



May 2016 Edition

The Review

You are invited to the
WEST BECKENHAM RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION AGM
to be held on **MONDAY 6 JUNE 2016** at 8.00pm in the
'Drawing Room' at Venue 28, Beckenham Road
We will welcome **Mary Mason** who will tell us about the
work of **Carers Bromley** and answer questions
This room is on the first floor, and, regrettably there is
no lift. Do stay for drinks and nibbles afterwards.

MEMBERSHIP CARDS: Along with this Review you will have received a membership card. WBRA used to issue cards some time ago. We would like to welcome new members with a formal recognition, and so have re-introduced membership cards for all.

ADDRESSES: Would you please check on the envelope you received this in, that we have your correct address details, including postcode? If not please let **Marie Pender** know by email, phone message or post – her contact details are at end of the Review.

MESSAGE FROM THE TREASURER: Thank you to all members who now pay by Standing Order. This is a great help. If you haven't changed to Standing Order yet, please consider it. The form is at the back. - **Daniel Holden**

Beckenham's Crown Post Office

The Crown Post Office at the War Memorial is set to close, and the franchise given to WH Smith in the High Street. The Post Office is usually very busy, and WH Smith is already a cramped, dark, crowded and unpleasant space, unsuitable in our view to offer post office services in addition to its core business. It is likely that local people and businesses will receive an inferior service with fewer staff, fewer counters and less space. The move, of course, although it is not said, is cost cutting. The Post Office is a fine and functional building, in a prominent position, and its loss as a Post Office would be a tragedy for our community.

Local feedback from Penge and Bromley residents that use franchised Post Offices in their towns have not been favourable, which indicates that the service in Crown Post Offices with specialised trained staff is better than in a shop.

Once franchised out, Post Office Ltd will have limited control. WH Smith can choose to stop providing certain services such as passport and DVLA services. If WH Smith moves out of the High Street, in a few years Beckenham could be left without a Post Office.



Many of you will have seen the demonstrations against the closure outside the Post Office on two Saturdays in April. Cllrs

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Vanessa Allen, Ian Dunn and Michael Tickner attended, as well as Bob Stewart MP. We collected hundreds of signatures to the petition, and hope you will have also signed them either on these days, or the online petition which can be found at change.org or www.coperscope.org.uk

There was a 'consultation' event on Tuesday 10 May Beckenham Methodist Church, Bromley Rd. BR3 5JE. The letter from the post office announcing the consultation says very clearly that they are NOT consulting on whether to close the office, but only seeking comments on the facilities to be offered. That doesn't mean we should not continue to oppose the closure. The Town Centre Team (including WBRA, CCARA, BBA and TBS) went along to the Forum together and secured a proper group discussion at the end of the meeting. All members of the public were very sceptical about the suitability of the small W H Smith's shop in the High Street to cope with the volume of customers, particularly those with buggies, wheelchairs or mobility scooters. There is no disabled parking close by. Cllr Tickner also asked about collection of large volumes of mail and parcels - there is no front loading area, and no easy access to the side or rear. The post office manager said all these points would be taken into account, but the general tone was that they have made their decision and are unlikely to change it.

There are plans for a further demonstration on Saturday 21 May, and the petition will be presented to the responsible minister Baroness Neville-Rolfe.

There are seven well-trained staff employed at the Beckenham Post Office. Their future is uncertain, and WH Smith staff would be paid less.

You can let the post office know directly what you think by completing the online survey via postofficeviews.co.uk

Elmers End Green

The Toilet Block

On 24 February 2016, three members of the WBRA Committee and their architect adviser met with the new owners of the toilet block, Mr and Mrs Smith, together with their architect. Gareth and Donna Smith purchased the toilets on Elmers End Green from Bromley Council about two years ago. You may recall, that at the time the toilets came up for sale, WBRA was fiercely opposed to the sale.

This meeting was instigated by our Chair, Marie, emailing Mr Smith thanking him for the lights he had put around the building over the Christmas period and asking if he would be prepared to have a meeting and share his ideas and intentions for the future of this, rather small, building on the green, with busy traffic passing around for most of the day.

