

MINUTES OF RVR MEETING

Thursday 5th January 2023 (Bromley Court Hotel)



Present:

Peter Saunders (Chairman), Linda Müller (Membership Secretary), Beatrice Osborn (Vice-Chairman), Nicholas Ansdell-Evans (Transport Officer), Euan McMaster (Newsletter Editor), Jacqueline St. Quinton (Secretary), Andrew Lancaster, Cllr Aisha Cuthbert, Cllr Felicity Bainbridge, Terry Richardson, Richard Fagg, Chris Porter, Mike Baker, Cllr Chloe-Jane Ross, Jon Baker, Jane Willcocks, Val Crowdy, Margaret Brearley.

1 Apologies, acceptance of apologies, absence of Officers

- Apologies received from: Dolores & John Ealey, Mike Baker, Monica (Street Friends Coordinator) and Dave Wiltshire (Treasurer), Clive Lees (Planning), David Page, Cllrs Sam Weber, Julie Ireland, Michael Tickner and Graeme Casey,
- A short eulogy to Leslie Tucker – see the December RVR Newsletter.
- Ratification of Andrew Lancaster to replace Nicholas Ansdell-Evans as Road Traffic & Safety officer – this was agreed at the meeting,

2 Approval of minutes of last meeting and discussion of matters arising

The minutes from last November's meeting were approved and there were no matters arising.

3 Finances

The Treasurer's finance report was presented (on behalf of Dave Wiltshire) by Euan McMaster, highlighting the receipts (member subscriptions & NS&I interest) as follows: £2,125.00 and £0.53 respectively. Payments: Expenses and donations for the financial year to date - £2,954.46. Deficit for the year: £828.93. The General Reserve (Santander Current Account + NS&I Investment Account + Petty Cash) amounts to £10,226.30. The End of Year accounts are being prepared for the Auditor. The report was noted and no issues were raised.

4 Community Projects/Issues

The Street Friends Coordinator's report was presented by Linda Müller on behalf of Monica Wiltshire – as follows:

- We met on Thursday 8th November 10.00 am cleared the overhang from the fences in Crab Hill, Ravensmead Road/Ravensbourne Avenue and Calmont Road. Also did a mass of litter picking. It was good to welcome 3 new street friends. There is room for more volunteers, so if you or anyone you know would like to join the group, please let me know and I will add you to the contact list.
- Following litter picking and tidying tree pits we enjoyed a festive mulled wine and mince pies together on 29th November 2022.
- I attended the first street friends meeting with Veolia/LBB. It was an opportunity to meet officers and other street friends, talk about the work we do in keeping our local streets clean and discuss ways officers can support us, the first of which will be to give us a basic health and safety checklist. These meetings will be held quarterly to share information and updates on several topics related to street friends. They were very appreciative of our efforts and referred to us as 'recycling heroes' for our litter picking work.
- Unfortunately, our application for funds to supply recycling box nets to as many RVR members who want them has been unsuccessful. Veolia are unable to fund this project as nets are available for all residents from local libraries. We recommend you get your own nets from the library. They cost £1.20 each and help to reduce street litter caused by overflowing bins, foxes and wind.
- On 9th December 2022, Linda Muller and Monica Wiltshire met with staff from Beckenham Place Park to discuss RVR funding a park bench. RVR will fund a bench in one of these areas. Our choices are either one made by volunteers from ancient wood from the park or a manufactured bench made from wood or a substitute material with a back to display a plaque either engraved or carved into the wood. The cost would be in the region of £500 - £800. A bench will be installed when the regeneration works on the east side of the park are completed (likely to be after Spring 2024). **It was proposed that the bench be dedicated to Leslie Tucker – this was carried unanimously.**
- Queensmead playground project: see the update below from Cllr Cuthbert. Please note that RVR has not yet received a formal request for our contribution. Our Treasurer will require the appropriate paperwork before disbursing the funds.

b) Beckenham Place Park update

The regeneration of the east side of the park and the wet woodland area is to start in the spring this year. Please see the BPP website for events scheduled this year – e.g. family entertainment in the form of a funfair and circus at the Park.

