

**Minutes of the meeting held on
Monday 5th October 2009 at 7.00 pm
in the Letherhead Institute.**

1 Apologies

Caroline Brown, Pauline Sabine, Cllr Bridget Lewis-Carr, David Woodhead.

2 Minutes of last meeting

After amending 'Leech Grove' to 'Leach Grove' throughout, the minutes of the previous meeting were accepted.

3 Matters arising

The Chairman (Hubert Carr) updated the meeting concerning Leach Grove, saying that the matter had been referred to our County Councillor, Tim Hall.

Cheryl Allen said that Hilary Porter had spoken to Mr Meophan and the matter should go through authority's legal department. She said Hilary had also spoken to PC Fran Davey, who had told her the situation had been monitored for the past two years.

Flip Cargill said the boys were angry that the police have warned them off and that they blame the allotment owners for this. She said that they had asked the police to do this; the children needed somewhere to play. She had merely wanted not to endanger users of the footpath.

The Chairman said that North Leatherhead had recognized the problem of youngsters needing space to play. He suggested that the boys who have been using Leach Grove speak to Richard Leary of Surrey County Council.

Another member said that she had found the leader of these boys to be a polite and enthusiastic member of the bowling club.

The Chairman said there are two issues

- the question of public rights of way;
- the future of Leach Grove. Will the hospital use it for future building developments?

Both were Surrey County Council issues, which is why he thought Tim Hall should be looking into it.

There were one or two other remarks made, but the Chairman said we were wondering from matters arising and brought this to a close.

4. "Leatherhead as it was - How do we preserve it?"

Linda Heath gave us a presentation, using some of the slides of the Leatherhead & District Local History Society (which has some 2000 or so slides). The slides showed Leatherhead in the 19th or early 20th century as we began at the 'Crossroads' and made our way up the High Street, past St John's School and round via the School for the Blind to the Parish Church; thence we went beside the river and along Church Street back to the Crossroads, down North Street, up Fairfield Road past Wesley House, then returning to the river, we came past the old Mill and Tannery to Bridge Street and made our way up to the Crossroads and finished at the old gaol and stocks.

Linda pointed out buildings which ought to have been preserved but were not and some which had deservedly been demolished. She said we should learn from the past and make sure buildings that were worthy of preservation were, in fact,

preserved and where buildings were to be demolished they should be properly photographed and recorded.

A few questions followed:

- Who lived at Cherkley Court? It was built and lived in by Abraham Dixon. It was also where in 1916 the partition of Ireland was agreed and the Irish Free State was granted independence.
- Who was Edmund Tylney? He was Master of the Revels to Queen Elizabeth I and lived in the Mansion House in Leatherhead. He extended the powers of his office to review plays for royal performance into the public arena, in effect becoming the official **censor** of the period's drama.
- Can the Leatherhead & District Local History Society's slides be viewed on the Internet? Work is currently being done to make this possible. They cannot be viewed at present, but it is hoped that these will eventually be available on the Internet.
- Does the History Society have photographs of the 1913 fire at St John' School? It has several photographs relating to the incident. Indeed, the Society has a whole lot of material relating to the school

The Chairman moved a vote of thanks which was enthusiastically supported by those present.

5. Reports from Subgroups:

a. Membership

Fran Barnby-Smith reported that leaflets had now been printed and were ready to be delivered to non-members in the hope attracting new membership. She asked for volunteers to help in the distribution.

She said that many roads were still without road stewards.

Certain roads were being targeted, particularly those in the south where there were few or no members; the intention is to build up a strong base in the south and then make an effort to extend our membership in the north of Leatherhead.

We shall also need help with the delivery of the Newsletter.

Our membership has remained steady of the past year, but we need more members and greater publicity.

b. Planning

Caroline Brown reported, in writing, that two committee members would be attending the Planning Committee meeting at the council Chamber in Dorking on Wednesday, 7th October, when the Edmund Tylney's application to retain tables and chairs on the High Street after 4.30 pm and Hague Investment's application to allow change of use of 52 to 56 Church Street from A1 to A3 usage (to allow the Blue Cafe to open in the evening as a restaurant) would be heard.

The request by Amici to have seating in the High street from 8.00 am to 6.00 pm had been refused.

Three members of the Committee had attended a conference of Civic Trust South East at Guildford on Saturday, 26th September.

The MVDC has drawn up a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) as part of the Local Development Framework. A copy of the SCI is available in the Library.

The government has just set up its Infrastructure Planning Commission to enable to accomplish large scale plans without losing many years because of objections. Some organisations, such as Friends of the Earth, feel this could give *carte*

blanche to the government pursuing any large scale project that is considered economically desirable.