Mr Smith stressed that he and his wife had thought about what to do with the building for many months. He did not want to do anything that would have a negative impact on the surrounding green, local householders or businesses and felt some project to do with the community would be nice. His intention is to turn this, rather plain looking building, into consulting rooms for the use of such people as physiotherapists or osteopaths, of which there seem to be many in this area.

We were shown the plans that had been drawn up to update the premises and make them suitable for their intended use. We learned that there was a basement to these premises and that is where the original toilets, built in about the 1930s, were situated. The plans show two consulting rooms, a reception area, kitchen and storage areas – and of course a toilet.

We came away feeling relieved and impressed. It is early days, but once planning has been approved and the renovations completed it should be very nice indeed.

The Elmers End Green History Panel

Please come along to the unveiling of the Elmers End history panel on Elmers End Green on 27 May at 2pm, and join us afterwards for a drink at the Elm Tree pub.

Whilst researching to campaign against the sale of the toilets on the Green, we came across the remarkable history of this little triangle of land, that has stood unchanged for at least three hundred years whilst all around it changed unrecognisably. So we thought we should share this history with the residents and businesses around the now thriving Green, and all who visit it, so have prepared this history panel. Cllr Peter Dean will unveil the panel at 2pm. Children from Marion Vian School will attend, to follow up on a talk about the Green given by Marie Pender last year. Afterwards, the new owners of the toilets, Gareth and Donna Smith, will show their plans for changing the building into new medical consulting rooms at the Elm Tree.

WBRA is also working with LB Bromley to put an information panel about the Clock House district on the grassed area between Venue 28 and the Library, to be installed later in the summer.



Beckenham Town Centre

Alleyways

We hope you have seen the alleyway illustrations now installed along the High Street. This was taken forward by the Town Centre Team, for which WBRA provides the secretariat, and funded by the London Mayor's High Street Fund and LB Bromley. Yet to be added is an art deco archway over "Regal Alley". We hope you agree that they have brightened up the High Street. The alleyway's footpaths and lighting will be improved under the Transport for London's major scheme beginning in late summer.



Resources for improving the High Street have been much reduced with the loss of a Town Centre Manager post. The remaining Town Centre Manager will be expected to support local businesses and the Town Centre Team as well as managing the introduction of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) in both Beckenham and Penge. BIDs are run by local businesses. There will be a ballot of such businesses and if the majority support the project, all businesses in the High Street will pay a levy to fund and organise High Street management activities such as street cleaning, local events and Christmas lights. But it is asking a lot of one person to

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take on all this new development work while still maintaining a High Street presence.

Also look out for a chance to have a say on the choice of new paving for the High Street. The old paving cannot be re-used – it would cost much more than to lay new. There is choice of colour stone, currently laid outside Zizzi's restaurant – two colours of red and grey. The samples may be moved so look out for them on the High Street and the explanatory notice which has also not yet been put in place.

Purple Flag and Secure Station Awards for Beckenham

Beckenham Town Centre, stretching from Copers Cope Road to Clock House, has been awarded the prestigious Purple Flag award for the night time economy. This is awarded to towns for their vibrant and safe leisure facilities. Beckenham was awarded this on the first attempt, which is apparently very unusual. The judges were particularly impressed by the involvement of many local groups such as the residents' associations.

Beckenham Junction station has been awarded a Secure Stations accreditation by the Department for Transport. The awards, administered by the British Transport Police, are given to station operators which can demonstrate that the station has reached national standards in station, staff and passenger security. There will be a Secure Station award presentation on Friday 3 June from 15.00 to 15.30 on the concourse at Beckenham Junction Station.

Tributes to David Bowie

Beckenham arguably has the strongest London links to David Bowie. This is where his career really started with gigs at what was The Three Tuns pub in the High Street, now Zizzi's restaurant, and at the legendary free concert at the Bandstand in Croydon Road Recreation Ground in 1969 (see below). It is said he wrote Spiders from Mars on the top deck of a 54 bus going along the High Street.

