

**Minutes of the meeting held on  
Monday 2nd November 2009 at 7.00 pm  
in the Letherhead Institute.**

**1 Apologies**

Cllr Rosemary Dickson, Caroline Brown

**2 Minutes of Meeting on 5th October**

The minutes were accepted as correct.

**3 Matters Arising from the Minutes**

None

**4 “Campaign to protect the Surrey Countryside”**

**- Tim Murphy, Chairman of CPRE Surrey Branch**

CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England) has the Queen as its patron, and the author, Bill Bryson, is its president. There are some 200 local groups; each County has its own branch. Surrey has 1750 members, and there are subgroups shadowing each District. Richard Bass is the chairman of the Mole Valley CPRE.

The Surrey countryside needs protection because:

- There are develop pressures as we live in the “London Fringe”
- Central government ‘s plan for the South East Region - 30 000 or so new homes every year till 2026 ( Mole Valley is required to provide 180 new homes per annum)
- Surrey is already the most densely populated County
- A government think tank has come up with growth figures 40% higher than the current South east Plan
- Main areas for development in Surrey are the “regional hubs”: Guildford, Woking, Reigate, Redhill.
- Labour has abolished Regional Assemblies; Conservatives will abolish regional government and regional plans - not clear what will replace them.
- Surrey is the most wooded county - we also have the Surrey Hills and great landscape value. Surrey has a great deal of open public land.
- 25% of Surrey is in the Metropolitan Green Belt which should be preserved not just for Surrey residents but also for Londoners themselves.
- The greatest pressure in Surrey is for housing, yet there are parts of the UK that are underdeveloped - something is going wrong
- Increase on aircraft noise, not only from major airports but from smaller airports as well, and an increase in private helicopters. Surrey is the most overflown County.
- Source of minerals: gravel, chalk etc. - pressure to increase production also cause increase in heavy goods vehicles.
- County Council wanted to build large scale incinerators at Capel and Virginia Water - have lost the case at Capel. here are also proposals for a waste-composter at Wisley

What can CPRE do?

- Challenge what is inappropriate, e.g. successfully opposed development of an eco-town on Dunsfold airfield (out in the countryside with bad links).
- Oppose change of green belt boundaries
- While Councillors and Council Officers are broadly supportive, need to be aware of danger from increasing number of unelected bodies, central government officials and advisors, and quangos, especially South east Development Agency (SEEDA) and the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC).

But CPRE does accept that more affordable housing is required and accepts that better use could be made of the Surrey countryside and of the need to support Surrey farmers.

Questions were raised after the talk:

Q. Are there any plans to apply political pressure, e.g. working with groups such as Green Peace or Friends of the Earth?

A. CPRE does belong to the Green Alliance; but there are differences with some groups, e.g. it doesn't approved illegal methods sometimes adopted by Green Peace; Friends of the Earth supported the Dunsfold eco-town.

Q. Could the south of Surrey take more development?

A. If you allow building in the green belt in one place, then there is pressure to build in the green belt elsewhere. There is a threshold (determined by facilities such as schools) to the expansion of villages.

Q. Is voluntary/compulsory dispersal of population possible? Would a tramway around the M25 help?

A. Such a tramway is not likely to reduce traffic demand; we need more park-and-ride facilities attached to the M25. Voluntary/compulsory dispersal of population not feasible in a market economy. We should push for higher densities in urban areas that could take them.

Q. Can a green belt be built on or is it sacrosanct?

A. extra housing must go somewhere; Surrey will not be able to meet its requirements without losing some green belt around the "hubs."

At this point there was a short discussion regarding affordable housing. The speaker pointed out that it was a problem as market forces worked against building of small, low-priced house. Cllr Bridget Lewis-Carr said that North Leatherhead had been fortunate in the amount of affordable housing provide, but it needed the infrastructure to go with it.

At this point, the Chairman brought questions to a close and thanked Tim Murphy for his address.

## **5 Reports from subgroups:**

### **a) Membership**

Paula Sabine reported on the recent membership campaign in which 1500

leaflets had been distributed; we have already received 17 new household as members. We are planning to distribute a further 500 leaflets.  
There is to be a meeting with Neighbourhood Watch on the 3rd November

### **b) Highways**

Parking - The LRA has arranged for an enlarged and laminated copy of the decisions to be available for residents in Windfield to see more clearly the complicated changes proposed there. One of the problems in some roads is a lack of consensus regarding the solution to parking problems.

It was felt that even if problems are resolved for the current set of streets, it merely pushes the problems elsewhere. We need a comprehensive parking strategy and we also need to make parking fees in existing car-parks more attractive.

'Avenue of the Stars' - the 'Stars' already exist so there's no initial cost. But there were concerns expressed about cost of installation and maintenance.

Poppy Fox suggested that some of the 106 money could be used for enhancing historic sites such as Leatherhead Bridge and the Running Horse with their association with the old Pilgrim's Way.

### **c. Planning**

The secretary read a report from Caroline Brown which stated that although we had opposed change of use of the two premises at the south end of Church Street because of its effect on the residents of Montague House, change of use had been granted and this was now likely to become a restaurant.

However, a ban on early deliveries was added to the conditions and the exhaust extractor will have to meet stringent conditions.

The application by owner of Brook Willow Farm for change of use of some buildings, retrospective permission for erection of others and for permission to extend use of yet further buildings has gone to Appeal. We will write stating that the green belt must be preserved, but we would agree to the lessees being given time to relocate sensibly.

## **6. Report of Ashtead-Leatherhead Area Forum on 15th October**

A short report was given. Concern was expressed that only one question was allowed from the public and that the agenda is controlled by the Council. It was asked from the floor why we did not boycott these meetings.

Fran Barnby-Smith proposed that before we took such action we first approach Ashtead Residents' Association to discuss a common approach to the problem. This was seconded by the Secretary and agreed *nem. con.*

## **7. Any Other Business**

The next meeting of the Leatherhead & district Forum is on 11th November at 5.30 pm in Park House. It will be followed by the Leatherhead Area Partnership AGM.

Tom Musoke asked if we could have an entomologist address the meeting at

some time. He was particularly concerned with the apparent fall in the bee population. It was agreed that we would look into this possibility.

We hope to have Paula Hancock speak to the meeting on Jan 4th about the Leatherhead-Triel twinning - but this has yet to be confirmed.

Cheryl Allen asked the Secretary if he had had any reply to the letter he sent to the Senior Licensing Officer regarding outdoor concerts at Thorncroft Manor. He said he not received any reply so far.

Cheryl said that she had received a reply which stated that the owners of Thorncroft Manor have a temporary license which means they have permission to stage any kind of party on 15 days a year on as many as 12 different occasions (each event being a maximum of 3 or 4 days). Because it is a temporary license, no one except the police are ask if they have objections. On the 1st of November a special police officer will begin work in our area dealing with licenses.

Cheryl said she wished to organize a petition in the affected area to present to this special police officer and to the South Leatherhead Ward Councillors.

The Chairman said he thought such a petition from those affected would be a good idea.

The Chairman reminded the meeting that next month's meeting on the 7th December will be our Christmas Social.

The meeting closed at 9.14 pm.