5 Planning Issues

The planning report was presented by Beatrice Osborn on behalf of Clive Lees – as follows:

14 Highland Road

There have been approximately 70 objections to the building of two houses at the rear of this property. The application is poorly presented and contains omissions and incorrect information. A major concern is the loss of trees and damage to an area of ancient woodland formerly known as Bromley Hill Wood. Downhill of this site is Madeira Avenue whose residents are concerned about the potential destabilisation of the steep hillside.

2/2a Crab Hill

Permission has been granted to fell the two Scots pines. The proposal had been to fell these trees due to damage to the wall and the drive. These trees have no specific preservation order on them but are protected by being in a Conservation Area and the felling application was not accompanied by a tree specialist report.

79 Coniston Road

The latest planning application is for an HMO Certificate of Lawful Use for up to 6 unrelated people. Over 80 objections have been received. If this application were to fail, the applicant could still submit yet another application for a 6-person HMO. Neighbours are concerned that allowing a 6-person HMO might lead to higher occupancy. There are still two enforcement investigations on this property: one is for drainage on the drive, and one is for the lack of render on the rear of the outbuilding.

Land next to 37-45 Oaklands Road

The Planning Inspector has dismissed the appeal for the block of flats at this site on the basis that it would have spoilt an attractive street scene.

2 Warren Avenue

Now a 3rd application in progress – a large extension to the existing property - awaiting decision. The 2nd application involving demolition was dismissed at Appeal on the grounds that the existing property makes a substantial contribution to the street scene. The property is now designated a 'non-designated heritage asset'. Translation: a notable property but not one that would justify being Locally Listed.

Romany Ridge and 15 Hillbrow Road

Planning permission for a huge block of flats at this joint site has been refused. However, the area could be developed and, as ever, the argument will be about on the size and appearance of the development,

18 Hillbrow Road

We found out recently that the property had been converted into three flats instead of the 2 flats permitted, and that the permitted building footprint had been exceeded. RVR has raised this matter with Lewisham Council and hope to find out if this is an enforcement issue. Additionally, the development plans suggest that the developer could be planning to use the property as an HMO. This would require planning permission.

2 Bromley Avenue

The Planning Inspector has allowed the appeal at this property and development can now take place.

66 Madeira Avenue

An application to remove the top 6 metres of the tree. Clive Lees has objected to this application on the following grounds:

- This tree is a wonderful, dominant and a landmark specimen. Its loss of stature would be a great loss.
- There were no coherent reasons as to why it was essential to prune the tree or how it would justify the loss to the community. No professional arboricultural advice was provided to justify such a drastic reduction of the tree.

We await the judgement of the Council's Tree Officer.

6 Transport Issues

Nicholas Ansdell-Evans reported on road and traffic matters – as follows:

(1) **Police speed checks.** Cllr Felicity Bainbridge shared her frustration at the reduction by 66% of the number of checks promised by Mayor Khan. At her request Peter Fortune, our GLA member, is continuing to press for more checks. Cllr Bainbridge said she had asked for data on what speed checks have been held / when / the outcome as well as future checks. This had not been forthcoming. She intends to raise the matter with the Portfolio Holder.

(2) **Community Road watch** (this is the scheme involving volunteers). Cllr Chloe-Jane Ross reported that there will be a Road Watch session in Foxgrove Rd, Crab Hill and possibly Downs Hill on Fri 10th Feb pm. Cllr Bainbridge reported that getting a Road Watch date in the Shortlands-Park Langley ward has been challenging. Unclear on the list of streets in scope. Cllr Cuthbert has asked for this detail. Richard Fagg suggested that the RVR should buy its own speed gun, not to enforce individual drivers but to collect significant data to pressurise the police into taking the problems in the area more seriously. Cllr Ross said the police discourage residents from doing this, but there was a feeling in the meeting that this should be looked into further, and Cllr Bainbridge asked the RVR representative to raise at the Shortlands-Park Langley Safer Neighbourhood Panel, this was agreed

(3) **Unmade section of Ravensbourne Ave.** Chris Porter provided an update. Bromley have proposed that residents pay for the installation of bollards and other interventions. The residents have received expert legal advice that there is no legal right for the public to drive or park on the unmade section of road. Bromley Council's response is due by 16th Jan. Lewisham Council have appointed a transport consultant to liaise with

residents, since the forthcoming park (east side) improvements will have an impact on visitors and access requirements.

