

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Leatherhead Residents' Association**  
**On the 8<sup>th</sup> June at 7 o'clock at the Letherhead Institute**

**Apologies:** Caroline Brown, Dennis Wickham

**Attending:** Hilary Porter, Richard Eckersley, Roy Allen, Paula Sabine, Hubert Carr, Jim Holt, Ray Brown, Fran Smith, David Smith, Andrew Morak, Cheryl Allen, John Bleakley, Cllr. Bridget Lewis-Carr plus 25 members and guests of the LRA between 7 o'clock and 8:30 for the general meeting.

**Police Report:** Fran Davey attended the meeting with a new support officer, Hermione (Henny) The crime figures show that May crime has risen in comparison to April, with Criminal Damage to a brick wall on Church Walk and to 7 mirrors on vehicles on Kingston Avenue. This crime that was not witnessed, is subject to further investigation. Violent crime was reported in area around Park House and Kingston House Gardens, which included anti-social behaviour by visiting youths. Neighbourhood priority for the month was theft from vehicles. Increases patrols of the Park House resulted in one person being charged with theft from vehicles. This initiative comes with a warning: Do not leave valuables in your car. On the positive side officers have worked with shopkeepers in The Leatherhead Town Centre to make sure they know how to use the radio system in their shops. There are now links to police and the cameras around our town. Leatherhead has not been designated a 'no cold calling area' like Fetcham, Bookham, and Ashted. However, the police will concentrate on vulnerable areas. A priority had been set by the Town Centre Forum to step up patrols of the area around the river. These patrols will continue, at request of the LRA.

**Matters Arising**

Several of the members of the LRA had specifically come to the meeting to discuss the Leatherhead Area Partnership's River Mole Project. Because Fran Davey and Henny will be actively involved in the policing of this area they were quite interested in hearing members concerns. For that reason the Mole River Development agenda item was dealt with first.

Several members who actively use the river path between Thorncroft Bridge and Leatherhead Bridge individually spoke of their disappointment that they had not been consulted concerning the details of the river walk project. Barry Davies, Bailiff of the river, spoke for the Cobham Angling Club that pay the MVDC for limited fishing rights in the area but were not notified of the changes. No one, except Cllr. Bridget Carr, knew that the path would be 8 feet wide and was to be made of a synthetic material. The development of the Mole River Bank is a complex matter and there are many objections. Many spoke of the work being done during the nesting season, in an area where there are many protected species; an area that is in fact a nature reserve. Others deplore the fact that a wide Fibredec path will compromise the natural tranquillity of a long but very narrow strip of the nature reserve. Clive Morrison represented a group of frequent (almost daily) users of the path who will no longer be able to use it. Clive can not use a laser key--others because of their fragility will not be able to cope with the mountain bikers whose speed will increase with the improved road surface. Many regret the use of an enormous 'kissing gate', these are known to decrease access and are being removed from locations all over the country. The gate size and material is completely out of keeping with the area. A 40 square metre hard standing, railway sleepers, and use of bedding plants are also to be featured in the part of Leatherhead that is most perfectly natural and unspoilt. Many think these features would be more appropriate in a theme park or children's play area. Although the proposed gate would definitely keep cars from entering the proposed 8-foot path near Thorncroft Bridge, no similar barrier has been provided to keep cars from driving across the path connecting the football club and the meadow near the river. There is grave concern about having a path that is shared by cyclist (even mountain bikers), children, walkers with dogs on leads, wheelchair users, and the 'feeble' people Heather Ward talks about bringing to the riverside. This is particularly true because the path was never planned to be 10-foot wide, which is the recommended width to accommodate both cycles and pedestrians. In fact, if the local flora is allowed to grow over the edges, as has been explained to some of us, the pathway will be about half the recommended width. For these reasons and with work scheduled to begin in 7 days, it was proposed that a vote be taken to seek legal advice concerning an injunction to stop work while residents were truly consulted. (32 were in favour with the 2 PC's and one guest abstaining).

Dave Smith agreed to undertake that task.

(DS)

A member of the LRA suggested that Natural England, the organisation that oversees Nature Reserves, be contacted to see if they approved of the River Bank Project. (Barry Davies)

### **Local Plan Consultation:**

Members of the planning committee have over the last two months been given opportunities to hear the preferred options Jack Straw's Planning Policy team has prepared to submit to the Government for approval. We distributed the Mole Valley's LDF News (Local Development Framework) that gives a summary of several years work by the team. Although public comment and that of the LRA was sought until 20<sup>th</sup> June 2008, the second stage of a three-stage project was at a very late period for us to actually influence the outcome. We presented a map showing the 10 areas considered being preferred options for development by 2028. The schematic drawing of the actual sites for development were made available for all to see.

### **Festivities Committee**

Hilary Porter and Paula Sabine would be assisting in the sales of ducks for the 21<sup>st</sup> June Duck Race which raises funds for the Christmas festivities for the coming year.

### **Planning**

The retrospective planning application for an addition to a house on Middle Rd. has been approved by the Council much to the dismay of residents on the street. On the positive side, an enormous, blue outbuilding has been taken down but replaced by a plastic garden shed. Neighbours on Magazine Place continue to be concerned about a portion of the kerb that has been lowered for possible use as a drive. This would be a case in which the Council may need to take legal action.

### **New Forums**

A decision concerning the details of the Council's four proposed Forums was hoped for in early June. It is a matter of debate whether the LRA should pay the cost of one of the Town Centre Forum meetings from available funds. Richard Eckersley suggested that volunteer contributions could be made, perhaps jointly with the LCA to cover the £35 for room rental plus cost of a minute taker.

### **Parking**

The Mole Valley Local Committee will meet in mid June and discuss parking issues. It is thought that 8-6 o'clock parking with a one-hour parking ban mid day will ease the parking problem. There is a 2-year waiting period for decisions made by the committee.

**COMMITTEE MEETING:** A shortened meeting followed the extended public meeting.

We welcomed John Bleakley who is assisting Ray Brown with our Web-site. He and Jill Morris have done some research and are willing to work on a new Draft Constitution. John was asked to e-mail the draft constitution to each of the committee members. (RB) (JB) (JM)

**Treasurers Report.** Current assets £4,100 . Jill Morris has provided information for Public Liability Insurance for £37. Membership for CPRE had been renewed (PS)

Roy continues to attempt to get space on notice boards. B@titudes in North Leatherhead are not using their board. Hilary is to contact Jenny. (HP) (RA)

Jim Holt reports that a Russian oligarch has erected a huge grey-green fence in Norbury.

David will continue to work on the newsletter. (DS)

There will be another meeting shortly to discuss publicity. (PS)