# Newsletter
# Winter 2023



# West Wickham
## Residents' Association

**www.westwickhamresidents.com**

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| | | | |
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| | |
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Or via the Association's website at: www.westwickhamresidents.com

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Please contact the Editor for more information

### *Minutes secretary*

The Association has a vacancy for someone to act as Meeting Secretary. The role involves taking notes at our committee meetings, distributing them to committee members and compiling the meeting agenda. Arranging meeting room with Wickham Halls and general liaison with Trustees of Wickham Halls. We meet for a couple of hours every two months, so the commitment is not heavy. Like all committee roles, the post is voluntary. If you're interested, please contact the Secretary, at katrina_iddon@hotmail.com or on 020 8776 1252, and she will arrange for you to attend a meeting or two to see what is involved.

### *Community toilets*

Like me, you probably remember the community toilets scheme which was introduced a few years ago, whereby some shops agreed to allow people to use their toilet facilities whether they were customers or not. This became a particularly useful scheme when the public toilets at the library were closed. Like me also, you probably think the scheme has slowly disappeared to the point where it's not common knowledge where such facilities are now located. This has been an area of discussion between the Association and our Councillors on several occasions. So, I'm sure you'll be pleased to learn that the toilets in the new library will be designated as community toilets….if you can hold on...

### *Subscriptions by Direct Debit*

We are very encouraged by the take-up of this scheme by members. At the time of writing, we're heading towards a thousand households signed up to pay their £2 annual subscription by Direct Debit via GoCardless and, if you haven't done so already, I urge you to join them. It really does make a significant difference to the lives of our volunteer Road Stewards. Delivering the Newsletter four times a year is straightforward but collecting subscriptions once a year proves a more challenging task. Many residents are not at home when Road Stewards call or, if they are home, do not have cash on them. Consequently, several repeat visits are not uncommon.

The next £2 subscription will be taken on the 1st June 2024 and then on the 1st June each year thereafter and will appear on your statement as 'GoCardless'. You will be informed by email before money is taken. Of course, we recognise that not every member has access to these facilities, so cash payments will still be collected.

You can sign-up to the scheme via our website at westwickhamresidents.com or by scanning the QR Code.

### *Donations*

We're always grateful when members donate over and above the annual subscription. For some years now, several members have given us £5 or £10 on top of their subscription payment. This year, we received a donation of £120 from a member who has given a similar amount for several years running. In the main, these members wish to remain anonymous and ask us to put the money towards community work. In the past some of the money has gone towards the High Street Christmas lights and we are currently considering supporting a group of parents who have applied for funding from Bromley council to help improve the play park at McAndrews recreational ground – see page 16.

*Editor*

## News from the High Street




By the time this edition reaches you, the High Street should already be lit up with Christmas lights in anticipation of the festive season. As it's currently a dark and wet October day, I'm looking forward to the switching on of the lights and the other events and activities happening locally.

Sadly, we still have several empty units on the High Street, with some rumours swirling that there may be a return of Starbucks - unconfirmed as yet. The Janj London restaurant at 97 High Street, which opened only recently, was closed for a while but has now re-opened as a Greek Restaurant—Geusi Greek Cuisine. They offer authentic Greek food through a dine-in service, kerbside pickup or delivery. AK Bennett Opticians had been delayed in their move up the High Street, but there's now a notice stating opening hours on the new premises at 20a, next door to Matthews Jewellers.

One of our newer arrivals, Memories Coffee House, has been a busy and popular attraction for families with young children and cake lovers alike. Located on Glebe Way,




as part of the old fire station, it's a little further down the High Street but having tested the coffee and homemade cake myself, I can say it's worth the steps! The owner, Beth, has a well-established cake business already and has now created a child-friendly cafe serving up homemade bakes and great coffee. They also use the space to host gatherings for various groups as well as having certain days dedicated to children with Special Educational Needs (SEN). We wish Beth lots of luck with her new venture.




The library has been looking eerily skeletal recently, but good news is on the horizon as contractors have been given August 2024 as the date to be finished. Let's hope there aren't any issues to prolong the much anticipated build. A little way in the opposite direction, the West Wickham and Shirley Baptist Church on Wickham Road has announced the opening of a new soft play cafe. It will be open every Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, 9.30am-2.30pm, and it's free for little ones to play if adults are using The Hub Coffee shop. The soft play is for under 5's and other activities will be running for older children. I'm sure this will be a popular facility for parents and grandparents with little ones to occupy!




