



Leatherhead Residents' Association

We aim to:

- Conserve and develop the amenities of Leatherhead.
- Promote an active interest in the community and in local government.
- Foster and promote the development and enhancement of the local community for the benefit of the residents.

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Contributions to the Newsletter are always most welcome. The views expressed are those of the contributors and are not necessarily shared by the Association.

*We email members when new information comes our way; sometimes emails have been returned as "undeliverable". **If you have changed your email address, could you please let us know.***

Also, if any member reading this wishes to be added to the email list, please visit the 'Contact page' on our website and complete the on-line form.

The Saga of the Missing Hospital Sign

The sign below answers a question that has been frequently asked in Leatherhead for over a year: "Where is the Leatherhead Hospital?"



Hospital.

The sign for Leatherhead Hospital was damaged in 2009 when Surrey County Council (SCC) put in a cycle path on Epsom Road. The cycle path was removed shortly afterwards but the damaged sign was left. Neither the Leatherhead Residents' Association (LRA) nor the League of Friends of the Leatherhead Hospital have been able to persuade the SCC or our local County Councillor to replace the damaged sign; all that SCC did was to remove the sign altogether! The League of Friends even volunteered to pay SCC to reinstate the sign, but received no answer. For over a year the LRA's Highways Subcommittee regularly reported to SCC the need for a sign to Leatherhead

At the May AGM of the League of Friends of the Leatherhead Hospital, at which our LRA representative was present, someone suggested that a AA sign would be a temporary help.

As a result, the LRA took on the challenge of arranging with the AA to place a temporary sign that would direct people from Epsom Road to the hospital. Audrey Mellers, Chairman of the League of Friends of Leatherhead Hospital, and Dr. Robert Youlden played their part in approving and arranging payment for the sign. At last, as a result of constant pressure by our LRA representative, on 3rd July the AA sign finally appeared; the League of Friends has expressed its appreciation of the LRA support in gaining this signage which will remain for six months to help new patients find their way.

Of course this is not the end of the story. The LRA will continue to pursue SCC's Highway Department and our local County Councillor in an effort to have a permanent sign reinstated. Surrey County Council has to approve the placement of all AA signs. The application made it clear that the sign was needed because SCC had lost the original sign. Perhaps SCC will now be shamed into replacing the sign.

www.leatherheadresidents.org.uk
The Letherhead Institute, High Street, Leatherhead, KT22 8AH
Tel: 07986 430935

Committee 2011-12

At the Annual General Meeting in May, the following were elected:

Chairman	Hubert Carr	chairman@leatherheadresidents.org.uk
Vice-Chair	Hilary Porter	vicechair@leatherheadresidents.org.uk
Hon. Secretary	Ray Brown	secretary@leatherheadresidents.org.uk
Hon. Treasurer	Paula Sabine	treasurer@leatherheadresidents.org.uk
	Cheryl Allen	environment@leatherheadresidents.org.uk
	Caroline Brown	planning@leatherheadresidents.org.uk
	Fran Barnby-Smith	
	Flip Cargill	
	Ann Cardew	
	Norma Tatham-Thompson	
	Ray Ward	

You can email the whole committee on: committee@leatherheadresidents.org.uk

As well as the already established Membership, Planning and Highways subcommittees, we now have a new Environment Subcommittee (see page 4).



From our Chairman

Dear members

The new arrangements of our open committee meetings seem to be working out well, although attempts to finish at 9pm still seem to be thwarted by Any Other Business. However we look forward to even fuller participation as the months pass.

With the trial cycle race almost upon us, we have had news of work which will have to be done in Leret Way. Since the cyclists will turn right to go down Bull Hill, the existing pedestrian island will obstruct the line around the corner. So it is to be made removable. This work will be done later this month ready for the race in August. After that the island will be returned until the real race takes place in 2012. Meanwhile the LRA is still supporting the idea of having a giant screen along the lower edge of the Red House Gardens so that on the Day of the Olympic Race we can all gather, with our picnics etc. and watch the broadcast until the race sweeps around us and off along Randalls Road. Lets hope it is a fine sunny day.