The Beckenham Society had a huge sell out success with their celebration of the life of David Bowie and his time in Beckenham at Zizzi's, the site of The Three Tuns pub where the Beckenham Arts Lab started in the late 60s. Mary Finnegan, author of *Psychedelic Suburbia* and founder of the Arts Lab, gave readings from the book and Daphne Guinness sang some of his songs.



Flowers as a tribute to David Bowie outside Zizzi's

Parks

Beckenham Place Park

A report on the recent consultation exercise on the proposed plans for the 'restoration' of the park, by the Borough of Lewisham's project manager, Alison Taylor:

Lewisham Council's project, funded largely by the Lottery Parks for People grant, continues to progress. In March officers hosted 10 public events displaying proposals for the design of the park. The team spoke to over 500 local people and 264 detailed surveys were completed, giving insight into what local people would like to see in this park in the future.

There is almost unanimous support for the restoration of the homestead building to provide café, toilets and visitor information, and much interest in holding small scale events and markets in this historic courtyard too.

There is a great deal of interest in volunteering in a range of different ways in the park – something which the Council is keen to make the most of and build on in the future.

It was also evident from the consultation that many people value the park as a place for wildlife and for walking. Whilst the regeneration of the park will provide new facilities and opportunities for visitors, the design team are keen to ensure that plans also maximise the habitat value of the park, and that places of tranquillity are retained for those who enjoy the sense of peace and space this special park offers.

Designs for the park continue to be developed. There will be further consultation in early June and plans will be submitted to planning and to the funders in early August.

During the March consultation, survey respondents were also asked about the mansion, as the Council is now actively exploring options and looking to secure restoration funding for the historic building at the heart of the park. There was very little support for the mansion becoming a hotel or offices, but significant support for the mansion being used in other ways – such as a restaurant, function suite, or for training, rehearsal or exhibition space. The Council continues to explore opportunities for the mansion, together with the other two buildings within the park - the Foxgrove, and the stableyard cottages - to ensure a holistic and sustainable approach for all the buildings within Beckenham Place Park.

What Ms Taylor does not mention is that golf in the park is to cease. Lewisham maintain that this closure is a condition of the Heritage Lottery Fund, but we now understand the HLF are in fact quite happy for golf to continue.

Crystal Palace Park

It seems that yet another private company/ companies have recently been appointed by the London Borough of Bromley to lead on 'community engagement and consultation around a sustainable regeneration plan for Crystal Palace Park'.

'Soundings/Fluid' writes:

A final plan is now being developed by Bromley council, guided by, but not limited to, the vision of the 2007 masterplan. This plan will regenerate the park and secure its long term future. In tandem with this regeneration plan the future governance of the park will be reconsidered, and a new not-for-profit entity will be created to take over responsibility for the management and maintenance of the park.

This organisation has requested a 'conversation' with the Bromley Residents Federation, but we don't know whether this actually took place.

Clock House Festival

Local historian and WBRA committee member Cliff Watkins single-handedly devised and produced a local history festival, which took place from 30 April to 7 May 2016. The Festival opened with a concert in the Methodist Chapel in Clock House Road on 30 April, and closed with a concert at Elm Road Baptist Church on 7 May.

The Festival celebrated 300 years from the Huguenot mansion that was the original Clock House to Venue 28 which is on the same site, occupying the building that was originally the Beckenham Technical Institute. The Clock House District is the cultural heart of Beckenham, with connections to many famous people from Admiral Brett and Lady Byron to Enid & Carey Blyton and David Bowie.



Beckenham Junior Choir, Beckenham Youth Voices and some parents join forces to sing "A La Cart" at the Elm Church concert on 7 May.

Office conversion to residential use

Most of the office space in and near Beckenham High Street is at risk of being converted to residential use. While we support the provision of additional housing to help combat high housing costs, people also need jobs. Beckenham is likely to lose hundreds of office jobs if all these proposals go ahead.

To make matters worse, the government has recently made permanent the permitted development rights that allow this to happen without local authority approval. They were supposed to last just three years. They have also extended the rights to light industrial sites, launderettes and other retail premises.

