



October 2016 Edition

The Review

You are invited to the
**WEST BECKENHAM RESIDENTS'
ASSOCIATION FORUM**
to be held on **WEDNESDAY**
19 OCTOBER 2016 at 8.00pm in the
Beckenham Public Halls, Bromley Rd.
This is a joint event with Copers Cope
Area Residents' Association

.POST OFFICE CHANGES

Sadly, Beckenham Post Office closed in August. Despite around 4,500 local people signing paper and online petitions against closure, we were ignored.



The new Post Office services are located in W H Smiths in the High Street. For some reason, it does not seem to be as well used as the old building. Perhaps people don't yet know it is there, but it can seem rather a ghostly experience with no-one there, tucked away at the back of the shop. It is a pity W H Smith haven't taken the opportunity to improve the rest of the store. It is still cluttered, and getting to the back of the shop with a buggy or in a wheelchair must be difficult. Also note that though the shop opens 10am to 4pm on Sunday, the Post Office is open only until 2pm. It is rumoured that the building

at the War Memorial may become a cafe, run by CityGate Church. It is not clear whether the post box outside this building will be retained. In our ever more fragmented world, post boxes are operated by Royal Mail, but Post Offices by The Post Office Limited, or increasingly by these franchises such as W H Smith. It is ever more difficult to know who is responsible for anything

BECKENHAM TOWN CENTRE

You will have noticed that the roads around Beckenham Junction station have been subject to massive road works since July. The work was supposed to be carried out during the summer to reduce disruption, but at the end of September it is still not complete. There were long periods when no workmen could be seen at all. WBRA understand that this is due to the workmen being diverted to “emergency” work elsewhere on several occasions.

This is, of course, only a prelude to much greater work on Beckenham High Street which is due to start in the New Year and last up to 18 months. Businesses and residents alike hope that the disruption will be minimised, and that we will not witness the long periods of inactivity that we have seen at Beckenham Junction. The contractors are Conways, and they have promised a dedicated liaison officer to work with local businesses during the work.

Meanwhile the Town Centre Team’s project to name and illustrate the High Street’s Alleyways has been completed with an Art Deco arch way over Regal Alley. The TCT project (led mainly by Copers Cope Area RA, WBRA and The Beckenham Society) was praised by the London Mayor’s Fund and may be nominated for an award.



The arch will be lit as part of the major High Street works, and the road way will be improved. Also part of the major works will be the Mews opposite Beckenham Green and Sainsbury's entrance. Unfortunately it is reported that Lidl has not cooperated with LB Bromley to produce plans to improve the dark and sad courtyard outside their premises. This is quite an important area for the High Street, with a lot of footfall using the bus stop. We hope Lidl will join the community in the improvements to our town centre.

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Proposals to form a Business Improvement District (BID) in Beckenham are moving forward, if slowly. A BID is a business led and business funded body formed to improve a commercial area, such as our High Street. Businesses decide and direct what they want for the area, using money raised from a levy on the businesses in that area. A feasibility study was completed recently, and a formal ballot of the local businesses will be conducted shortly. A similar BID is being pursued for Penge. Our Town Centre Manager has her work cut out – she is taking forward both BIDs, as well as

continuing with the liaison work between the Town Centre Team and the council.

ELMERS END GREEN

The Elmers End Green History Panel was unveiled by Cllr Peter Dean on a wonderfully warm and sunny afternoon on 27 May.



Our Chair, Marie Pender, with Cllr Peter Dean at the unveiling

We were delighted to welcome children from Marion Vian School, accompanied by Headmaster Ian Redgrave, to witness the unveiling. About 30 members also came along and were invited to drinks afterwards at the Elm Tree pub alongside the Green. The Elm Tree was formerly the William IV, which has stood on this site since at least 1860s.

Permission has been granted for the conversion of the toilet block to medical consulting rooms. Work should begin shortly.