The question of on-street parking charges is still worrying many people throughout Surrey, and Leatherhead is no exception. A number of organisations in Reigate and Banstead, and in Elmbridge made an appeal to SCC, supported by many organisations in other Boroughs and Districts. The four Residents' associations in the north of Mole Valley, including the LRA, supported the appeal. The outcome was that SCC dropped their plans. However this may not be the end of the matter, and a better prepared scheme may yet come back, so we are keeping our eyes open for this.

Kind regards

Hubert Carr

chairman@leatherheadresidents.org.uk



From our Secretary

Dear members

We welcome two new members, Norma Tatham-Thompson and Ray Ward, to our Committee and thank them for offering to put themselves forward for election. Our Committee continues to grow in strength and the new arrangement of monthly Open Committee Meetings mean not only is the Committee more directly responsible to the LRA membership but it enables more time for our subcommittees to get on with their work each month.

We now have a new and enthusiastic Environment Subcommittee who are working hard to bring about improvements to our High Street as well as being involved in much else (as you will read on page 4).

You may recall reading in the last Newsletter how by supporting Cllr Rosemary Dixon's campaign to reduce night time noise from deliveries at Sainsbury's we ensured residents at last got a good night's sleep. On page 1 of this Newsletter you see that by supporting the Friends of Leatherhead Hospital we have managed to get two AA signs erected on the Epsom Road. *By working with the local Councillors and supporting local groups we can and do get things done*; and we will continue to pursue the matter of the Hospital signs and press Surrey County Council to have *permanent* signs erected on Epsom Road.

Support us and persuade others to join us and we can get more done together.

As I wrote in the last Newsletter "Some members from time to time have grumbled about the conduct of meetings. Mindful of this, your Committee adopted a set of Standing Orders which have been published on the Association's website since February." Things have improved: in June the meeting lasted only eight minutes longer than our 90 minute deadline, though it must be admitted July meeting went twenty minutes over. This would probably have been shortened if Standing Orders had been applied more strictly. We shall get better.

I expect many of you were dismayed by the article "Life on different sides of tracks that split town" in the June 30th edition of the Leatherhead Advertiser. A great deal of good work has gone on over the years in the north of our town. Raw statistics are not helpful. Out of context, they served only to highlight differences and do not reflect the very positive work that has been going on over the years. Statistics should be put into context or not quoted.

Our Association since its inception has tried to bring north and south together, to treat Leatherhead as one town. We had members attending the North Leatherhead Community Group meetings before that group dissolved itself. We have been participating in the Leatherhead Community Garden and have consistently tried to involve both police teams in our work. Let us be proud of the good work done in the north of our town and work together to make the whole of Leatherhead a better place!

*We continue to strive to streamline our meetings and make them more efficient, to make the Committee more accountable to ordinary members and to get as many people as possible involved in building up the Leatherhead Residents' Association so that it has an even stronger voice **for the whole of Leatherhead.***

Kind regards,.

Ray Brown

secretary@leatherheadresidents.org.uk

New Environment Subcommittee Formed by LRA Committee



The happy recipient (left) of the bouquet raffled by the Environment Subcommittee is Maureen. Although a Bookham resident, she frequently visits Leatherhead and is happy to contribute to charitable causes. She participated in the raffle as she walked through the town on the 30th April during the celebration for St. George's Day and the Royal wedding.

Maureen remembers when there were hanging baskets and flowers on the High Street and looks forward to seeing them in place again.

The £99.32p collected from the raffle will form a small fund that will be used in the near future to buy plants and flowers for the planters to be provided by MVDC. Her reaction when she heard that she had won the raffle was, "You have made my day!" We are happy to have such an appreciative and deserving winner.

Members of the LRA's New Subcommittee Find Much to Occupy Their Time

The Environment is a huge subject and it affects us all. Earlier this year the LRA Committee decided that many of the topics being looked at closely by various committee members would fit snugly under an umbrella called the Environment Subcommittee. These activities have included:

- supporting Cllr Rosemary Dixon's campaign to reduce night time noise that was preventing residents from getting a good night's sleep
- familiarising ourselves with the active Transition Movements in Ashted and Bookham
- volunteering to work on the 'new' Leatherhead Community Garden
- inquiring into the eviction of Norbury Park farmer, Nick Bullen, and the closure of the saw mill
- representing Leatherhead Residents' Association to the Norbury Park Liaison Group
- working with the Mole Valley's Chief Conservation Officer, Rod Shaw, to restore beauty via plant life and to Leatherhead High Street.