We must give special congratulations to Leyla Narsoy of LK Dry Cleaners, for reaching 20 years of trading on the High Street. On the 29th September 2003 Leyla began her adventure as a business owner and has gone from strength to strength, opening a second branch in Hayes in 2017. As Layla thanked her customers for their support over the years on social media, the congratulations poured in from locals, with numerous people highlighting how lovely and friendly Leyla and the staff are and how much they enjoy going there. What a great testament to one of our long running High Street businesses. Congratulations to Leyla, Ismail and all the team. Wishing you many more years on the High Street.

*Charlotte del Guercio (WWRA Committee)*

## TRAFFIC & TRANSPORT

### *Proposed road safety measures*

Bromley Council traffic engineers constantly monitor traffic incidents and the effectiveness of safety measures on the Borough's Road network and recommend casualty reduction schemes where they believe such action is necessary.

One such scheme that will be of interest to members, was recommended to Councillors in October. It concerns the roundabout at the junction at South Eden Park Road, Links Way and Monks Orchard Road. Following a safety study conducted on 34 cluster sites that had more than 5 collisions in a period of 3 years, this roundabout was found to have had 8 collisions during the study period. In the last 3 years, data still shows 7 collisions, indicating that the situation has not improved.

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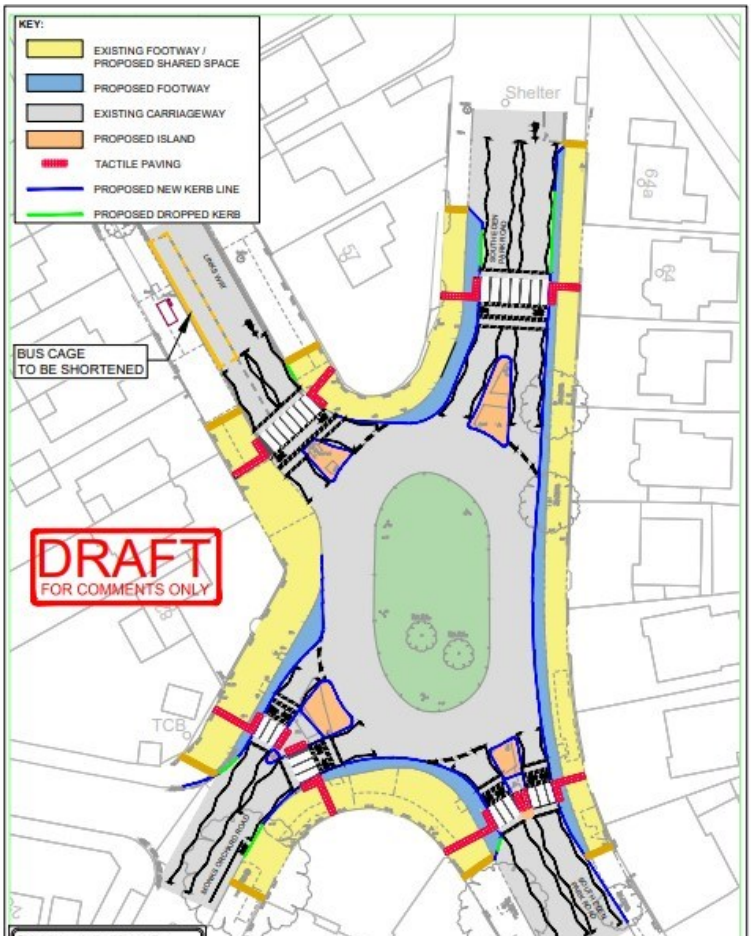
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As a result of this investigation, officers are proposing a scheme to improve road safety for all road users at this roundabout. The proposals include:-

- Introduction of parallel zebra crossings on all arms of the roundabout to allow priority for vulnerable road users as well as making them more visible to drivers.
- Widening of footways on all arms around the roundabout and narrowing lane widths to slow down traffic and improve deflection at the roundabout.
- New shared spaces for both pedestrians and cyclists to improve accessibility for all at the roundabout.

The proposed scheme was recommended to Councillors in October and was due to be considered by the Environment and Community Services Committee in November after this edition of the Newsletter went to print. There will be an update on progress and any agreed action in the next issue.



