

Leatherhead Residents' Association

Minutes of Open Meeting – 1st July 2013 at 7.30 pm

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Bridget Lewis-Carr, Pam Wilson, Paula Sabine and Ian and Irene Seifert and Kristina Kenworthy.

2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the last open meeting on 3rd June were approved.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising.

4. CORRESPONDENCE

Chris Grayling (MP for Ashted) had written to say that the future of Epsom General Hospital remained totally open at present.

C.B. reported that plants had been provided and reinstated at Kingston House gardens following her approach on behalf of the LRA to the manager, Mr David Searle.

H.C. reported that the Green Belt Boundary Review had now gone through the MVDC Committee stages but that he was invited, together with Kristina Kenworthy and Roger Hardwick (representing the LRA Planning Sub-Committee) to attend a confidential meeting at Pippbrook at 9.30 am on 17th July to discuss Green Belt and other forward planning issues. It was unclear whether representatives of Falconwood and the Save South Leatherhead Campaign had been similarly invited.

5. APPOINTMENT OF PRESS OFFICER

It was felt important that the LRA should have a Press Officer for the purposes of liaising with the media and a job description was circulated at the meeting. It was agreed that any Press Releases should be approved in advance by at least one, preferably two elected officers on the Committee. This would help to avoid misspelt names and ambiguities. The Leatherhead Advertiser had offered a column space to local Residents' Associations to share coverage in turn; in practice this meant LRA news would feature approximately once a month. To minimise the work involved, it was agreed any submission to the local newspaper should, as far as possible, be identical to the monthly article for the Ashted and Leatherhead Local except as regards length, with the former extending to 150 words and the latter to 550. The Committee unanimously approved the appointment of Flip Cargill as Press Officer. The Chairman passed around a list of guidelines for a Press Officer, but agreed they could be expanded and clarified.

6. REPORTS OF SUB-GROUPS

CB announced a change of procedure in that sub-group reports and Minutes would no longer be available at the meetings since these were already available for inspection on the LRA website. One or two copies of the minutes, with the Reports, would be available by arrangement for Committee members without computers. (However, this problem has since been solved).

Publicity and Membership Sub-Group ([Publicity_July_2013.pdf](#))

HP asked for the approval of the whole Committee to approach the Town Centre Manager with a request for the LRA to assume responsibility for the Notice Board near the Post Office. This was unanimously forthcoming.

Action: HP to put in a request to Town Centre Manager for LRA to administer the Notice Board

Environment Sub-Group ([Environment_July_2013.pdf](#))

The Open Gardens day had raised just over £680. The Committee offered a Vote of Thanks to CA for her work in organising this.

AC would hold a further garden open day at her home on Saturday, 3rd August from 10 am – 4 pm with refreshments offered from 2 – 4 pm.

The MVDC would provide equipment for a Litter Pick to be held on 1st August, two days preceding the Prudential London Cycling Event which will take place on 4th August..

FC reported that 362 Evidence of Use forms in respect of the bid to have Leach Grove Woods awarded Village Green status had been submitted on Friday 28th June and there would now be six weeks for any objections to be lodged. Realistically, the only objector was likely to be the landowner (NHS).

Planning Sub-Group ([Planning_July_2013.pdf](#))

In line with an apparently growing trend, FS reported three further applications during the past week for change of use from business units to residential dwellings within the town.

An application had also been submitted for an infill development at 29 Church Road, involving demolition of the existing house and replacement with two pairs of semi-detached houses plus 6 flats in what is currently a large garden containing some 30 trees. Similar previous applications had been rejected in 1994 and 2007 and residents of Magazine Place, to whom this development would be directly adjacent, recently held a meeting to rally opposition which was attended by almost 50 potentially affected householders. They had also employed the services of a planning consultant to fight this application which was seen as a direct test of the effectiveness of the long-established Conservation Area.