The raffle was held in order to kick start the process of bring more plant life back to the High Street. We were well on our way to purchasing hanging baskets when the matter of £5 million of insurance became a stumbling block. We do have a small insurance policy to cover the requirement of public liability when we have a table at events such as Public Safety Day, but it does not stretch to the £5 million required. We have thus been forced to slow our pace and continue to work with MVDC. We are hopeful of a great outcome. You do not have to be a committee member to work on a subcommittee. For more information contact me.

Cheryl Allen
environment@leatherheadresidents.org.uk

The Big Society and Localism

The "Big society" is a central part of this governments thinking and later this year we shall have the Localism Bill. What is meant by the concept "Big Society" and what will Localism mean? Much is still to be decided regarding the Localism Bill. Two of our Committee members offer the follow articles.

[Editor]

The Big Society – what is it?

The Big Society is a broad vision that crosses a range of public services, when Whitehall and centralised decision-making will be reduced and communities 'empowered'. This is not just in planning, in education, for example, the Government plan to introduce Swedish-style free schools that could be run by groups of parents outside of local authority control, alongside an expanded academy programme.

At its core, the Big Society is a vision to create a nation grounded on an ethic of volunteerism, where local decisions are taken by local people. It is a shrinking of the state.

For planning, the Big Society has come to be defined by "Localism", a new word with - at present - no firm meaning except that planning decisions will originate from local rather than national policy.

Localism Bill update - "Garden grabbing" banned

The practice known as "garden grabbing", developing in the gardens of existing houses, has been banned by amending PPS3, removing the classification of gardens as "previously developed land" (the same category as derelict factories and disused railway sidings) so that they will no longer be designated 'Brownfield'.

Under the Localism Bill 2010, public consultation will become a statutory obligation on all planning applications. Chapter four of the planning section sets out the obligations applicants will be under, including to 'publicise the proposed application in such manner as the person reasonably considers is likely to bring the proposed application to the attention of a majority of the persons who live at, or otherwise occupy, premises in the vicinity of the land'.

Applicants will also need to 'have regard to any responses to the consultation' received, publicise the timeline for consultation, and, upon submitting an application, set out how the applicant has complied with the above, what responses were received during the consultation period, and what account was taken of those responses.

Ray Ward

Dilemma for Mole Valley District Council (MVDC)

On 15th June, three members of your LRA committee went to the second MV meeting on Localism and what it will mean for our area. It was chaired by Mr. Jack Straw, MVDC Chief Planning Policy Manager.

It would appear that the "Core Strategy," a document carefully, (and expensively), built up over the last few years and relating to most aspects of life in MV may have to be scrapped because it is based on the now disregarded South East Plan. Unfortunately, this latter also failed to make any reference to the Green Belt.

However, if this were to happen, then there would be a most difficult hiatus between old rules and new rules for Planning Applications. New rules could not apply until a new Core Strategy had been agreed and so there would be a period of time when almost anything could be passed. Builders and developers would almost certainly take full advantage of this.

The second half of the meeting was taken by Ms. Suzanne Parkes, a Senior Planning Policy Officer. She explained how the Government sees "Planning at Community Level." This involves "Neighbourhood Development Plans." (i.e. what to do where), "Neighbourhood Development Orders" (extensions that will not require Planning Permission) and "Community Right to Build Schemes"

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aimed at automatically permitting small communities which need specific, separate developments to build them without needing to go to the Planning Dept.

A number of villages throughout the country are to be in the forefront of Planning at Community Level. Bookham Vanguard (renamed from Bookham Vision) is to be in the second “wave.”

MVDC will be continuing their liaison meetings with local organizations like ours and the next one is on Wednesday, 13th July.

*Caroline Brown,
LRA Planning Subcommittee Chairman.*

The Transition Movement in the Mole Valley

In September 2008, three people decided to set up a Transition Steering Group for the Mole Valley. The purpose of the group was to explore what life would be like if we could make the transition to a low carbon society. The main point of a Transition Town is to be sustainable when we come to a time when cheap and easy to reach oil is no longer available. Another factor being considered is climate change. This steering committee emerged from the Council run Green Mole Forum.