# ENVIRONMENT

## *Street trees*

The Borough's "Treemendous" tree planting project is in its third year and Bromley are looking to replace trees felled in the last year. Fifteen hundred trees have been planted this year plus 25 sponsored by members of the public. Fifty different species have been planted and this level of diversity ought to increase pest/disease resilience. The survival rates among newly planted street trees were very good this summer - the mortality rate within the Treemendous project is 10% for year 1 (2021/22) and 1% for year 2 (2022/23), which compares favourably against a national mortality rate average of 30% (per the Forestry Commission). Any tree planted by Bromley is guaranteed a watering regime for one year, but high priority trees may be watered for up to three years. Street tree watering is already contracted out, and all trees had fifty litres per week for 19 weeks in 2022. Last year was a tough year for all trees due to drought, but the efforts of local residents are very much appreciated.

To support and widen this effort, trees are now marked with QR codes which can be used by the public to access information on the tree - this system should have been implemented by the end of November. Information includes the species of tree and a list of dates when Council sponsored watering was performed. Watering can be requested if the tree appears stressed and, additionally, "Please water me" cards will be affixed to saplings to encourage more local residents to water trees.

## *Platinum Jubilee Parks Fund (PJPF)*

A new PJPF Officer (Jane Askew) is now in post. Current projects include playground improvements, biodiversity gains and a community garden in Kelsey Park. A further 11 applications worth £192k have been made and two projects are in the shaping phase. Every ward in Bromley has now put in at least one application. Delivery of works is complete at four sites, with a further eight to be completed by the end of the year. The current applications for West Wickham concern a play and picnic area at Blake recreation ground and Rugby Pitch improvements at Sparrows Den.

## *Nature Friendly Verges*

This is a trial in Bromley to take the "No Mow May" concept a step further on a selection of Bromley's verges. The response to the first public survey is encouraging, revealing (from 440 replies) 73% support, 20% opposed and 7% unsure. The support strongly depends on location; the closer a wild verge is to property, the lower the support for it. Verges close to houses have 62% support for example (11% lower than average). The hay cut for those verges was completed in September.

## *Rare butterflies in Bromley*

The White Admiral butterfly (a relative of the well-known Red Admiral) has been recorded at two sites in Bromley (Crofton Woods and High Elms) again this year. These butterflies could potentially spread to other woodlands and tree belts that have their caterpillar food plant - honeysuckle. Similarly, the Brown Hairstreak butterfly has popped up in several Bromley sites, so I will provide an update about how to look out for both of these in the summer edition.

## *High Broom Woods*

Unfortunately, this lovely woodland has recently been colonised by Three-Cornered Garlic (*Allium triquetrum*) which, although pretty, is an invasive plant on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act because it outcompetes native flora such as Wood Anemone and Bluebells and requires a sustained effort to remove it. In High Broom Woods it is suppressing another ancient woodland indicator plant called Opposite-Leaved Golden Saxifrage. Cherry Laurel is also causing problems in Bromley's woodlands.

On a more positive note, there is now an active group of the Ravensbourne Riverfly citizen science monitors (see last summer's edition) who received their training on a wet & windy day in October.

## *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*

First published in 2012, the framework has since been through four iterations, the latest published on 5th September. There are numerous policy paragraphs relevant to the environment including urban green spaces, protecting the natural environment (paras 174-181), Green Belt, pollution, climate change and flood resilience, all of which must inform all London Borough's Local Plan policies and those of the London Plan. A Local Plan or the London Plan can only deviate from the NPPF in exceptional and justified circumstances.

The main amendments to the latest NPPF come under 'Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change', to assist decision makers dealing with proposals to use and improve existing renewable energy sites giving weight to the advantages of doing so. If you want to read the framework, search for 'NPPF' online and you will be directed to the Government website.

### *Delays to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)*

BNG gives the development industry an opportunity to work with the planning system to make sure development improves and protects our precious biodiversity, rather than further eroding it. It also has the potential to boost green jobs, innovation in habitat mapping and make green space more accessible to the public. Following

