valued by RVR members and can be a very quick way of providing feedback on matters large or small (such as the type of recycling bins we have in Bromley!)

Life membership for Michael Tickner

This received a unanimous vote to recognise Michael's contribution to our Society and community over many years. He has been consistently an interested, supportive and dedicated representative of our area and will be difficult to emulate. We wish Michael every best wish in his next endeavours. The award does not imply support for any particular political party.

Member news and activities

RVR Summer Garden Party – 15th August

Much fun, relaxation and good conversation was had at the annual summer garden party, held in the gardens of 33/35 Downs Hill. Music was provided by the Chicago Classics Jazz Trio and we were blessed with a fantastic array of raffle prizes, including some generously donated by local businesses – [Tracy Wright](#), local hairdresser, [Panagua Bikes](#), [Shortlands Tavern](#) and [Blooms and Candy Flower Studio](#). £400 was raised for the [Bromley Borough Foodbank](#) and [Bromley Homeless](#). Thanks to all the volunteers who helped to make it such a special day – as our Chairman pointed out in her welcome speech, RVR strives to promote friendship and neighbourliness and that was certainly achieved. Particular thanks go to Jay, Joel, Jacqueline and Euan for so generously making their gardens available for the event. And here is a small selection of the wonderful pictures, supplied by our Treasurer, Nanthini Santhiapillai.



Bromley Reform Synagogue

RVR was delighted to be represented at the annual civic service and reception on Saturday 20th June alongside our local MPs, Peter Fortune (Bromley & Biggin Hill) and Liam Conlon (Beckenham & Penge). Also in attendance were the Mayors of Bromley and Lewisham and other representatives of the local community. The synagogue held the service to thank the community for its support and we were given a very warm welcome.

Buicks to Beaulieu

In a bittersweet moment for our former Treasurer, Dave Wiltshire, a number of us gathered at his Crab Hill home on 10th July to wave goodbye to his pair of lovingly restored Buicks – a 1930 open-top model, built in Michigan and a 1931 sedan, built in London. These beautiful cars have gone to a new home at the [National Motor Museum](#) in Beaulieu, Hampshire. Dave gave a moving speech of his 'Buick journey' which started when he fell in love with them at the age of nine and continued alongside his dad when Dave bought his first Buick and restored it. He explained how they had travelled regularly to New Jersey for 20 years to attend the Hershey Car Show and became great friends with William King Schaedel, a fellow enthusiast and active member of the Antique Automobile Club of America from whom they had sourced car parts.



Dave Wiltshire with one of the Buicks – mind your feet folks

And we also said goodbye to Hadyn Davies, one of our Road Reps, who is moving to Broadstairs. Some of you may remember that Hadyn gave a fascinating talk on the restoration of London's St Pancras hotel at the members' meeting in November 2025, featured in the [Q4 2025 newsletter](#).

RVR meeting - Thursday 3rd September at 7.30pm - Shortlands Golf Club

In addition to the usual agenda items and updates, Pat Jones from Bromley Little Theatre (BLT) will be telling us all about the history of this very special local theatre. A report will follow in the next newsletter

If you missed it, the best thing is to discover BLT for yourself by booking a show! Find out more about BLT's outstanding theatre for everyone at bromleylittletheatre.org

Planning

Planning enforcement

It's boring but it is necessary to repeat: **DO NOT** build anything before checking that you don't need permission! So many owners and builders build things and then suffer the upset and cost when the Council requires them to take them down again. We see this again and again. You can get reassurance from the council for as little as £274 – a bargain relative to say, revising or removing a loft extension built without permission.

Millwall FC

Many of you will have seen all the changes going on at Millwall as the club takes advantage of its having purchased the freehold last year. Many trees have been felled but we understand that many of these were diseased (ash die-back) and needed urgent removal. We are hoping to get a formal statement from Lewisham Council about this in due course.



A number of other changes appear to need planning approval including:-

- The massive earth berm (the long mound of earth) probably needs planning permission;
- Two temporary buildings don't have permission
- The large sign is unauthorised

Lewisham is investigating these and other issues but at the time of writing we don't know the outcome

79 Coniston Road – yet another sorry chapter

This long running saga of planning irregularities, inspections and refused planning applications continues. Most recently the property (which only has permission to be a single family home) has been [advertised](#) as a hotel! We have been advised that Bromley Council is preparing to issue two Enforcement Notices that will require the property to be used only as a single family home and secondly to stop people from living in the garden outbuilding!

The Chalet, Kirkstone Way

This long-abandoned bungalow has been the subject of two Enforcement Notices in recent years. The first of these was quite stringent and was ignored by the owner. The second, sadly, only required minimal changes including replacing the hoarding. While this is much tidier, it still means neighbours have to live next to a 'building site' which isn't very satisfactory. For the moment the matter rests there.