The Housing Association had applied to demolish garages in Cressall Close and replace them with three buildings (9 dwellings in all) with parking and gardens included and the screen of trees to be retained if possible. The Committee did not feel this proposal was of particular concern although it was noted these dwellings would back directly onto the Bypass. It was also noted that this area of housing had in years past been given over to allotments and it was the development of this land originally that appeared to have set the precedent for the MVDC now seeking to sell off the one area remaining for public cultivation in Barnett Wood Lane.

HC deplored the move of the Help Shop to the Library and said it would seem appropriate to seek removal of both facilities to a central location within the town centre. However, HC reported that it was possible the High Street would be extensively redeveloped once again within a few years and this ongoing uncertainty made locating a permanent site impossible at this stage.

Action: FS to draft LRA letter of objection to Planning Committee regarding application for development at 29 Church Road for submission by 11th July deadline

Highways Sub-Group

Councillor Tim Hall was able to give a first-hand report of Highways matters and listed a number of roads due for resurfacing and drainage works in the Autumn, most notably the Leatherhead Bypass in August/September.

Work would begin on road markings in the new Residents' Parking zones in the week commencing 8th July. A resident of Parr Close reported that the introduction of double yellow lines in Cleeve Road had been most effective in relieving congestion caused by commuter parking but had predictably led to the problem being pushed into the residential closes bordering it, such as his own road, Parr Close.

Further work was needed to take away a dead branch overhanging the pavement following tree removal in the Epsom Road.

Cycling in Church Walk remains a problem.

Vegetation is to be cut back along the footpath close to the Lidl supermarket.

FS felt not enough was being done to enforce the double yellow line parking restrictions in Highlands Road at the weekend and in the evenings. She is of the opinion that single yellows with time restrictions would be more suitable. AC said that she was not aware of any objections to the double yellows.

HC reported that talks concerning the Epsom Road cycle path had stalled for the time being and Councillor TH explained that in fact neither of the two routes proposed was ideal so much further discussion was needed.

JH raised the question of why indicator boards on buses were still by no means prevalent, let alone universal. Councillor TH explained that when Countrywide had gone into receivership, their leased vehicles (which tended to be the more modern ones which offered this facility) had been repossessed by the vehicle leasing companies, leaving a stock of much older vehicles of various types to continue running the replacement services. It did not seem there was any immediate solution but the fleet would in time be upgraded systematically.

7. MEETINGS ATTENDED

L.A.P.

CA commented that all bodies such as this were now operating in a climate of funding cutbacks. Two initiatives were being considered to counteract the effects of this, namely:

1. Unity Lottery Scheme whereby it was hoped that a town lottery could be established to fund both commercial and charitable initiatives. Sensitivity regarding not being seen to exploit less well-off sections of the community might result in regular contributions being accepted only via cheque and Direct Debit once the scheme was up and running.
2. Business Improvement District Company. These were now prevalent elsewhere and consisted of commercial sponsors in the form of business organisations grouping together to form a legal entity to support and represent commercial interests in their area. In return for paying higher local taxes they were empowered to address issues outside the remit of local authorities (TH gave the example of the group in Kingston paying for better security and policing of the shopping area. Another example was that of the Company paying the parking charges that the Council would normally expect). Smaller companies are included in these forums and those below a certain size were exempt from the contribution whilst still entitled to a voice in decision-making.

Green Belt and Judicial Review

KK thanked all the LRA representatives who had attended the three-day judicial review hearing in London which heard arguments from both sides concerning the lawfulness of MVDC's grant of Planning Permission for the Cherkley Court development. Opponents of the development had been heartened by the Judge's acknowledgment that this was a very important case and one which it was perfectly appropriate to bring by way of testing the law in this area. Judgment had been reserved and whatever the eventual outcome there could be no doubt of the fairness of the process.