(4) **Downs Hill** - parking of commercial vans. Terry Richardson provided an update, advising that although there was a peak in parking over Christmas, the number of vans has reduced, and this is a downward trend. Progress has been made and the business owners continue to be collaborative. Cllr Bainbridge commended Terry Richardson for his work in liaising with the van owners, who have been largely cooperative.

7 Any Other Business

Following a comment by a member that often the Veolia refuse collectors generate litter when emptying bins, leaving residents to pick up this litter. Cllr Cuthbert's view was that a photograph of such incidents should be forwarded to her so that she may bring it up with Veolia.

Future of Shortlands Village 19th Nov – based on minutes from Robert French (SRA)

Some 60 people attended the meeting. Sharon Richardson and Richard Fagg represented RVR. Michael Ricketts is the main driver on this initiative. The purpose of the meeting was to present and collect comments and ideas for improving the environs of Shortlands Village. These ideas were intended to be realistic, practical, achievable and affordable to build a "Blueprint" for presentation to Bromley Council and Councillors. Implementation would take place over several years.

Goals set out at the meeting included improving the environment, making it safer and more vibrant. Martyn Street (SRA) noted the improvements made to Beckenham High Street – these might provide inspiration for improving Shortlands Village. At present, the Village seems to be a 'place to pass through' rather than spending time in the environs. Improvements that might encourage people to linger through the Village included (1) pedestrian safety; (2) reducing traffic speed; (3) reopening the station access tunnel in Station Road; (4) creating parking bays in Beckenham Lane where pavements allow; (5) improvements to the station car park and recycling bins. Ideas on these aspects are welcome – e.g. local markets, craft fairs, etc.

RVR recycling efforts

In addition to the work carried out by the Street Friends, Richard Fagg raised the issue of using recycled paper for the RVR Newsletter. The Newsletter Editor will check with our printers about the quality of the publication on recycled paper.

Shortlands Station Lifts

Cllr Cuthbert reported that there is no official update at present but there are indications that some planning and clearing of the area is being done. Cllr Cuthbert will try to find out more.

8 Input from Councillors

Cllr Aisha Cuthbert reported the following:

- Queensmead playground project - jubilee grant for £20,000 was approved in principle. A massive thank you from Shortlands & Park Langley Councillors for RVR's contribution.
- LBB leaf clearing programme. Over 2,000 tonnes of leaves were collected this year. Leafing programme continuing into the NY due to very wet and cold weather at the start of December. If residents need to report missed leaf collection, please post on FixMyStreet and escalate to Cllrs if needed.

Cllr Chloe-Jane Ross reported that – re the Bromley Town Development - she raised the following points on behalf of the ward councillors:

- Development & height of new developments in different parts of the town centre
- Housing - Affordable, social housing & mixed developments
- Environmental concerns and sustainable construction
- Refurbish rather than rebuild where possible depending on carbon efficiency of existing buildings
- Minimising disruption to the environment & to neighbouring residents during construction
- EPC ratings and how these will be incorporated into the SPD
- Commercial life of Bromley Town centre
- Character of Bromley Town especially the historic Market Square and the Conservation area
- Transport - lack of local transport provision, active travel and sustainable travel to be promoted more including the possibility of trams in Bromley and additional electric vehicle charge points.
- Cllr Ross suggested that multiple individual submissions to the consultation might have greater impact than a single submission made so far on behalf of RVR.

9 Next meeting: **AGM – Thursday, 2nd March 2023 at 8pm @ Bromley Court Hotel**

The meeting closed at 9.30 pm