Government u-turns in September on aspects of achieving net zero by 2050, there was a flurry of media suggesting that the mandatory BNG commitments were also 'under review.' In reality, the long-standing date of November 2023 to introduce BNG as a mandatory requirement for most large scale developments, has been merely delayed a few weeks to January 2024, with the mandatory requirement for small sites (<10 units) remaining at April 2024. We still await secondary legislation and further guidance from DEFRA to provide clarity on some of the determination and delivery aspects; this is promised before the end of November. Meanwhile, DEFRA has a blog to help inform people and it can be found at:-

defralanduse.blog.gov.uk/2023/07/20/bng-whats-happened-and-whats-coming-next/

*Richard Barnes (WWRA Committee)*


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# PLANNING

## *12 Park Avenue*

The Association has objected to a planning application submitted for this site. This 1930's semi-detached, 3 bedroom house has since had a further 2 bedrooms added. This proposal is an application to add a further 5 bedrooms by building side and rear extensions and using space in the roof. The resulting 10 bedrooms would have access to one common bathroom and a shower room which is en-suite to one of the bedrooms. We objected to this as being an extreme overdevelopment of the site and out of keeping with similar properties in this and surrounding residential roads. In addition, we questioned compliance with residential density standards, parking provision and possible adverse effects on light and privacy rights of neighbours. If you want to view the application on the Council's planning website, the reference is **23/03376.**

## *.Planning decisions*

Some recent planning decisions related to previously mentioned applications. Planning references, given in bold can be viewed at the Council's website, bromley.gov.uk.

11 Red Lodge Road, which was refused a change of use from Health Clinic to Café/ Restaurant in May 2023, **(21/05194),** was subsequently permitted the change in August 2023 **(23/02330).** 105a Station Rd, the ex-beauty salon in the Library car park, granted change of use to Nursery, had an application to add another floor and rooftop garden, refused in August **(23/00972).** The application to erect a 3 bedroom house in the grounds of 30 Corkscrew Hill, was refused in July 2023 **(23/01815).** An application by 269 Pickhurst Lane to erect a 2 storey, detached house in the back garden with frontage and access onto the Avenue, was refused in August 2023 **((23/02862).** A third similar application to build a 2 storey, attached house at 62 Braemar Gardens, was refused in July. According to the planning website, an appeal has been lodged. **(20/02263, 21/04046, 23/00430).**


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# A look at Wickham's Past - By Peter Leigh

## *High Street*

In 1883, William Walford published a book entitled Village London. In it he states, "Few parts of even the distant suburbs of London are prettier or more sylvan than the country between Hayes and Croydon and probably few rural villages, even in Yorkshire or Devonshire are more sequestered than West Wickham which up to the present time has not suffered to any extent from the incursion of the demon of bricks and mortar."




Believe it or not this is what our High Street looked like in about 1900. This photograph was taken from about the end of The Grove and is looking down the High Street. On the right are two cottages which were owned by the Hall sisters who occupied a large house called Ravenswood in Station Road, while poking out from behind the trees on the left is Runswick House, now occupied by Barclays Bank. It bears a date of 1865 on its side wall and has in its time been a butchers shop with slaughter house at the rear, then A.J. Moule bakers, later the annexe to Ravenswood Hotel, during which time a cafe opened on the premises, although an application for a licence to sell wines and spirits was refused. Next door is a cottage dating back to at least 1805, where Lloyds Bank is now. In 1900 it was occupied by a William Hollamby, a carpenter and was known as Bible Cottage because he always displayed a bible in the window open at a suitable text for the day. Beyond was Ribbon Cottage occupied in 1900 by Henry Springate, his wife and five children. He worked for the MacAndrew family a few yards up the High Street at Wickham House (opposite the Swan). Ribbon Cottage was pulled down in 1930's for a pair of shops currently occupied by The Kitchen Shop and Cancer Research.

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## *Christmas Tree Festival*

A Community Christmas Tree Festival will be held at St Francis of Assisi, Ravenswood Avenue, West Wickham, between 9th – 16th December 2023. Come into the Church and look at the trees, have some refreshments, listen to some music and get ready for Christmas.

The trees have been provided and decorated by a variety of organisations in West Wickham including the 7th West Wickham Scout Group, West Wickham Sugarcraft Club, Messy Church, West Wickham Floral Society, Ravenswood WI, Memory Box Café, local schools and many more.

They will be raising money for Welcare in Bromley, a charity that provides practical and emotional support and advice to families in need.