Fortyfoot Road Campaign

Mark Francis of the Fortyfoot Road Safety Campaign (formerly known as '40' Potholers') said the aims of the Campaign were two-fold: to achieve urgent repairs to the disintegrating road surface and to obtain agreement from the SCC to adopt the road and take over its upkeep in the long term. Councillors had shown themselves sympathetic and Clare Curran (Chairman of the SCC Mole Valley Local Committee) following an interview on BBC Radio Surrey, was expected to add her voice. A petition launched a week previously and to be handed in on Friday 5th July was expected to garner several thousand signatories locally and throughout the area in view of the large number of outside users of the road and the public amenities ranged along it. Councillor TH stressed it was unlikely the SCC could adopt the road without it having been brought up to standard by the frontagers themselves – but since local authorities were chief among them, it was to be expected they would contribute towards these costs. In view of the extent of repairs it might be more realistic if the three sections of road were repaired progressively and adopted in turn but this was all subject to negotiation and certainly it was hoped the prevailing spirit of goodwill would lead to a successful conclusion. Mark Francis said it was hoped the issue could be placed on the Agenda at County Hall sooner than the Autumn in order that action could begin on the process of adoption.

Action: Petition forms were made available to all attendees and they were urged by FC to canvass support from as many local contacts as possible to maximise impact.

8. MEETINGS TO BE ATTENDED

BLEAF – Monday 6th August am

Town Centre Forum – 17th July. Representatives of the Bookham and Ashted Residents' Associations would be on hand to talk about their experiences of the Neighbourhood Plan.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A Drop-In Forum would be held on 10th July 4 – 8 pm in Park House concerning the Prudential London Cycle Race

Suggestions were sought for articles for the next issue of the Ashted and Leatherhead Local magazine. CA offered to write about the outside events which have taken place in Leatherhead and FC to write about the campaign to improve Fortyfoot Road. Their offers were gratefully accepted.

Action: CA - short piece on the Open Gardens day

FC - brief roundup of the Fortyfoot Campaign

HC – article on need for Leatherhead organisations to work together and present a united front on local issues given the lack of a Neighbourhood Plan for the town.

No developments were reported regarding the setting up of a local radio service for Leatherhead; a suitable studio space and sufficient sponsorship were likely to be complicating factors.

The Save Our Allotments campaign representative reported 2,500 signatures had been gathered opposing the sale of the site to developers. This would be submitted to MVDC via the Help Shop at 4.00 pm on Tuesday, 2nd July.

The next MVDC Full Council Meeting would be held on 23rd July, followed by the Executive Pre-Council meeting on 30th July.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next closed meeting would be held on Monday, 12 August in G6 at the Institute.

Consideration would be given to inviting retailing consultant Simon Matthews (formerly Town Centre Manager for Dorking and Economic Development Officer) to speak at a later meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.40 p.m.

LRA - MEMBERSHIP & PUBLICITY - notes

Paula, Cheryl and I met in the Letherhead Institute library on Friday 3rd May.

WE agreed to adopt the terms of reference originally provided by Ray Ward, who continues to provide a generous service of printing and providing posters and newsletters at minimal cost.

Membership. Numbers are encouraging, but need to be increased. It was agreed that the suggestion of an A4 leaflet should be reconsidered, but the committee should be asked to agree that a membership drive in the Summer should offer an additional six month free membership, if residents were willing to pay for the 3 year £5 membership for 2014 – 2016 (inclusive with the remaining part of 2013).

Publicity : a request has been received from Flip that she should be appointed as the contact for the Local Press, as she has already established a good working relationship.

Ideas were considered for increased publicity presence in the North Leatherhead area, but in the meantime it was agreed that enquiries should be made for the possibility of another publicity barrow in the Swan Centre to support the Allotments group and the South Leatherhead appeal. (arrangements to be reported).

Subsequent to the meeting: I have realised that our membership forms advise that we have open committee meetings each month - this needs revision and decision on a forward diary. At present I am offering to be available at 7 p.m. before each meeting so that nobody is turned away without the opportunity to speak to a member of the committee and then appropriate concerns can be added to AOB on the Agenda.