The Transition Town Movement in Leatherhead

In the Autumn of 2010, the Leatherhead Residents' Association (LRA) Committee realised that all surrounding towns had jumped on the Green Mole Forum bandwagon and had Transition groups up and running. There was a reluctance to begin yet another group in Leatherhead that required Officers, Committees, and time, since there seemed to be so many such groups: these included the LRA, the Leatherhead Community Association, the Leatherhead Area Partnership, and the Leatherhead and District Forum to name a few. At the same time it seemed too much for the LRA to take on the responsibility of establishing a Transition Town within its existing framework.

What happened next?

Very frequently our LRA looks to Bookham for inspiration. In 2010 Bookham had the newest Transition Town group and it was decided that interested committee members would visit Bookham's monthly open meetings. Some LRA members have become quite active in this exceptional group.

In the mean time a group of Leatherhead Residents have established an organic Community Garden. With this outlet for learning gardening skills and the two allotments in our town, what better way is there to learn to be sustainable? With waiting lists in all Surrey allotments, one further step could be garden sharing. Many LRA members have now visited meetings of Transition Bookham and Ashted. They have also joined in activities of both groups. You may have spotted a few familiar faces in the photos of Ashted's newly planted vegetables beds on The Street. We are always willing to lend a hand.

Very recently The Green Mole Forum has given the LRA the opportunity to write a proposal for £250 to fund a 'Green project' in Leatherhead. The Environmental Subcommittee has decided to offer the money to buy berry plants for the fruit cage at the Community Gardens.



Other Shared Activities of Transition Groups

Residents from Bookham, Ashted and Leatherhead carpooled to the largest and newest Recycling Centre in Surrey last month for two guided tours. Those of you who have not visited the Randall's Road site lately will find some changes in the **SITA Community Recycling Centre**.

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Much effort is made to sort out reusable items. You can place items such as foil, plastic tops, batteries, and cartridges in small bins on site. They are recycled in ways that allow SITA to make donations such as the £1200 given to Leatherhead Football Club last spring. This centre accepts rubbish directly from the public. Amazingly items such as eyeglasses and bras are kept separate so that new owners can be found. Clothes that are beyond use are now also accepted for recycling. Further improvements such as new signs and a larger parking area are coming next year.

The second tour was of the **Grundon Materials Recovery Facility**, tucked away in a distant corner of the site - this facility sorts and sells the mixed contents of our recycling bins. MVDC gets paid for each tonne delivered to Grundon. Every time you fill your recycling bin with appropriate glass, paper, washed plastic bottles, etc. you are contributing to keeping Council Tax down. Paul, our tour leader, had praise for local residents who are said to be doing a very good job of recycling. Countrywide the UK recycles about 40%: Mole Valley does well at 60%. There is room for improvement since Germany recycles 60 to 65%. A very small portion of the material delivered to Grundon cannot be recycled. Even this is taken to a site near Heathrow to be incinerated and turned into energy. This Heathrow site put 55,000 Mw into the National Grid last year.

We were asked to take the message to residents that if you are in doubt about whether an item can be recycled leave it out.

Evelyn Tomassi and Nicola Avery



The polytunnel near completion

Scenes From the 'New'

Leatherhead Community Garden



Some willow wigwams are used for plant support; others for art



Polytunnel becomes classroom as Ruth Wheeler of MVDC's Surrey Community Art Project shows residents how to use willow tree wood to make a unique piece of art and embed it into the garden



"Growing Together"



Railway sleepers from the Leatherhead Loco find new home

Leatherhead Community Garden Update

Like the Phoenix of Greek Mythology, the Leatherhead Community Garden, has been reborn to live again. A new location at the West Hill School in North Leatherhead has brought together some of the original volunteers and some members of a new Committee based at West Hill School, an institute with a special focus on science. Use of school land for a garden, which can be shared by school and

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community, was the brainchild of assistant head teacher, Andy MacFarlane. His idea is actually an extension of classroom instruction that has been carried on at the school for years.

Final details of the proposal are being negotiated with Surrey County Council. If the plans for a neighbourhood orchard get the go ahead, change of use permission will be required. In the meantime, volunteers work on the site every Saturday between 9 and 3 o'clock. There is hope that there will eventually also be daily opening hours between 6 and 8 pm and Sunday opening hours between 10 and 2 o'clock.