Through the Town Centre Team, WBRA have repeatedly pressed LB Bromley to make an "Article 4" direction to remove these rights for Beckenham, as they have done for Bromley. But nothing has happened.

The long standing issue of the office building at Thayers Farm Road (official address is Beckenham Road), where many applications have been made over the years to change to residential have failed, is now the going through as one of these permitted developments. So even where the local authority has clearly found such use unsuitable for many years, they now have no say.

Balmoral Avenue proposed academy school

“Balmoral Residents” has formed to fight proposals for an academy school “Eden Park High School” on the former Co-op Sports Ground in Balmoral Avenue.

E21c already runs two primary schools and a secondary school in the area. This new school would eventually take up to 1400 pupils. Neighbouring residents are concerned about the damaging effects of this proposal in the area, particularly on traffic at peak school times in narrow quiet residential roads which are totally unsuitable to large volumes of traffic, and the loss of Urban Open Space of this previous sports club and bowling green. The academy may also want to take land from the rugby club. No planning application has been made.

The land was bought in late 2015, and within weeks, on 5 January, The Beckenham Academy Trust “E21c” sent in contractors to clear the land. The land has been a much loved recreational resource for the local people for over 20 years, but now it has all gone. As far as we are aware, E21c has not undertaken any wildlife assessments, nor consulted with the neighbours. We have to ask if people who ride rough shod over local people and have little regard for due process of consultation are fit and proper persons to be educating 1400 children in future years. What an example to set!



The entrance to the proposed school is intended to be in Balmoral Avenue, which is a quiet residential road. There is likely to be a two year construction period, during which large vehicles would be using this narrow residential road. The traffic problems alone would damage the environment of the road. Balmoral Residents are attempting to keep an eye on the wildlife, especially the badgers, and transgressions by the contractors on-site.

WBRA also have deep concerns about the Department for Education (DfE) funding of this proposed 1400 place academy school on Urban Open Space. We asked our MP, Bob Stewart, to find out about their role of the in the purchase of the land. The Land Registry records that the land was purchased by DfE for just over £16m, but it records the owner with "Title Absolute" as the academy itself - Education for the 21st Century (E21C). Lord Nash, Minister of State at DfE, replied that consent to sell the land would be given if there was no longer a need for the site, for example if they didn't get planning permission, and that he would "expect" that the proceeds of any sale would go to the department.

This raises important questions about the use of taxpayers' money to fund private sector education. A consistent pattern appears to be emerging over London where academy companies can bulldoze their way, not using their own money, onto any piece of land that they identify as suitable for their purposes with no consideration of the impact on the local area, its people and its wildlife. We question DfE's role in apparently blindly acquiescing to any highly speculative bid for funding to purchase any apparently unoccupied land, particularly land with protected status, without at least first requiring that planning permission has been obtained. This would at least protect the land from destruction while proper local consideration is given.

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Education for the 21st Century, is entering into a period of consultation on the desirability of this new free school. The period of consultation began on 18 April 2016 and lasts for a six-week period, until 27 May 2016. You can let them know what you think on the consultation questionnaire before 27 May at <http://edenparkhigh.com/sect10.html>

If you want to lend your support to Balmoral Residents and/or find out more please contact balmoralresidents@btinternet.com or call 07724 181632

Coptic Church Dunbar Avenue

Residents in Dunbar Avenue and Balmoral Avenue are objecting to the use of the grounds of the Coptic Church in Dunbar Avenue for weekend and late night outdoor activities. The church is housed in the former Elmer Lodge public house, and has planning permission for community use within the building. Residents were at first pleased with the change of use from a pub to a church, feeling that this would be a quieter and more pleasant neighbour for them. But over the years, there has been increasing use of the rear grounds for physical activity which is very noisy. Last August, a 5-a-side football pitch was constructed without planning permission, with 6 metre high netting and full floodlights. This football pitch is right in the middle of the surrounding neighbours' gardens. The residents report that the floodlights are very intrusive and on late into the night. They have had to move children's bedrooms to the front of the house. LB Bromley is not taking appropriate enforcement action. WBRA is supporting the residents to find a resolution.