CLOCK HOUSE HISTORY PANEL

The Panel will be unveiled by Cllr Sarah Phillips at 11.30 am on Saturday, 22 October. It will be located outside Venue 28, opposite the Library. WBRA are pleased that the area is picking up, especially that new shops are opening in Clock House Parade. The rejuvenation of Venue 28 must be a big contributory factor to a general uplift in feeling. Venue 28 is now well used by a variety of clubs and classes.

Please come along to the unveiling, and join us afterwards for coffee and cakes at a local cafe.

BECKENHAM BANDSTAND APPEAL

A fund raising event to restore the Bandstand at Croydon Road Recreation Ground was held in August. Large numbers of people gathered on a warm and sunny day to hear 5 hours of music. The main Bowie tribute act was excellent as the Thin White Duke.



The bandstand is the last identifiable one of its type and has a wealth of musical heritage, having been the venue for many musical performances since its installation in 1905. For us, the most notable was probably the Free Festival by Bowie himself in 1969. The bandstand is well worth renovation.

In total, £93,000 is still needed to complete the restoration of the bandstand, in addition to the £35,000 already raised. A crowdfunding campaign has been launched You can pledge a donation at **www.spacehive.com/bowiebandstand**

Supporters are also being invited to purchase a personalised brick around the much-loved landmark. The bricks, which cost £100, could be a personal tribute to remember David Bowie, but the brick could also commemorate a loved one, celebrate a special occasion, or promote a business. The bricks will form the circular pathway around the structure and can be purchased at www.bromley.gov.uk/bowiebandstand.

PLANNING - *by Marie Pender*

Proposed Academy School at Balmoral Avenue

The planning application for this academy was received by LB Bromley in early July, but was published only in mid September. The application is for two buildings of two to three storeys to provide an eight form entry plus 6th form school (up to 1,680 pupils) and sports hall, playing fields, Multi Use Games Area and car parking spaces, cycle parking spaces, floodlighting, new pedestrian and vehicular accesses, servicing and storage.

The residents living right next to this development are understandably very alarmed at the prospect of over 1600 students passing down Balmoral Avenue four times a day, as well as sports facilities and floodlights. They have welcomed the fact that Balmoral Avenue is one of four sites in LB Bromley's Local Plan review recommended for removal of the designation as suitable for educational use.

There seems to have been problems with LB Bromley's mailing of consultation letters to residents. The consultation letter dated 16 September had not been received by residents in Balmoral Avenue on 26 September – half way through the supposed 21 days allowed to make representations. There are 57 documents associated with this application, so even the full 21 days is hardly adequate! The letters have been re-issued and the deadline for responses is now 17 October.

LB Bromley has deferred a decision on permission for Eden Park High School's temporary site at the Ravensbourne School. This could delay the whole process for the proposed new school at Balmoral Avenue. There is considerable doubt as to whether this new large school is needed in the Borough. It might well be that the school children would come from neighbouring Boroughs rather than Beckenham.

Rear of Station Parade, Elmers End

An application for demolition of the existing buildings and construction of a four storey block of eight flats (six 1 bedroom and two 2 bedroom) with undercroft car parking, refuse and cycle storage was refused. This land was until recently the depot for GKC van hire, which has moved to Elmers End Station.

The reasons for refusal were comprehensive - cramped and incongruous form of development; the loss of an existing viable small business use and premises; a dominant, overbearing and intrusive form of development; directly overlooking to Station Estate; an increased sense of enclosure and loss of outlook harmful to the visual amenities of both Station Parade and Station Estate; poor standard of provision of outdoor amenity space. All this would provide an unacceptably poor standard of living accommodation. The applicants have appealed the decision.

Thayers Farm Road, 112 Beckenham Road

This pink building behind 112 Beckenham Road, accessed from Thayers Farm Road, is the subject of yet another planning application. This time the proposal is to demolish the building and build two 2 bed and three 1 bed flats. Previous applications, most recently for 3 two bed and 3 one bed flats, were refused and appeals dismissed.

Rowden works

This is another site with a long planning history. A new owner had decided to re-apply for the previous proposals that had been repeatedly refused up to 2016. It now appears that the proposals given permission in 2012 are now going ahead.