The Christmas Tree Festival will be held during the following times:

Saturday 9 December – 10.00am – 1.00pm

Sunday 10 December – 12.00noon – 3.00pm

Wednesday 13 December – 10.30am – 1.00pm

Friday 15 December – 10.00am – 1.00pm

Saturday 16 December – 10.00am – 1.00pm

For further information please contact Kate Dyer katedyer41@hotmail.com or

Nicky Nightingale nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk



### *McAndrews Recreation Ground*

Tiia Pilott and a few parents from Hawes Down School have set up a group called the McAndrews Playground Parent Group and have applied for £17,500 of funding from Bromley Council to help improve the play park at McAndrews recreation ground. To make the application the group had to collect £500 in donations and one hundred signatures. The group are looking to update some of the equipment, remove the fencing that separates the two parks, add some more picnic benches and put on a community day to help paint the playground. The detailed plans will be finalised if they get the funding. If you want to find out more about their plans and make a donation, please visit their gofundme page at gofund.me/0668ba99

### *Arhh, Jim Lad….*

This Winter's pantomime production from the West Wickham Pantomime Society (WWPS) is Treasure Island directed by Danielle and Nicholas Grant. As usual, performances are for charity and will run from Friday 5th January 2024 until Sunday 13th January 2024 at Wickham Hall in Sussex Road, BR4 0JX.

The Box Office is open, the tickets are still only £10, and they can be booked via the WWPS website at westwickhampanto.org.


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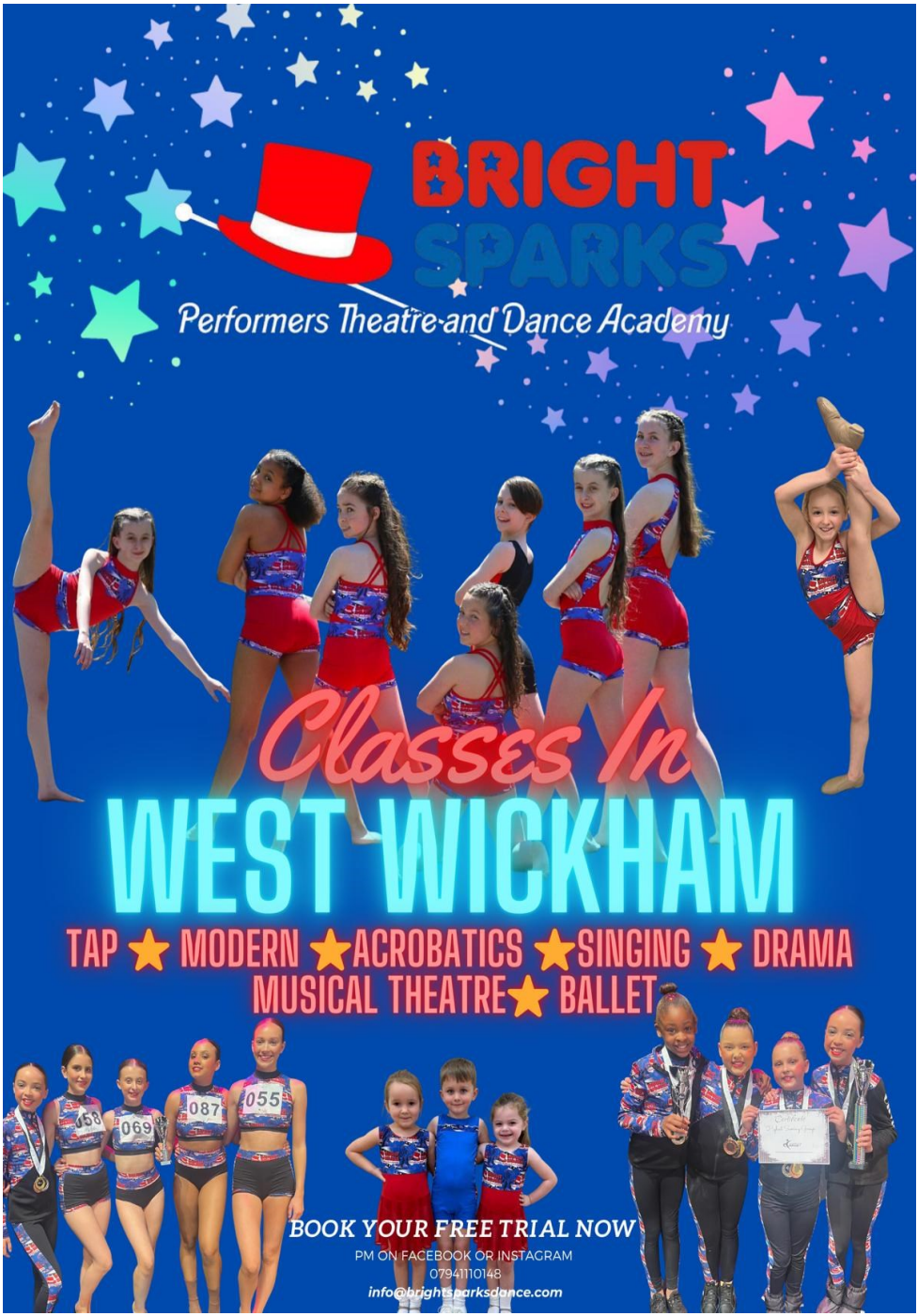
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## *Churches Together in West Wickham (CTWW)*

## *Celebrating Christmas 2023*

Church services are providing an important element of spiritual well-being for people in West Wickham and the surrounding area. Please see the details of what's happening to celebrate Christmas on the individual Church's website listed below. You will receive a warm welcome.