HP.

Planning Report July 1 2013

There are no new appeals this month. We are awaiting decisions on Brook Willow Farm (retention of units 9 and 10 as stables) and Tall Trees, Headley Road (bungalow in rear of garden)

The conversion of 37 Bridge Street to 3 flats has been approved, and there are applications for the creation of a flat in the roof space at 1 Bridge Street and 3 flats at 15 Bridge Street. This last one has parking spaces.

There is also an application for the demolition of some garages in Cressall Close and replace with 3 blocks to give a total of 9 flats with parking spaces

The application to demolish 29 Church Road and put up three buildings with a total of 10 dwellings is the third application on this site. The 2 previous applications, in 1994 and 2007 were similar, and both were dismissed on appeal. The residents are holding a meeting on Friday 28 June, which I will be attending

List of applications up to 21 June 2013

Decisions

13/0391 36 Church Rd Raise roof ridge height and create first floor with balconies to front elevation; erection of two storey front/side extension and single storey rear extension Approved

(13/0435) 7, Queen Annes Terrace. Insertion of 1 No. dormer window and 2 No. roof lights to front elevation to facilitate loft conversion. Increase in height of existing single storey rear element (conservation area.) 1 dormer to rear and increase in height of existing single storey rear approved

3/0461) 6 Downside Court, Downs Lane. Certificate of Lawfulness for the proposed development in respect of the construction of a building incorporating a garage, workshop and garden room. Approved

(13/0466) Blue Cedars, Yarm Way. Erection of two storey front extension and infill side extension, and single storey rear extension. Approved

(13/0483) 73A, Highlands Road. Erection of two storey front extension. Approved

(13/0490) 34 Church Walk. Removal one sycamore tree Refused

(13/0486) 2, Tudor Walk Erection of single storey rear extension. Approved

(13/0536) 22, Fairfield Road, Erection of single storey side extension following demolition of existing single storey side element. Approved.

(13/0502) 37, Bridge Street Change of use of part ground floor and first floor from office (Use Class B1) to 3 No. residential units with additional access to side elevation. Approved

(13/0538) Tyrrells Wood Golf Club, The Drive. Erection of single storey timber outbuilding to replace existing brick built building. Approved

(13/0556) Trinity Primary School Woodville Rd. Single storey extension for classroom, cloakroom and group area and new tarmac access path. No objection

Running List

13/0588 15 Bridge Street. Change of use of first floor offices (Use Class B1) to 2 No. flats (Use Class C3) and extension to form 1 No. flat at 2nd floor level with balcony including change to front and rear elevations. There will be 3 Parking spaces. The roof height will be raised behind the existing pitched roof, but will be still lower than adjacent property.

13/0679 54 Copthorne Rd Single storey side extension

13/0717 22 Kingslea two storey side and single storey rear extension

13/9727 Leatherhead Golf club single storey front and side extension and change to elevations

13/068 21 Barnett Wood Lane Single storey side and rear extension

13/0708 Three garage/parking areas, Cressall Close. Demolish existing garages and erect 3 new dwellings providing a total of 9 dwellings with associated garden space and parking.

13/0192 29 Church Road. Erect one block of 6 flats (3 affordable housing) and 2 pairs of semis with parking and access.

13/0193 29 Church Rd Conservation area consent for demolition of house.

13/0686 29 Poplar Rd First floor rear extension

13/0734 45 St Marys Rd Part single, part 2 storey rear extension

13/0719 Tesco stores Alteration to bus stop

13/0564 Leatherhead Cricket club erection of storage container for Red Cross equipment

13/0772 1 Bridge Street conversion of existing roof space into a 2 bed flat No parking space.

Report of the Meeting of the Membership and Publicity Group

held on Thursday 20th June 2013

Present; Hilary Porter, Cheryl Allen, Paula Sabine, Norma Tatham-Thompson.