STATION PARADE

Over the past year WBRA has constantly campaigned to have the small piece of ground next to Station Parade cleaned up. This is near the traffic lights at the junction of Elmers End Road and Croydon road, opposite Tesco. The large bins were always overflowing with black bag waste, and furniture regularly dumped – to the extent of bits of furniture appearing every week.

Council officers have tried hard to get the landlord, who it seems lives in north London, to take action to keep this area clean. Our thanks go to them. The area was eventually cleared and the bins put behind the gate. We thought all was going to get better, but no. It seems whoever was dumping the waste couldn't work out how to open the gate, so more black bags were dumped outside and we had dirty nappies and packages of rotting food spilled over the ground. At the time of writing, the alleyway has been cleared and cleaned. We wait with bated breath to see if this will last. We usually like to illustrate our items with photos – but in this case, you really wouldn't want to see them!

COPTIC CHURCH, DUNBAR AVENUE

Following an item in the May 2016 *Review*. Dr Zoser Boulis, Secretary and Trustee of the Church wrote to object. WBRA is sorry if church members were upset. This was not our intention, but as a Residents' Association our role is to support members who have an issue that concerns them. The full text of his letter can be found on the WBRA website, so members can judge for themselves.

Our May Review reported that residents in Dunbar Avenue, Balmoral Avenue and Eden Park Avenue have protested about the use by the church of outside space for noisy game activities that went on late into the evening and outside their permitted hours for social activity. The largest problem was a football pitch with 6 metre high metal netting and floodlights. WBRA has seen photographic evidence of the floodlights in use.

Dr. Boulis' letter quotes our points, and his reply is in italics:

- "Residents in Dunbar Avenue and Balmoral Avenue - *there are others from Eden Park Avenue and the far end of Dunbar Avenue, the result of the canvassing. We do not see them and they do not see us. There are several immediate very friendly neighbours who did not complain.*
- Use of the grounds for weekend and late night outdoor activities - *we have a children playground. These children, who are of civilized professional parents and well behaved, play unorganised games for no more than a couple of hours following the Sunday service which finishes at mid-day. Occasionally this happens on Saturdays also. There are no children or anybody using these grounds at night or during the week, as there are no services at nights and no lights are available.*
- Over the years, there has been increasing use of the rear grounds for physical activity which is very noisy. *This is certainly untrue. I have repeatedly requested Bromley council to measure noise pollution, if any, objectively in*

MHz and they haven't done. This accusation was thrown out by the Appeal Planning Inspectorate from Bristol last year. He investigated and found no evidence of noise. Accordingly, we won the appeal in connection with evening services if we wish. So far, we did not start evening services.

- *Last August, a 5-a-side football pitch was constructed without planning permission. We have a children playground. We have no football pitch, we have no football, we have no whistles and we have no organised games of any nature.*
- *Netting and Full Floodlights - The netting is important to prevent any ball from falling into peoples` gardens or the road, which is not easily accessible, except from the front. There are no floodlights. We had normal lights installed. These lasted a week only and were removed as gesture of goodwill.*
- *`The football pitch` is in the middle of surrounding gardens. The borders of the playground are two alleyways with garages and one garden. The houses are far away on the other roads.*
- *The floodlights are very intrusive and on late into the night. They moved children`s bedrooms to the front of the house. There are no floodlights and nobody is in the church at night. A complainant talks about children and does not have any.*
- *WBRA is supporting the residents to find a resolution. I believe that WBRA should be honourable and apologize to the Coptic Orthodox Church."*

Neighbours have subsequently challenged these points by saying:

- There is a sports pitch, climbing frame and volleyball.
- There are portable football goals.
- All the homes of residents who have been disturbed either back onto, or are within disturbance range of the site.
- They question the relevance of whether or not a complainant has children.

LB Bromley has taken enforcement action against the poles, netting and floodlighting, which were erected without planning permission. The church has taken down the floodlights “as a gesture of goodwill”. But it has appealed against the enforcement notice for the poles and netting, and it has put in a retrospective application for these items. WBRA has supported residents in countering the appeal and objecting to the retrospective application.

