

Q2 2026
Issue 2



Welcome to our latest newsletter, the second of 2026. If you are reading a printed copy and wish to follow any of the web links, you can download a pdf version from the RVR website at www.ravensbournevalley.org

Highlights

This is my first newsletter since taking over from Euan McMaster and I would like to thank him for keeping us all updated for 12 years. He is a very hard act to follow, but I note from the February 2014 newsletter that Euan said the same about his predecessor, the late Leslie Tucker, who was one of the founder members and subsequently a life member of RVR. So hopefully, I can continue to build on some very strong foundations. Included in this issue are the usual updates on local issues, events and planning matters, but here are some highlights. Some will remember that before Euan, the newsletter was prepared on a ribbon typewriter.

Council elections 2026

The recent elections across England, Scotland and Wales promised to be some of the most unpredictable for years, if ever. This certainly proved to be the case in Lewisham, where Labour lost control to the Green Party. However, despite polling suggesting that Reform would make great inroads in Bromley, possibly resulting in a hung Council, the Conservatives continue to run the Council with 35 of the 58 seats. RVR supported the democratic process by hosting hustings in collaboration with the Shortlands Residents' Association (SRA) for the Shortlands and Park Langley ward. A very lively and well-attended debate took place at Shortlands Golf Club on 29th April. Read more, including the impact of the results for the 'RVR wards' on pages 3/4.

RVR AGM March 2026 and May members' meeting

Future AGMs will also have a hard act to follow. The meeting in March had everything - official RVR business, fascinating local history, music, presentation of a monster-sized cheque to a local legend and an invaluable insight into the important work of the Bromley and Orpington Samaritans. We also took a few moments to remember the passing of one of our past Chairmen, Leslie Watmore. Read more on page 2. The May meeting might have been quieter, but we had a couple of very special guests, one of whom is known for his love of marmalade sandwiches – see page 3.

Gillian Lees (RVR Newsletter Editor)

AGM report – March 2026

Tribute to Leslie Watmore

Tributes were paid to former Chairman, **Leslie Watmore**, who passed away on 2nd March. He was remembered as a 'true gentleman right to the end and a thoroughly 'decent man'. His and his wife Wendy's generous hospitality at their home was fondly recalled. RVR was very lucky to have him, and he will be sadly missed.

We had a couple of fascinating, if somewhat contrasting, guest speakers. **Gita Bapat – Samaritans Director, Bromley & Orpington branch** provided an informative insight into the function and work of this country-wide charity (over 200 branches). It was sobering to hear that a call for help is received every 10 seconds and over the last 70 years, more than 134 million calls have been made. Samaritans make a real difference – users report a significant reduction in distress. Gita talked us through the Samaritan values and vision and explained what happens when somebody calls. The full presentation is on the [RVR website](#).

We also said a fond farewell to **Dee Janes**, who has recently retired from working in the Shortlands Station Ticket Office. Dee has been something of a local legend, widely respected in the local community. She has received a commendation from the Met Police for her work in keeping the station safe. Moreover, Dee has



been a dedicated fundraiser for local and national charities, personally raising over £550,000 over the years. A visible reminder of her legacy will be the community garden that she created at the station. RVR teamed up with Shortlands Residents' Association (SRA) to crowd-fund a leaving gift of nearly £1,000, double the original target! At one of her many leaving parties, her boss, in a warm and appreciative speech, notably described Dee as the 'employee most likely to get him sacked!' We are looking forward to hearing reports from her new home of Stoke-on-Trent where she has plans to work on the railway there.

Presentation of leaving gift to Dee Janes

We also conducted the formal AGM business, including the election and re-election of the elected officers. Newly elected are **Euan McMaster** as Membership Secretary and **Nanthini Santhiapillai** as Treasurer. We were also fortunate to have three local councillors to update us on issues of concern, such as local traffic issues and proposed controversial green belt development at Hayes Farm.

[Draft minutes](#) of the AGM are now available.

May meeting report

This was a quieter than usual meeting on account of its taking place on election day. In consequence, no councillors attended to provide their usual reports and issues such as road and traffic have been on hold during the campaign. However, those who did attend were treated to a fascinating talk by **Martin Stone, Director of Muswell Hill Soup Kitchen** and his non-speaking, but trusty sidekick, Paddington Bear.



Martin Stone and Paddington Bear

Martin is a former Lecturer in Housing and Homelessness, Director of Muswell Hill Soup Kitchen and Founder of both Next Meal (nextmeal.co.uk) and Street Smart Ai (street-smart-ai.com). These organisations help homeless people to locate their next meal. Martin took over the soup kitchen over twenty years ago and has transformed it. IT has been a great enabler in making services such as Next Meal and Street Smart AI possible, not just in the UK, but globally.