Local Green Spaces

'Local Green Space' is a new planning designation introduced by the government to provide additional protection to local green areas of importance to the local community, and add protection in addition to any existing designations (such as Metropolitan Open Land).

Bromley Council provided a very short consultation period on this, from early February to 22 March, and the suggested sites had to be nominated on a very user-unfriendly form.

Sites that have been nominated in our area are:

Beckenham Green, Elmers End Green, the 'dog-walkers' field' near Cator Park, the flower-bed area at Thornton's Corner, 'Cyphers Gate open space', and the War Memorial roundabout. We await the outcome of these nominations.

Adult Education

Adult education provision in Bromley is still under threat.

The proposal is to shut, (and presumably sell) the Widmore Centre, but keeping Kentwood and Poverest Centres. There is tragically no intention to transfer the specialist equipment that was at Widmore for classes such as pottery and silversmithing, and these classes will cease. The nursery at Kentwood is also under threat, which makes no sense in the context of the stated prioritisation of classes for people who need help to access employment, such as women needing English classes and single parents.

Enrolment for courses in the Autumn 2016 start on 15 June.
The website is www.baec.ac.uk

Croydon Road Recreation Ground Bandstand

Built by McCallum & Hope Ltd of Glasgow between 1880 and 1921, the elegant late Victorian bandstand has been the venue for many musical performances. One of Beckenham's most famous residents, David Bowie played at the bandstand at Beckenham Free Festival in 1969 which was organised by the musician himself and The Beckenham Arts Laboratory.

Since the death of David Bowie efforts have re-doubled to raise money for the restoration of the bandstand. You can purchase a personalised brick around the bandstand and be part of local history.



If you would like to commemorate a loved one, celebrate a special occasion, or promote your business, this scheme is a way to leave your legacy in Beckenham. The natural stone bricks, which can be inscribed with a short message, will form a circular pathway around the structure. Proceeds from the sales of bricks will go towards the restoration and on-going

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enjoyment of the bandstand. The scheme is being run in partnership with the [Friends of Croydon Road Recreation Ground](#) who have been actively fundraising towards the £120,000 restoration campaign over recent years.

The bricks will be installed at the same time as the restoration of the bandstand, which is now expected to be during the Summer/Autumn of 2016, dependent on a new Heritage Lottery Fund application.

There are also plans for an exclusive Autumn Launch Party to celebrate the restoration of the bandstand in style. The evening will include live music, dance, bubbly and canapés served around the newly revitalised structure. You can buy tickets which are priced at £35 each or £60 for two. You will be notified of the official date.

You can buy your own personalised brick and/or tickets for the launch party by completing an [online payment form](#) on Bromley Council website, or in person at the Civic Centre, by telephoning the Landscape Helpdesk 0300 303 8658, or by sending a cheque made payable to the London Borough of Bromley to the Civic Centre, Stockwell Close, Bromley BR1 3UH.

Market on the Green

The latest in the very successful Markets on Beckenham Green took place on Saturday 14 May 2016. These markets are always good for artisan and local food, crafts and gifts and entertainment. The next ones will be from 10am to 4pm on Saturday 9 July and Saturday 24 September 2016.

Roads

Junction of Lawn Road, Bridge Road and Copers Cope Road

Following a fatal motorbike crash at this junction, contrary to what we were previously told by the Council's Head of Road Safety, Lawn Road has now been completely blocked off.

Junction of Kent House Road and Beckenham Road

Committee member Shirley Civil has been campaigning. She writes:

It is well known that we have an increasing problem with parked cars in and around Kent House Road, Kings Hall Road and other roads near Kent House Station. The Council, unwisely in my opinion, started parking charges in station approach following its excellent renovation of the road surface there. This has caused people to avoid the charges by parking on nearby roads in the area.

I contacted the council some time ago regarding people parking on the left filter approach to the traffic lights at the end of Kent House Road. There is a small school crossing across the road from the left to the Harris Academy school on the right with a small island (or build-out) on each side of the road. From the one on the left to the traffic lights at the main road there is no yellow line until three or four yards before the lights. This means that cars are parked in an area which is intended for cars using the left filter at the lights. As the green filter 'Go' lights up before the main green light, traffic is stuck in the right hand lane unable to move into the filter lane, thus obstructing the traffic intending to turn right.