ANCASTER ROAD PARKING

Members have contacted WBRA about parking problems in Ancaster Road and neighbouring roads near to Elmers End station. Commuters and others park close to dropped kerbs making it very difficult for residents to get on and off their property. We have researched available solutions, but a Controlled Parking Zone is not likely to be permitted because almost all of the houses in this area have off street parking available. Another option is white bar markings. These are advisory, but are reported to work reasonably well in encouraging drivers to park considerately. A charge of £50 is made for installing each white bar.

Elmers End Road now has three van and car rental companies within about a quarter of a mile – Popular, Enterprise and GKC. They all park their hire vehicles on the roads. LB Bromley seems unable to act.

'LOCAL GREEN SPACES'

Nominations for this new designation were invited in February and March this year. In Beckenham, Alexandra Recreation Ground, Royston Field, Cator Park, Beckenham Green, Dorset Road Allotments, and Kelsey Park seem to have been accepted. Various other patches of green that WBRA nominated have not been included, and once again Elmers End Green has not been designated.

CLOCK HOUSE SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAM

The Clock House Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) hold Ward Panel Meetings approximately every eight weeks. This is when representatives from the community meet with local designated police officers to discuss current issues and concerns and to decide on the police team's Priorities and Promises for the following period. New attenders are always welcome and anyone wishing to join the SNT and participate in these meetings should email clockhouse.snt@met.police.uk

The good news at the August meeting was that Burglaries, Robberies and Motor Vehicle crime were all down in the Ward compared with the previous eight-week period. However, our officers will still keep working on these Priorities to further reduce these crimes.

The Promises for the next 8-weeks were set as 1) Anti-Social Behaviour and youths loitering; 2) Littering, especially when related to drinking; 3) Drug use and supply.

A recent street briefing on Churchfields Road, when speeding and traffic problems near the refuse depot were raised, produced a positive outcome. The Traffic Unit agreed to hold a number of speed checks on Churchfields Road and Marlow Road in the near future, and the relevant Council Officer will visit the refuse depot to discuss solutions to the congestion.

As there has been a spate of moped thefts around the Ward, moped owners are reminded to secure their vehicles carefully and to report anything suspicious, especially possible abandoned vehicles.

Further SNT information is available at <http://content.met.police.uk/Team/Bromley/Clockhouse>

PENGE AND CATOR SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAM

The newsletter of the Penge and Cator SNT of course reports on the terrible traffic incident on 31 August in Lennard Road where two lives were lost.

Burglaries are down in this area also. METRACE teams have been promoting SMARTWATER, for marking property, in the Penge area for the last couple of months, which is a useful a tool against Burglary.

FEDERATION OF BROMLEY RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS - by Judith Niechcial

This grouping of representatives from residents' associations across the Borough meets every few months at Bromley Methodist Church. A lot of time is taken up with controversy about Biggin Hill Airport, but there is also discussion which affects this part of the Borough. Some examples are:

The Landscape Group (TLG)

This company has the contract to deliver gardening services for LB Bromley. There is some dissatisfaction with the standard of work, and concern that understaffing and low wages may be a factor. Certainly in Cator Park this summer, although the grass has been regularly mowed, the beds have been choked with weeds. This has been reported on the FixMyStreet website.



TLG did run a course on invertebrates at BEECHE (Bromley Environmental Education Centre) at High Elms, covering many aspects of ecology. It was interesting to learn that 90% of all the water in the country, LB Bromley included, was polluted by fertilisers leaching out from fields.

Trains

Stage Two of the rebuilding of London Bridge station allows trains to and from Charing Cross to stop at the station once again. However no trains bound for Cannon Street will stop at London Bridge until early 2018.

London Land Commission

This was set up by the previous Mayor, and is compiling a register of publicly owned 'brownfield' sites that could be used for housing development, and to 'co-ordinate and accelerate the release' of this land. From a map published on their website it seems that 83 sites have been identified in Beckenham.