What was the connection between Paddington Bear and homelessness? He explained that he had gone to Paddington Station to buy a bear for his grandson but had been unable to access the shop on account of the large numbers of homeless people. Martin devised a solution of co-ordinating local homelessness charities to provide an alternative to staying in the station, which in turn, enabled Paddington Station to perform its function as a railway station properly.

Council Elections and Hustings



Local democracy in action

RVR is covered by three Bromley wards (Beckenham Town, Shortlands & Park Langley; and Beckenham Town & Copers Cope) and one in Lewisham (Downham).

In collaboration with the Shortlands Residents' Association (SRA), we held hustings for the Shortlands & Park Langley Ward on Wednesday 29th April at Shortlands Golf Club. This was a great success with a packed room of 76 attendees. The session was chaired by Keith Mills, Vice-Chair, SRA and organised by Mike Ricketts, Chair, SRA together with Margaret Brearley, Chair, RVR and Jay Sharma, Vice-Chair, RVR. Candidates attended

from four of the five parties standing for election – Conservative, Green, Liberal Democrat and Labour. The Reform Party did not send a candidate.

Despite the seismic shifts elsewhere in London, Bromley remains under Conservative control. In respect of the three 'RVR wards':

- **Beckenham Town & Copers Cope** – all three seats were won by the Liberal Democrats – Chloe-Jane Ross, who retained her seat, together with new colleagues, Gita Bapat and Steven Jefferies. This represented a gain of one seat from the Conservatives, previously held by Michael Tickner.
- **Bromley Town** – the three Liberal Democrat candidates - Julie Ireland, Graeme Casey and Sam Webber - retained their seats.
- **Shortlands & Park Langley** - the Conservatives retained all three seats – Adam Grant and Gemma Turrell retained their seats, and Serena Gupta replaces Councillor Felicity Bainbridge.

Lewisham Council will now look very different under Green Party control. Previously, the Labour Party held all 54 seats on the Council as well as the elected mayoralty. Now, the profile is Green Party 40 seats and Labour 14. Liam Shrivastava was also elected as Mayor of Lewisham for the Green Party. However, Labour was successful in retaining the three seats of **Downham Ward**, which were won by André Bourne, Gloria Lambert-Morris and Oana Olaru-Holmes.

RVR strives to be non-political, but we would like to congratulate all the newly elected or re-elected Councillors, and we look forward to working with them all. However, we would like to give special thanks to:

- **Michael Tickner** who has worked with the Society and other residents since before any of the current officers in RVR can remember. Indeed, Michael was first elected to be a Councillor in Bromley at least as early as 1974. In his time representing Beckenham he has also represented that part of our area west of the railway line. He was always ready to meet and help the Society and residents, and consistently and regularly attended our meetings more than any other Councillor. He also provided on-going support and advice to officers of RVR on a regular basis. We are extremely grateful for Michael's contribution to our Society and community. 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.
- **Felicity Bainbridge** who stood down after one term because of too many competing commitments. We particularly appreciated Felicity's friendly engagement with us and our collaboration regarding the Shortlands Village Conservation Area. We wish her and her young family every success in the future.

Shortlands Historical Walk – Saturday 27th June at 2.30pm

Led by Mike Ricketts, Chair of SRA, this is a popular and fascinating tour of the local area. Please contact Linda Muller (linda.muller2021@gmail.com) if you are interested.

Local News

Waldo Road Waste and Recycling Centre Closure

From 31st January, [Waldo Road reuse and recycling centre](#) was partially reopened at weekends with residents having to enter the site via the Baths Road entrance. The site will offer a partial service and full service is not expected to resume until **Autumn 2026**.

[Churchfields Waste Centre](#) remains open but booking is essential.



Waldo Road recycling centre

Road Improvements

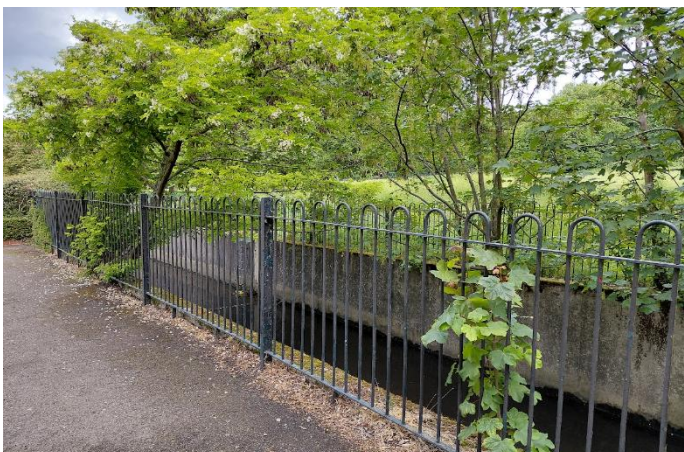
Resurfacing of the following roads is scheduled for Summer 2026 – Albemarle Road, Crab Hill, Downs Hill and Farnaby Road (between Ravensbourne Avenue and Bromley Avenue). A full list of borough-wide works is available on [Bromley Council](#) website.