### Coney Hill Baptist Church

Coney Hill Road

West Wickham BR4 9BU

www.coneyhill.com

### St John's Church

Layhams Road,

West Wickham BR4 9HJ

www.stjohnsww.com

### West Wickham Methodist Church

Hawes Lane

West Wickham BR4 9AA

Sunday, 17 December 10.30 a.m. Carol Service
Sunday, 24 December 4.00 p.m. Crib Service
Monday, 25 December 10.00 a.m. Christmas Day Service
www.bromleymethodistcircuit.org.uk

### St Francis' Church

Ravenswood Avenue

West Wickham BR4 0PW

Sunday, 17 December 10.45 a.m. Family Carol Service
Sunday, 24 December 6.00 p.m. Lighting the Lamps
Sunday, 24 December 11.15 p.m. Midnight Communion
Monday, 25 December 10.00 a.m. Family Communion
www.stfranciswestwickham.co.uk

### St Mark's Catholic Church

High Street

West Wickham BR4 0LT

Mass 24 December at 6.30 p.m.
Mass 25 December 10.00 a.m. and 11.30 a.m.
Saintmarks7@btinternet.com

### West Wickham & Shirley Baptist Church

Wickham Road

Croydon CR0 8EH

www.wwsbc.org.uk

**Emmanuel United Reformed Church**

The Grove

West Wickham BR4 9JS

4pm Saturday 16 December: Community Carol Singing
6:30pm Sunday 17 December: Carols by Candlelight
4pm Christmas Eve: (short) Crib Service- the Christmas story for children and their families
11:30pm Christmas Eve: Holy Night Service with communion at midnight
10:30am Christmas Day: All-age Christmas Celebration Service

**St Mary's Church**

The Avenue

West Wickham BR4 0DX

Sunday, 17 December 4.00 p.m. Carol Service
Sunday, 24 December 4.00 p.m. Christingle Service
Sunday, 24 December 11.15 p.m. Midnight Communion
Monday, 25 December – see St Francis' Church
www.stmarywestwickham.co.uk




# Friends of West Wickham Library

(fwwl@btinternet.com)



Corner of Leesons Hill and Sevenoaks Way, St Mary Cray

## "The first Council estate in Bromley"

A talk by Pam Preedy

**Wednesday 10th January 2024 @ 2.30pm**

## "Standing up for Woods & Trees"

A talk by Allan Goodison

**Wednesday 14th February 2024 @ 2.30pm**






## "The hidden meaning of Pub Signs"

A talk by John Thompson

**Wednesday 13th March 2024 @ 2.30pm**

At **Emmanuel Church Hall**, The Grove, West Wickham

Doors open from 2pm

Entry: £2 members (£3 for couples) & £3 for non-members
Meetings may be subject to alteration without notice.
Programme correct at time of printing

***FILMBOX – the West Wickham cinema you probably don't know about….***

I spoke to FILMBOX Committee Member Paul Tanner who told me about the origins and current activities of this valuable community cinema resource which is based at Langley Park School for Boys (LPSB).

In 2012, a film studies teacher at LPSB, Vivienne Clark, was inspired when she first saw the theatre at Studio 609 in the new school building. Helped by Sarah Niblock and other team members, they created FILMBOX. It is a fully constituted members' cinema club, but all screenings are also open to the public. It is a not-for-profit, self-funded venture, independently co-run by staff, parents, 6th form student volunteers and local residents. It is associated with, but not administered or funded by the school and they are very grateful for the support and encouragement provided by many members of the school community.

They have two large modern screens, one with seating for over 400 and one with seating for 100 and they show at least two films each month during term time, about 30 films each year. The first screening on 26 September 2012 was a free showing of *The Artist,* preceded by a Buster Keaton short film, *Backstage*, which was accompanied live by Laurence Panter on the grand piano! Over 330 people attended, and the club hasn't looked back since. Members also enjoy priority booking, cheaper tickets for their guests plus 4 free tickets and two Members' Socials each year with a free drink and food.

