

Chairman's speech for the LRA meeting on 10 January 2022

Good evening everyone and thank you for coming. When this meeting was first planned, I had thought we would be on the "sunny uplands" of Post Covid. I am sure you all thought the same last summer. So, I shrank my original plans for this meeting to an update on the latest changes to our town plus a little (probably very little) light entertainment.

Going back to our last meeting, I am pleased to report that three people have shown a particular interest in the work we do as a Residents' Association. I do not want to name names yet as I feel they need time to settle in and to decide whether our take on helping the community here is for them or not. More volunteers would still be welcome. For example, would anyone like to organise a Race Night like Susan Leveritt did?

You will remember that at the last meeting, there was a majority of us voting to retain Sunday as a pedestrianized time until 6 pm. It made the rules the same as the rest of the week and so easier to remember. However, the economic result is so tied up with the effects of Covid that it may be a long time (Years?) to estimate.

Martyn will take us through the 7 or 8 major, agreed, specific buildings in Leatherhead, but it will need a few years for these to be built. Meanwhile, there is the great unknown of the new Local Plan. I, with the other local Chairmen, am invited to a meeting with Mole Valley Council on 20th January. I do hope that something useful will be divulged and that our hopes, especially regarding some areas, will not be dashed.

A new initiative being started by Jess Lee of Surrey C.C. is called the "Community Partnerships & Engagement Team." They are giving themselves a very wide brief by making it easier for residents to:

1. Enhance public spaces and facilities to meet local needs
2. To be active in delivering their priorities, such as addressing c.
3. Play a role in shaping the services they use
4. Influence the decisions that affect them

To be honest, much of that seems like what organisations such as Residents' Associations do attempt to do already, but they are having a Zoom meeting on Thursday and I will try to attend.

Another initiative organised by (I believe) a countrywide organisation called "Resources for Change Ltd" is seeking clarification (and probably slight enlargement) of the Surrey Hills AONB. They have an impressive website and their survey form can be accessed either writing to the address given or downloading it from the website. So any enquirer is not surprised, I warn you that the address is deep in rural Wales, but the personal answering my enquiry did it amazingly quickly!

<https://www.surrey-hills-aonb-boundary-review.org/>

Finally, some news from nearer home: the people in Headley are very concerned about the proposed future use of the Jubilee Complex, the military hospital needed after some campaigns some 20 years ago. It seems that there is an application to surround it with 15m of barbed wire and to prepare it to house some 48 very seriously disturbed individuals. Partly in view of the large number of homes planned for the former military site and partly because of the well known beauty of the area, the current residents of Headley are opposing this building. To add to their case, it would appear that the two current buildings there were only permitted on a temporary basis and were expected to be removed when the need for them disappeared.

I will now finish my report by asking if any people received more than one email about this meeting tonight? I must apologise for that. We use a program called "Wordpress" and sometimes it is a bit confusing.

Now I will hand over to Martyn who will bring you up to date with developments planned for our town.