Community Links Bromley

CLB is a membership organisation of over 200 local charitable voluntary and community groups. It works to support, promote and facilitate the development of a strong, diverse, confident and effective voluntary and community sector in the Borough. The website is <http://www.communitylinksbromley.org.uk>

TREE FRIENDS - *by Kelvin Wynne, Tree Friend Co-ordinator, Clock House and Eden Park*

With approximately 36,000 trees and over 200 species, Bromley probably has the largest street tree stock of all the London boroughs. The vast majority are deciduous and generally made up of a combination of large forest type species such as lime, oak, ash and horse chestnut; and smaller ornamental trees such as Sorbus species, hawthorn, ornamental plum, apple, pear and cherry.

Of course, Bromley do have contractors to do most of the associated maintenance work but in these days of reduced budgets have asked for 'volunteer' Tree Friends to assist. Duties are mainly to monitor the health of existing trees, removal of basal growth and side shoots, watering if possible, identifying empty tree pits for future planting etc. It is easy to sign up for this role. To find out more, access the 'Tree Friend Toolkit' link on Bromley Council website.

I recently did an impromptu survey of roads close to my home, identifying empty tree pits and damaged trees. Bromley have now just told me that they will be planting at least fifty new trees this year, in the local area. Certainly a good result!

BECKENHAM PLACE PARK

In late July Lewisham Council, belatedly, issued a call for ideas for the development of the three historic buildings in the park: the Mansion, the Homesteads buildings, and Foxgrove. The Council writes:

Each of the buildings is different in character, needs different levels of investment and so provides different opportunities.

We are keen to hear from interested individuals and organisations who have ideas about how these buildings can be brought back into full use and support and shape the regeneration of Beckenham Place Park.

These buildings were (why?) not included in the original Heritage Lottery Fund bids. The deadline for submission of ideas was 9 September. We suspect that there is much more public support for the restoration of the Mansion and stable yard than for the plans for the park, involving closure of the golf course.

FURTHER EDUCATION PROVISION IN BROMLEY - by Shirley Civil

The Widmore Centre in Bromley has finally closed. It used to offer an extensive programme of Further Education classes ranging from academic subjects, practical subjects such as sewing, and many creative classes; pottery, jewellery-making, and art classes of various kinds including life drawing.

In the past each year at the end of August I would go to the Kentwood Centre in Penge to collect a brochure containing details of all the classes for the forthcoming academic year. This year I was told there were no brochures. Pottery and jewellery-making and some other

popular classes have not been transferred to Kentwood, In addition the cost of classes seems to have risen this year.

The Kentwood nursery has been shut, (and the cafe moved to the rooms where it was). This is a cost saving measure, but can only lead to lower student enrolment in the long run, as parents of young children will have nowhere to leave them while they study.

I do not think the council understands how important FE classes are for local people. The classes give opportunities to young and old to enhance their lives and learn new skills, some of which can lead to new opportunities in life, including employment.

We on the WBRA Committee would appreciate feedback. Do you use FE classes/Do you think the council ought to re-introduce the brochures and the missing classes? (Without the brochure people can't see the full range of classes, and not everyone has access to the internet.

The education website is www.baec.ac.uk

MARKET ON THE GREEN

Watch out for the Christmas Market of local produce and crafts and gifts on Saturday 3 December on St George's Green, Beckenham Junction. These markets, where there are also children's activities and live music, are increasingly successful and well-attended. They are organised by our sister RA, Copers Cope Area Residents' Association.

JUNCTION OF KENT HOUSE ROAD AND BECKENHAM ROAD - *by Shirley Civil*

I am very happy to report that my campaign regarding the left filter at the junction of Kent House Road and Beckenham Road did at last succeed in a single yellow line approaching the traffic lights being installed, preventing parking in the filter approach. The traffic flow has improved there a lot as a result. (I would have preferred a double yellow line, but it is an improvement.)

TRAMLINK

Transport for London surveyors have been seen in Elmers End in preparation for putting a second platform for Tramlink at the station. This will take some ground from the car park, but in truth the car park is little used anyway because of the charges.