There is plenty of free parking, a licenced bar and ice creams so, if you love watching films of all ages and types in a comfortable cinema setting and want to know what's in the current programme, I suggest you visit their website langleyfilmbox.com/. You will also find out about membership, prices and other activities. Alternately, you can use your smartphone on the QR code.

Upcoming films include Chevalier (2022, US,12A), Benediction (2021, UK/US, 12) and Barbie (12A).

*Editor*



Rotary West Wickham

## *Volunteering with Rotary West Wickham*

We fully understand the pressures that the modern way of working puts on people with younger families, or indeed, older family members as they help out with child-care etc.

We also understand that this can mean that people think that they cannot commit to becoming " full time" members of clubs, societies etc., including ourselves, as they feel that the time is just not available!

However, if you want to give back something to our community (and Rotary West Wickham exists solely to serve the community), why not consider volunteering to help us with our projects at times that are convenient to you? You do not have to "sign up" to a specified number of events and any help you can give will be gratefully received.

From experience, some of the events that have given a feeling of satisfaction to past volunteers include helping steward our annual Fireworks Display, assisting with our Christmas Collections (a couple of hours on a weekday evening or at our High Street Collections on a Saturday morning in December) and when we help at events organised by others, such as West Wickham Village Day or Hayes Fair.

You will never be "left alone to cope" if you can help us and as a volunteer you will be covered by our Rotary insurance.

For more information about volunteering with us contact our President, Barry Fenton, on 07514 358364 or email fentonbarryrotary@gmail.com.

*Ian Leach*

### *Voter Identification (ID)*

Members are reminded that identification is now required when voting at a polling station. If you haven't already arranged for your Voter ID, there is still time to prepare and there is no need to panic but action should be taken soon. Bromley does not have any scheduled elections until the Greater London Authority (GLA) elections in May 2024. Voter ID is now required in UK Parliamentary General Elections, the next one of which must be held by January 2025 but could be any time between now and then.

If you want more information about how you can provide acceptable identification, you can find it at bromley.gov.uk/VoterID.

## *A new Met for London*

Following a consultation involving over 10,000 Londoners and other partners across the city, the Metropolitan Police has launched a new policing project called 'A New Met for London' which has a stated mission of delivering more trust, less crime and high standards across the Capital.

The Commissioner, Sir Mark Rowley, has visited each of the 32 London Boroughs and on the 1st August, the roadshow came to the Civic Centre in Bromley. Prior to the presentations, local and specialist officers were on hand to display equipment and to discuss their various roles with the members of the public.

Proceedings then moved to the council chamber where Sir Mark outlined the new project and fielded questions. The main change for local people will be more focus on working with the local community. Local Community Officers will work closely with their communities to fight crime and to keep them safe. This is what Londoners said was a priority throughout the consultation process. Sir Mark set out the three priorities to reform the policing of London.

The first was Community Crime Fighting. To support this priority, he said that the Met will-

- Recruit an additional 500 Community Support Officers (PCSOs)
- Put more officers and PCSOs into local neighbourhoods and make sure that they are delivering against the priorities of Londoners.
- Use data to better understand the demands that the Met faces and deploy officers to where they will make the biggest difference to communities.
- Strengthen specialist teams, with an extra 565 people who will work closely with local police teams and partners on investigating domestic abuse, sexual offences and child sexual abuse and exploitation.
- Make it easier to contact the Met, whether by phone, digitally or face to face. Each borough will have at least one 24/7 front counter.
- Continue to improve the 999 system so that emergency calls to the Met are answered more quickly.
- Continue to work with their partners to ensure that individuals in need of care and non-crime help get supported by the right agency. This will free up police officers to tackle crime itself.
- Create a Victim Focus Desk to provide better support and advice for those who have suffered crimes.

The second was Culture Change. This is important to embed the values of policing by consent. To achieve this,–

- The Met would build a strong culture focussed on delivering for London, maintaining high standards and better reflecting the diversity of London.
- It would become a police service that does not discriminate – tackling racism, misogyny and homophobia.
- The Met would deal with discrimination wherever it discovers it, ensuring that all cases are robustly dealt with.
- It would take a more precise approach to the use of force and stop and search. The Met would carry out regular reviews to make sure that the tactics that are used to this end are used properly.