The good news is that apparently two other people have complained about the situation, and at last the Council is planning a single yellow line with an 8am to 8pm parking restriction there. I would have preferred a doubly yellow, but I look forward to my efforts at last being partially fulfilled.

Kings Hall Road

Shirley Civil reports that Police will shortly be installing secret speed monitors in the bushes in an effort to identify some of the drivers who habitually speed dangerously along this busy road.

The Museum of the Mind at Bethlem Hospital

This wonderful new museum in Monks Orchard Road has been nominated as one of the contenders for the Art Fund Museum of the Year award. The £100,000 prize is the largest arts award in Britain and the biggest museum prize in the world. It is awarded to the museum or gallery in the UK that is judged to have best demonstrated exceptional achievement and innovation.



A statue from the gates of Bethlem Hospital when it was at Vauxhall

The Museum of the Mind has been open to the public since February 2015 in the Hospital's former administration building. Its displays offer unparalleled resources to support learning about the history of mental healthcare and treatment. There is no charge for entry.

Bakerloo Line extension

In January, TfL announced the results of its consultation on the extension of the Bakerloo Line to Lewisham, Hayes and Bromley. The conclusion is that the line should be extended to Lewisham, via the Old Kent Road, and this could be completed by 2030. It appears that although LB Bromley opposed the extension to Hayes and Bromley, many other Boroughs actively lobbied for the line to be brought to their area, including Croydon, Streatham and Slade Green.

TfL believe that an extension beyond Lewisham can provide specific benefits to wider rail capacity, by potentially converting the Hayes line and re-allocating rail services to other busy routes. They have therefore not ruled out a future extension beyond Lewisham. Network rail is doing further assessment of the “challenges and options” to improve National Rail services and TfL will provide support in assessing what role an extension beyond Lewisham has in the long term. But this is a long way in the future.

Recycling

Green Waste

Many members complained to us that the green waste recycling service at Unicorn Primary School car park, Creswell Drive, was to be open only in April in future. As Easter this year was in March and the bank holidays are in May, April totally missed the dates when most people first get out in the garden after the winter.

So WBRA pressed portfolio holder Cllr Colin Smith to re-instate more opening days. In particular, we asked that it be open on the two May Bank Holiday weekends, when most

people want to catch up with the spring clear out. Cllr Smith replied:

Ultimately, we are now having to assess the value of nice-to-have services such as this, versus reductions to care packages for elderly folk, or the retention of as many case workers for seriously troubled children, and in the final analysis, much as it grieves me to see the partial dismantling of a service I have spent the last 10 years of my life championing, I genuinely do believe, with regret, that it has become a necessary pill to swallow against that backdrop.

However, he does agree that though they cannot keep it open throughout the summer, next year, and for future years, the spring opening of this recycling facility will be arranged around the Easter and May Bank Holidays.

Tips on furniture recycling - from Marie Pender

Following redecoration of our sitting room, we treated ourselves to new sofas. The “old” ones were in pretty good condition despite being 16 years old. We thought someone would want to use them. But it wasn’t easy.

We are all perhaps victims of the success of the British Heart Foundation’s furniture stores - they wouldn’t take the smaller, two seater, because it was slightly faded on one corner. It had been near a north facing window. I was surprised. They both seemed to me to be very usable and I certainly did not want to send them to the dump. Fearing that I did not know how to get rid of them, and not able to keep them in the house for very long, I let them take the three seater.

That was a mistake. A second hand furniture shop was interested only in sets – either three piece suites or two matching sofas. But I did find a charity that wasn’t as picky as BHF. This was the Debra store in Locksbottom. Debra is the

charity for Epidermolysis Bullosa (EB), which is a group of genetic skin conditions which cause the skin to blister and tear at the slightest touch. They are opening new stores so want lots more furniture.

