

Chairman's address for 5th August 2019

Apologies for Absence: Martin Velzeboer, Hilary Porter, Rosemary Dickson and P.C. Neil Clarke

Good Evening everyone. I have frequently been advised to avoid a meeting in August because, being a holiday month, some people felt that there would be nothing to discuss. But, following a month of activity, like July, there is in fact plenty to tell you about. It is next month, September, when there will be no open meeting.

First of all, there has been the most time consuming and controversial Consultation about our High Street. For this in depth study we have to thank Susan Leveritt, our part-time Publicity Officer and Secretary. From her own experience of owning a restaurant there, she has campaigned vigorously for renewed permission for all cars to park in certain spaces and for a limited amount of time. She received tremendous backing, i.e. 1300 signatures asking for this small but crucial change. **As a result of both this and Councillor Hall's call for some very speedy action at a Local Committee meeting,** Mole Valley then decided to investigate in depth and the marketing firm Arcadis was employed. They produced plans, studies and a questionnaire. The plans were detailed and hard to read on the computer so ~~they~~ Arcadis organised a number of public meetings and then these were followed by extra sessions manned only by officers and directors of the LRA. Hilary, who is a member of the Access Group, got busy contacting relevant officers and Councillors – thank you Tim and Keira – and managed to get a 7 day extension to the Consultation period. These last extra sessions were specifically aimed at people who did not have a computer but who did have opinions. The last hard copies of answers to the questionnaire (nearly 30) were taken to MV last Monday and we now await their decision. Well done Susan and Hilary for dropping everything else and getting this done. They spent time in the Fairfield Centre, at the Swan Centre Barrow and in the Sunshine Café. There were, of course, other items on the Arcadis list of suggestions, like altering the provisions for disabled parking and making North Street one way and allowing cycling both up and down the street.

Sue will now outline the chief differences between the Options for the High Street shown on the plans and will add a few words about what happened next..

(**Me**) Other meetings we have been to include the Consultation on the future of the Headley Court buildings and land. Patrick Gardner is in the process of selling the existing houses, formerly used by staff, but there are many other buildings and grounds for which a satisfactory use is being sought. Of course, the main house, a listed building, will be retained but the future of the Help for Heroes sports centre is uncertain. I am sure they would like to hear from anyone with big ideas!

Time was also spent at the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom where a decision is being sought on a long drawn out problem concerning Leach Grove. The ownership is not contested, only its use. It belongs to the National Health Service but their ability to build on it or use it as a car park is being contested. We spent two days up there and expect to receive judgement sometime in October.

Nor has the Planning Dept. been dormant in our regard as **Fran** will now relate. Royal Oak and Fountain House.

And now **Martyn** will move on to talking about matters that will affect us all, like infrastructure.

I am now speaking on behalf of **Hilary**, who is on holiday. The theme for the Heritage Week this year is the history of Leatherhead and other towns. With this in mind, Hilary is putting on a display of local memorabilia, especially maps, in the Institute. On the Friday 20th she will be upstairs in the ADHall while a local historian, Tony Matthews is giving a talk about the story of Cherkley Court between 2pm and 3pm after which there are free refreshments! On Saturday and Sunday (21st and 22nd) she will be displaying the same items downstairs in a room adjacent to the kitchen from 10am to 4pm. I know she would be delighted to have a chat with anyone who could spare the time.

Cheryl – do you wish to say anything?

Now back to General Information: Later on in this month, on Bank Holiday Monday to be precise, there is to be a celebration for the 50th anniversary of our Theatre. It will take place from 10 till 4 pm in front of the theatre and be called Picnic on the Plaza. You are expected to bring your own tables and chairs and food! Entertainment will be laid on and it is hoped that Judi Dench, the Patron of MV Arts, will be able to give it an official opening. There will also be two tours through the theatre, one at 12 midday and another at 3 pm.

I have had various updates from the Improving Healthcare Together programme, still there is nothing concrete regarding the location of the proposed new Acute Hospital. Maybe some of the promises of Prime Minister Johnson could be realised here.....

I had hoped to have a Speaker at this meeting and had written to the appropriate Police Authorities. However, the person allocated to such requests, Neil Clarke with the snazzy title: "Crime Reduction Advisor & Designing Out Crime Officer," or DOCO, is away on holiday but would like to be invited to another meeting.

Meanwhile, I had another surprise last Monday. Should we wish to return, the ADHall is available once more. However, I would like to know, by a show of hands, if you as a representative audience, would prefer to return or to stay. I am not sure whether you find hearing here easier or not, or, indeed, about the same. Both venues have a loop system. The seats might be marginally comfortable here but the kitchen is a bit further away. No one has complained to me about the parking so, I suppose, you always find somewhere.

AOB: Does anyone else wish to bring up a subject?

Our next Open meeting will be on Monday, 7th October here in the Methodist Church.