Lastly, the Met would fix its foundations to make sure that it succeeds. To do this the Met will –

- Serve London better by organising and deploying officers more effectively. The Met will give them the training, equipment, data and technology they need to use their powers precisely to cut crime. The Met will also develop the outstanding and diverse leaders that will be needed to drive these reforms.
- Ask Londoners to collaborate with it while this plan of reform is being implemented.

Throughout his presentation Sir Mark was very open about the difficulties that both he and his officers faced in order to implement the new policy.

He was very open about his determination to remove from the Met those officers who had committed crime, abused their powers or otherwise fell short of the standards that were expected of them. He continually expressed the need to combat all forms of corruption and discrimination within the Met.

Regarding community policing, he said that he would do his utmost to ensure that wherever possible local officers would be 'ring fenced'. This would prevent them being taken away from their community policing role to fill operational shortages on their Boroughs or to police demonstrations etc., elsewhere in London. He stated that it was imperative that local communities should have police cover available to deal with local problems and concerns whenever needed.

Sir Mark is very much aware of the problems facing the Met. He is obviously committed to tackle them head on. We can but hope that he will succeed in pushing through his reforms in order to give Londoners the Police Service that they want and deserve.

If you are interested in finding out more about what 'A New Met for London' will mean for improving the service that the Met gives to the public, you can read the whole plan at www.met.police.uk/ANewMetForLondon

*John Amos (WWRA Committee)*

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## *Councillor's Corner*

We hope that residents find this update informative, and we encourage you to contact us if you do have any issues and we will be happy to help where possible. Our contact details are given on page 2.

## *Leisure Centre renewal agreed by Council*

Plans for the refurbishment of the Leisure Centre took a big step forward when the Council's Executive recommended to full Council a two stage £27m improvement to two Leisure Centres. Stage One will see the Walnuts pool at Orpington close and once completed, West Wickham would close so that whole Leisure Centre could be renewed in one stage with completion planned for April 2026. Full details are in the Executive agenda for 18th October 2023 on the Council website.

## *Churchill Theatre*

The Churchill Theatre and Central Library buildings are coming to the end of their lives with many parts of the fabric beyond economic repair. The Council is in discussions with the current tenants of the Churchill, the Trafalgar Group, to gift the freehold interest of the site to enable them to invest in the building to ensure it is sustainable and protect the future use of the theatre. If they are unable or unwilling to take the gifted freehold with a substantial dowry, it will be marketed on a 999 lease to other interested parties. The Central Library, which is part of the same site, will move to the Council owned building formerly occupied by Top Shop further up the pedestrianised section of Bromley High Street.

## *West Wickham Library*

Work on the refurbished library continues and will include a new café, lavatories and a meeting room for community use. The construction of 26 homes on the former Station Road car park is also well underway. In the meantime, the library is housed in the wonderful Art Deco former health centre on Addington Road.

## *St David's School expansion plan approved*

Plans for seven new classrooms at St David's School on Beckenham Road were approved by a Planning committee in August. In addition to the new building in the grounds of the school, approval was given for landscaping and 6 extra staff parking spaces on site, including one bay for disabled drivers, 21 extra cycle places and 30 pupil scooter places. In conjunction with the school expansion, West Wickham Councillor Nicholas Bennett, as Cabinet member for Transport, Highways and Road Safety has approved a pedestrian crossing to be located by the school which will benefit residents and pupils of both St Davids and Oak Lodge Schools.

### *Blake Recreation Ground*

Its good to see that the Councils Platinum Jubilee Fund has been accessed by the Friends of Blake Park who have raised money for new play and exercise equipment in the park. We were pleased to support this application and hope to see other parks in the ward also access this funding that the Council made available during our late Queens Jubilee year to improve and upgrade the Borough's parks.

### *Dog Fouling*

There seems to have been an increase in complaints about this happening on pavements. We are delighted to say that the Council have a team that patrol and can enforce on this. Please do let us know if you would like a particular Road targeted.

### *Fix My Street*

This is a great tool to report physical issues such as graffiti, cleansing issues or road and pavement defects to the Council . You can access the service at:-

https://www.fixmystreet.com

How to report a problem:-

- Enter a Bromley postcode, or street name and area
- Locate the problem on a map of the area
- Enter details of the problem
- Confirm the report and Bromley Council will investigate

**We wish you all a Merry Christmas and prosperous New Year.**

Please remember that we are available for contact via our details on page 2.

Nicholas, Hannah & Mark




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