Cheryl Allen reminded us why a similar application for change of use of 52 to 56 Church Street had failed in 2003, and insisted that the problems associated with the use of the buildings as a restaurant were still pertinent. Why had the LRA not made representation?

The secretary replied that in fact the LRA had sent a letter to every Councillor on the Planning Committee outlining our concerns over the matter.

c. Highways

The Chairman reported that he and the Vice-Chair, Hilary porter, had attended the Leatherhead Highway Forum. This forum allows District Councillors to be updated by relevant County Councillors.

It was revealed at the Forum that £20,000 had been quoted by Sally Edwards for work at Knoll Roundabout; the work had in fact cost £320 000.

Plans to remove the stairway in Station Approach had been shelved as it was claimed that the removal would necessitate the closure of Station Approach for two or three weeks. The Chairman was of the opinion that the stairway could be removed without causing the complete closure of the road.

Indeed, he reported the attitude of the Forum was somewhat negative, basically saying that nothing could be done as there was no money.

It remains undecided whether to have shared pedestrian-cyclist footpath along Epsom Road and Randalls Road or to have a white line along the pavement, separating pedestrians and cyclists.

It was pointed out by one of our members that the footpath from Linden Gardens to St Andrew's School was dangerous at night as steps leading up to the footbridge are badly lit, in particular there is no light at the top. Also if one chose to walk back to St Andrew's a long Epsom Road and over the now improved Knowle Roundabout, one came to a dip in the road after the crossing above the Motorway, where a large puddle was formed in wet weather resulting in pedestrians being soaked as cars passed by.

The Chairman said he would take this matter up.

Another member drew attention to the dangerous state of the raised footway between Winfield and the road junction at the top of the High Street. The path was badly overgrown and in some places it was difficult for individuals to pass.

The Chairman said that Highways were responsible for this and he would take the matter up.

The Chairman said that the Bookham Residents' Association sent polite letters to those people who allow overhanging bushes to be a nuisance to users of footpaths. We should be more pro-active over the matter of footpaths. Do we know where the footpaths are?

6, Report of Civic Trust South East Conference in Guildford on 26th September

In the morning we had two major sessions:

1. Cllr Mike Appleyard (Bucks County and Wycombe District Councils) - "*What is*

*the future of regional strategic planning boards?"*The answer would seem to be 'uncertain'. Since, unlike Wales or Scotland, the future of both regional and local government structures was not clear whatever party won the next election. The South East Plan, however, still stands and is likely to remain.

2. Russell Walters (English Heritage) - "*Heritage at Risk*". Mr Walters outlined the rationale behind English Heritage's decisions and urged us to get English Heritage policies written into Local Development Plans and to engage with residents.

The morning concluded with a short address by Anne Milton, MP for Guilford, urging us to use every opportunity to let MPs know about local problems, and with a video presentation by Griff Rees Jones on the 'Civic Society Initiative'

In the afternoon, Tony Burton (Director of the Civic Society Initiative) - "*The civic society movement - which way forward?*": said that in a society where trust in national and local government was weakening, the civic movement was important. It must engage in a variety of networking methods and work at grass roots level; it must avoid being top-down like the old Civic Trust. Whatever emerges as a national body must give support and influence to local groups and federations. The conference then broke up into four discussion groups which reported back to full conference.

For the future, there is to be a Convention of the Civic Trust Initiative in Blackpool on October 15th & 16th with a view to establishing a new national body next April. In the past the former Leatherhead Society had greatly benefited from expertise of the old Civic Society; in the next few months we need to consider whether we want to be part of the new movement.

7. Any Other Business

Do we know how money allocated to Leatherhead is spent?

The chairman replied that at one time a lot of money did get spent before we knew about it, and cited the examples of the sale of Wesley House of the two brass cannons. But now, with regard to Section 106 monies, the Leatherhead Councillors meet together and recommend to the Council how it is spent. Leatherhead has done well out of its assets.

The meeting was reminded of the next Ashted-Leatherhead Forum meeting on the 15th October at Christ Church, Leatherhead.

A question was raised about Citizen Advice Bureau in Leatherhead. The Chairman replied that John Howarth (either behalf of the Chamber of Commerce or the Leatherhead Area Partnership) had negotiated a rent of half of what the Council had achieved so that CAB would be remaining in its same premises for the foreseeable future.

Mr Tom Musoke raised a series of questions about the legal status of the LRA. It was decided to note the questions and refer them to this month's Committee Meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.23 pm.