The Chalet, Kirkstone Way - before and 'sort of' after



Help us to keep Bromley attractive

If you see anything that has been built without permission, please report it to Bromley or Lewisham Council as necessary. Their addresses are Planning.Investigation@bromley.gov.uk and Planningenforcement@Lewisham.gov.uk. Reports are treated confidentially. And please copy us on any reports.

We are always ready to provide free guidance to members to help them navigate these issues – please contact our Planning Officer, Clive Lees at planning.rvr@outlook.com. The [RVR website](#) provides a wealth of information on planning issues, including updates on current developments and Self-Help Planning Resources.

The general rule is that if something is too big, too high or too unusual it might well be unauthorised development!

Where is our £500k?

Bromley Central Library was sold last year for £500k, but that money is supposed to be used for the education and learning of the people of Bromley. How come?



Until June 2026, Central Library was on the site of an old house called Neelgherries, named after the Nilgiris (today's preferred spelling) hills in India. It was owned by Emily Dowling who bequeathed the site in 1900 to the people of Bromley for their education and learning and it has been held in Trust since then.

Now the site has been sold, the proceeds (£500k) are still held in Trust. We have asked the Council how it intends to use these funds for their

designated purpose, because at the moment the money is sitting in a bank account!

Land at the bottom of Downs Hill – bona vacantia

This is a small triangle of land at the end of Downs Hill by the 354 bus stop. It is now 'bona vacantia' which means ownerless or vacant goods. It refers to assets, land, or estates that have no legal owner and consequently pass to the Crown (or the Duchies of Lancaster/Cornwall) in England and Wales. We are currently making enquiries of the solicitors dealing with the case as to what happens next. We have also asked that Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's) be raised on the trees to help protect this valuable corner.



Bona vacantia land

Finally..

We would like to take the opportunity to express our thanks to our Bromley and Lewisham Councillors, particularly Cllrs Grant, Casey and Olaru, and to Cllr Alexa Michael, Chair of the Development Control Committee (Bromley), for their support in planning and other matters.

Community Links

Report problems such as graffiti and fly-tipping at [FixMyStreet](#) via [Bromley Council](#) or [Love Clean Streets®](#) via [Lewisham Council](#)

Join the [RVR Street Friends](#) team. To volunteer, contact Nigel Foster: nigelfoster16@gmail.com

Further useful links are on the [RVR website](#).

Roads and Traffic - Road Safety Incident Reporting Form

Please complete the [Road Safety Incident Recording Form](#) if you witness a traffic accident or similar within the RVR area and send these to the RVR Roads & Transport Officer, Andrew Lancaster at roadsandtransport.rvr@outlook.com. This enables us to collate data for submission to Bromley Council to assist in requesting additional safety measures such as pedestrian refuges. Relevant photographs relating to the incident are particularly helpful and can be uploaded with the form.

Crime and Safety

Find your Safer Neighbourhood Team on the [Met Police website](#). It is important to report all incidents so that the police can adjust their priorities and responses such as providing advice on security measures to residents and liaising with neighbourhood groups, such as WhatsApp groups to share information.

Meeting Dates

Members' meetings in 2026 are held on the first Thursday, every other month, at 7:30pm at Shortlands Golf Club, Ravensbourne Avenue, Bromley, BR2 0BP. All members and prospective members are welcome. The meetings normally last between 60 and 90 minutes and focus on local community and planning issues. There is usually at least one of our local councillors in attendance to answer questions and log concerns. We also usually have a guest speaker on topics that we think will interest members. The bar is open during and after the meetings.

If you are registered for email delivery, you will receive minutes of completed meetings, agendas for forthcoming meetings, quarterly newsletters and news updates (see below). Forthcoming meetings are as follows: -

- 3rd September • 5th November

News updates

The RVR Newsletter is published quarterly. More regular updates can be found on our website at <https://ravensbournevalley.org/news/>.

We also send out emails to alert members to urgent local issues and events of interest as well as posting on X (formerly Twitter) at <https://x.com/RVRResidents>. Please feel free to reply to our posts or tag us @RVRResidents if you want to share any news or information of interest to members.



RVR contacts

The society is run and supported by a dedicated group of hard-working individuals, comprising Officers and Road Representatives.

The current list of Officers can be found at <https://ravensbournevalley.org/contact-us/>. This link also includes a full list of the 16 RVR Road Representatives who, between them, cover the whole RVR area. If you wish to contact your road representative and do not have their address, please email the RVR secretary (secretary.rvr@outlook.com) or write to RVR Secretary, 35 Downs Hill, Beckenham, BR3 5ET.

If you wish to join RVR, you can find joining information on the [RVR website](https://ravensbournevalley.org/join/).

If you have ideas or suggestions for the newsletter, please contact Gillian Lees at editor.rvr@outlook.com