Library Developments

Shortlands Library remains closed for safety reasons following the recent appearance of cracks in a rear wall. During this period, a click and collect service is available for the collection of reservations and book bundles at St Mary's Church, Shortlands every Monday from 9.30am-1pm and 2pm-5.30pm. This service is available through the online library catalogue or by emailing shortlands.library@gll.org The new **Central Library** will open in late 2026 at 145, High Street (the former Top Shop building). The existing library will remain open until the end of the summer exam season. We await further detail on dates and interim facilities.

Queensmead Recreation Ground: River Ravensbourne Restoration Proposal

Following a large turnout at the public consultation regarding this proposal, Thames 21 has published an [update](#) on its website regarding its progress to transfer the river to a more natural state. Several options had been proposed with the intention of enhancing the river corridor while balancing environmental benefits with the recreational and accessibility needs of the park. The project will not proceed to the final design and subsequent delivery phase, mainly due to a lack of clear and demonstrable local support for any proposal affecting a valued community space.



Ravensbourne River at Queensmead Recreation Ground

Community Links

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

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

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

The [BEN April 2026 newsletter](#) is currently available. It contains many links to forthcoming interesting events in and around Bromley. RVR is a member of the Bromley Environmental Network.

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 RVR, together with Shortlands Residents' Association, to collate data for submission to Bromley Council to assist in requesting additional safety measures such as pedestrian refuges. Photographs of damaged vehicles, street furniture or private property resulting from such incidents are particularly helpful and these can be uploaded with the road safety form.

Planning

Planning enforcement

We continue to see a high level of Council enforcement activity in our area and again urge anyone thinking of making any changes to their property to seek advice before doing so. Building or property improvement without permission is invariably stressful and expensive when the council may very well seek removal of the building/improvement, or at the very least modification. Typically, the council enforces against a lot of fences and walls that are too high.



111 Hayes Way where a particularly egregious example of a high fence has resulted in 'fortressification'. There is no chance of the Council allowing this and it will have to be removed.

But we also see owners installing roof extensions without permission for example at 100 Ravensbourne Avenue (see below) where the new roof extension must be reduced in scale.



100 Ravensbourne Avenue where the Council is requiring the roof to be adjusted to match 98 Ravensbourne Avenue.

In Shortlands Village, traders on Beckenham Lane regularly get caught out by complex planning rules, made more complex by being in a Conservation Area. In essence, if any change to a shop can be seen from the road, there is potential for difficulties with planning rules. To help traders we have a special section on the RVR website detailing common issues.

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

Crime and Safety

You can find your Safer Neighbourhood Team on the [Met Police website](#) where you can enter your location in the box under ‘What’s happening in your area?’ There is useful information on the local team, events and crime statistics and priorities. 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.

Beckenham Place Park (BPP)



Poster at BPP entrance

Although there is a website for [BPP](#) it has not been updated at time of writing. One of the best ways of finding out what is going on is often through notices on the railings, for example at the Crab Hill entrance opposite Ravensbourne Station where the various markets and events are often advertised. One example is [Jam in the Park](#) every third Sunday at 3pm in the Homestead Café courtyard from May until September for a lively, open-stage music experience. Also see the [Mansion House website](#) for events and activities. Other events this summer include the [Taste of the Caribbean](#) food festival on Saturday 4th and Sunday 5th July.

The three music concerts (Symphonic Ibiza, Park Rock Lewisham and Sundown Country Festival) planned for the weekend of 5th-7th June have been cancelled.

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.

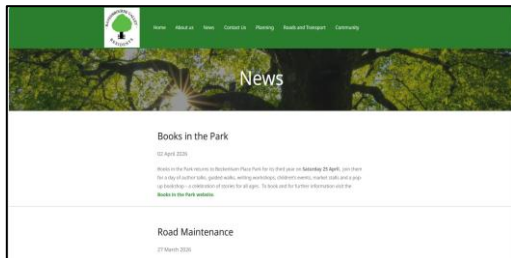
If you are registered for email delivery, you will receive minutes of completed meetings, agendas for forthcoming meetings, quarterly newsletters and news updates (see below). Forthcoming meetings are as follows: -

- **2nd July**
- **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/RVResidents>. Please feel free to reply to our posts or tag us @RVResidents if you want to share any news or information of interest to members.



RVR webpage



RVR X page

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 have read this newsletter, you can find joining information on the [RVR website](#) .

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