So my tips - if you need to get rid of old but serviceable furniture, try different charities. If one refuses something, another might take it. Also if possible, think twice before splitting sets to get rid of part of the problem. They are more attractive to charities or other shops if they are kept together.

National Health Service Bill

Committee member Alan Freeman has forwarded this piece by Peter Roderick of Queen Mary, University of London, which admirably sums up the creeping privatisation of the NHS, summarised from an article in the London Review of Books Vol.37 No 23, December 2015:-.

The National Health Service in England is being dismantled. But you wouldn't know it from listening to the radio or reading the newspapers. As so often, you have to look beyond the headlines about pressures on funding and the junior doctors' dispute to find out what's really going on. In 1990, Kenneth Clarke introduced an internal market into the NHS. It had three pillars: GP fund-holding (delegating budgets to individual GP practices); the replacement of health authorities by '**NHS trusts**' (self-governing accounting centres with borrowing powers, and their own finance, human resources and PR departments) and the splitting of purchasers from providers (the planning and delivery of services was to be undertaken by separate bodies, with the money flowing between them). In its 1997 manifesto, New Labour promised to 'end the Tory internal market'. It did get rid of GP fund-holding (only to reintroduce it later as Practice Based Commissioning), but otherwise took the Tories' ideology even further by introducing, in 2003, the market-oriented 'NHS

foundation trusts' and their regulator, **Monitor**, as well as scaling up the **Private Finance Initiative**.

Then came Andrew Lansley's **Health and Social Care Act 2012**. No longer does the government – or anybody else – have a legal duty to provide hospital services throughout England. The hundred or so NHS trusts were all prospectively abolished, and a plan set out to transform them (if not to close them down or sell them off) into **foundation trusts**. The 150 or so foundation trusts had their private patient income cap abolished and were permitted to receive 49 per cent of their income from non-NHS sources. About 113 private providers have since been licensed by Monitor, and tendering for services has been made virtually compulsory. 'Public health' has been carved out of the NHS, and shared between local and central government. *(And here in Bromley 50% of the council's public health staff are set to lose their jobs under the 2016/17 budget following a 6% reduction in the public health grant from the Department of Health. Ed.)*

We are now at a crucial time in the wrecking process. Under the 2012 Act, **clinical commissioning groups (CCGs)** buy services from providers, especially from NHS foundation trusts. But the trusts are no longer obliged to provide particular services. Since April 2013, their services have fallen essentially into two categories: Commissioner Requested Services (CRS), and the rest. Services designated as CRS are subject to 'continuity of service' restrictions on the trust's ability to cut or alter them. Monitor has the power to make the trust provide CRS services for a specified period, but cannot stop them being cut once that period expires. Trusts also need to have Monitor's consent before they sell off buildings and equipment used to provide CRS. Services that are not CRS are not subject to these restrictions. So the more services that are not designated as CRS, the more freedom an NHS foundation trust has to do what it likes – so long as 51 per cent of its income comes from NHS services. [...]

Halting the demise of the NHS in England won't happen without a new law. The National Health Service Bill, scheduled to have its second reading in the House of Commons on 11 March [2016], would reverse 25 years of marketisation. It was tabled in June [2015] by the Green MP Caroline Lucas, and is supported by Labour (including Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell), as well as by Lib Dem, SNP and Plaid Cymru MPs and the British Medical Association.

Planning

A new application for 3 detached houses at the rear of 213 Kings Hall Road has been refused but has gone to appeal. The appeal against refusal of permission for Rowden works (8 flats) was dismissed. An application for flats to be built on a small patch of waste ground in front of Cyphers Bowling Club on Kings Hall Road was also refused. There is also an application pending for a pleasant family house in Hayne Road to be demolished and replaced by yet more flats.

Gravel paths

Finally, a plea from committee member Alan Freeman to those residents who have gravel or stones on their forecourts: Would you please make sure that spillage onto the pavement is swept back onto your own property. Gravel is permeable, and it is very commendable that the water table is thought of in these incidents, but the gutters get full of said gravel and stones. The mechanical sweeper just pushes this material further along the road and eventually finishes up in the drains. Also it is not nice to walk on. Brighton beach comes to mind.

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