Membership : The publicity events for the Open Gardens and the Swan Centre tabled support for the Leatherhead campaigns (Allotments, South Leatherhead, Fortyfoot Road etc.) were discussed and it was agreed that although this highlighted the activities of the LRA and support for local concerns, they had not facilitated an increase in membership. It was noted that future table or barrow publicity would be at cost and the possibility of a table in the High Street on market days might be an alternative.

The Duck Race provided an opportunity for committee members to wear LRA jackets, but not to actively promote membership.

It was agreed that door to door was a better means of gaining new members and a leaflet drop should be considered to coincide with the consultation on the changes to the Green Belt, and the further announcements concerning the allotments and Merton College developer proposals. This would be a time when there was more concern and interest for support from the LRA. It was also suggested that a note should be put in the newsletter suggesting that members should pass their copy on to friend or neighbour to increase interest in joining the Association.

An update was given on the topics considered at the meeting of the SCC Mole Valley Local Committee concerning the High Street, the proposed Cycle path from Ashted to Leatherhead and On street parking restrictions. It was noted that consultation regarding on street parking would only be directed to residents in the roads concerned, so possibly did not warrant specific publicity. But residents might be grateful for support if requested.

Publicity : Concern was expressed over the difficulties of placing posters in the Town, and the seeming neglect of the notice boards, and the loss of the facility for window display due to the relocation of the Help Shop. It was agreed to recommend that the Town Centre Manager should be asked to release the control of the notice board outside the post office to the Leatherhead Residents Association.

HP.

Report of the Environmental Sub Group Held on Monday 24th June 2013

Town Centre Planting

It was decided that the plants in the Nat West planters required a mid-summer tidy up. FS and CA began the process immediately by adding additional plants and potting soil.

A better system for keeping the plants watered is being sought. It was decided that a rota will be available at the July meeting to ask for help. It was also decided that a committee member should be present, even if only to supervise, because the security of the gate where water is accessed is extremely important. Request for volunteers is included in the Summer newsletter.

To create more awareness of the Brighter Leatherhead Trophy there will be a leaflet drop through the letterboxes of businesses in the town centre. Even though it is a bit late this year it will make people aware that we are interested in the appearance of the town.

Leach Grove Wood A new application for Village Green Status, submitted at the end of March with 74 evidence of use forms, was accepted (as was essential) before the new Growth and Infrastructure Bill was passed in April. Evidence of use statements continued to be gathered until June 25th when a final submission of another 285 was made to County Hall. We are now in a 6 week objection period. Letters to SCC showing support are sought during this period.

The LRA's Leach Grove Wood reserve fund will go some way toward paying the barrister who has guided us through the process giving a much stronger chance to win.

Forty-foot Road Update A series of meetings beginning May 23rd have resulted in the Fortyfoot Safety Campaign group to petition SCC to:

1. Make sound repairs to the craters in Fortyfoot Road, Leatherhead *without delay*
2. Adopt the road permanently at the next County Council Cabinet meeting before there are further serious incidents.

Summer Litter Pick

An attempt is being made to have a **Litter pick** to coincide with the 4th August Prudential RideLondon Cycle race. Notification is given in the Summer newsletter. The 1st August activity will be coordinated with MV to supply equipment and will follow last year's plan except that the targeted areas will not be limited to the cycle route. Many committee members will be on holiday so volunteers will be necessary.

Debriefing after the Leatherhead Open Gardens/ beginning of plans for next year.

As interest in the project gains momentum, it is necessary to think of how we can maximise its potential. To this end, feedback from Bookham Open Gardens was discussed. Comments/suggestions of participants have been noted.

Since the Friends of the Parish Church have over the years held open gardens, it has been suggested that 2014 should be a joint venture. We as a sub committee have agreed that this is a good idea. The next meeting of the 'friends' is in July so we should have a better idea of how this might develop by the end of the summer.

Some people have already volunteered to open their gardens for 2014 but we are eager to have a list of gardens that could be open over the next two years.