

Environment Subcommittee Report for December 7th LRA Meeting

Meeting November 27th with Louise Herrity, Ann Cardew, and Cheryl Allen attending

Topics of discussion:

Leatherhead Open Gardens 2016, Leatherhead Station, Planters at Nat West Corner and beyond, Red House Grounds Trees Survey

Open Gardens June 12, 2016 We are in the very early stages of planning this important fundraiser in conjunction with the Friends of the Parish Church. Nothing except the date has been finalised and we are seeking gardens to be open on the day. Meetings with the friends representatives will occur early in January.

Leatherhead Station We have not given up on bringing our Anti-litter message to the station but we have not been successful in getting the attention of the station manager. The letter delivered personally by CB has gone unanswered. CA made yet another stop by the station to see if the Duty Manager happened to be on hand. Failing to find him, a brief conversation was had with a member of staff. He suggested another letter to Southern Railway's head office in what he calls a "top down" approach.

Interestingly, he said that the most frequently complained about issue was overhanging branches. I think that we can claim a little success here since one of the four items in our complaint was the branches, which were cut back. In fact, this is the only result of the complaint.

Planting Schemes Scaffolding has caused multiple problems on the High Street this year. We were delighted when the scaffolding at Nat West Bank came down early in November. However, scaffolding went up at Santander within weeks. Equipment stored by the workers impedes access to the water supply at Patrick Gardners facility. A phone call from John Hayball reported that he thought it was dangerous to climb over the equipment. Being unable to water the planters, they have been temporarily removed. We hope to have them back in place as soon as possible.

LH has spotted a location on Kingston Road with planters needing some attention. She will approach the businesses to see if our intervention would be appreciated.

The Duke's Head management continue to water the flowers which NT and CA planted in October.

Tree Survey On Friday, 27th November, our Chairman, accompanied by qualified Arborologist, Mike Nash (formerly of Kingston Borough) and our Environment Chairman, Cheryl Allen, did a detailed tour and examination of the trees in Kingston House Gardens. The task was made somewhat more difficult by the fact that at the end of November, the leaves had fallen from most of them. But, by looking at those fallen leaves and at the planting plans of 2006, it is believed that reasonable accuracy has been assured.

However, you may be surprised to learn that we identified at least 26 varieties of tree (NOT bushes) and that the total tree count was at least 150.

It was decided to do this investigation after it became known that the Red House Gardens were proving to be an attractive lure for any developers looking at Leatherhead. Houses, shops, roads, multi-storey have all be mentioned and it is feared that some of the recent additions to the park could be dug up and discarded regardless of their potential to beautify the landscape. Of course, if it is decided to use the park for any of the above, the LRA will call for a more detailed tree survey, but meanwhile no one should be tempted to imagine that a damp, possibly empty park in November is not appreciated and loved. Throughout the warmer months there are people to be seen on the Trim Trail, in the playground, on the grass picnicking or playing cricket and also using the chairs and benches for a sandwich lunch.