Structures already in place include: two storage sheds, a huge polytunnel, a fruit cage, and a few raised beds. In May, staff from Wisley planted 120 trees that will become a hedgerow along the perimeter fence. Local volunteers planted an additional 80 trees including silver birch, hawthorn, rowan, hornbeam, wild cherry, beech and blackthorn, which are traditional hedgerow trees. It has been a challenge to keep the small trees alive with the draught conditions we have experienced this spring.

Other planting, mainly from seed, include potatoes, radishes, lettuce, beans, cauliflower, cabbage, pumpkins, corn, and broccoli. The new polytunnel helps the seed germinate and grow quickly.

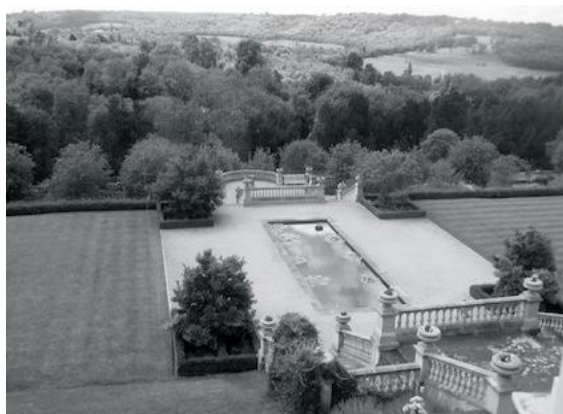
Simon Woodhams has done a wonderful job of project managing the site that will be turned over to the new committee in July. New Volunteers are much needed. If interested, contact me or just come along on any Saturday. Major construction will be completed by 31st July. There will be an official opening at the end of August.

There is hope that the scout hut on the site of the original community garden will become the home of a new Mole Valley Boxing Club. Volunteers who painted and re-floored the building will be glad to know that their time and effort has not gone to waste.

Cheryl Allen
environment@leatherheadresidents.org.uk

Cherkley Court

Cherkley Court was built in 1866 for the Leatherhead benefactor, Abraham Dixon, but had to be rebuilt in 1893 after a fire. His widow lived in the house until her death in 1909, when it was acquired by Max Aitkin, 1st Lord Beaverbrook, the politician and owner of the Express group of newspapers. He served in the war cabinet for both the 1st and 2nd world wars, and was commissioned by the Canadian Government to set up the Canadian War Records Office. Many famous guests stayed at Cherkley Court, including H. G. Wells, Harold Macmillan, Rudyard Kipling and his close friend Winston Churchill.



Beaverbrook gave his son, Sir John, the house a few years before he died in 1964. Sir John did not take the title of Lord Beaverbrook, but he lived at Cherkley until his death in 1985.

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Cherkley Court was turned over to the Beaverbrook foundation on the death of Sir John's second wife in 1994. Sadly the house then fell into disrepair until 2002 when the foundation began a seven year refurbishment and the grounds were opened to the public in 2007. Unfortunately by December 2009 it was deemed to be financially unfeasible and the house and estate were put up for sale.

The Beaverbrook Foundation initially applied for planning permission to return the house to a single family dwelling, but in 2009 the new owners submitted plans to turn the house into a luxury hotel and leisure complex. The new owners, Longshot Limited, wish to create a 40-room luxury hotel, with a restaurant, a cookery school, a spa and a golf club, which is intended to be a private member club with about 400 - 450 members. This complex would provide employment for 150 people.

Longshot seem to be making every effort to 'get it right' and 'be the best' in every way. They are hoping to put in a planning application in the autumn 2011, and have held design development workshops for local residents to explain their plans and answer questions.

The second workshop was held 1st - 2nd July 2011. Several of the LRA committee attended, and listened to presentations by some of the consultants employed by Longshot on various aspects of the design. The architect, a heritage specialist, outlined the plans for the buildings, and showed where changes had been made in response to the first consultation, for example, less building in the courtyard. Some of the existing buildings at the top of the hill are to be replaced with new ones, including the golf clubhouse. The spa will be housed in the coach house, with a swimming pool where the kitchen gardens are at present. The service centre for all the facilities is to be underground, as are the changing rooms for the golf course.

The most controversial part of the plan is the golf course; therefore, golf course designer David McLay Kidd presented a major part of the workshop. The plan is to site the golf course to the north of the house, on the open land from Reigate Road, and also on the other side of Stane Street up to the woodland. This area is adjacent to Tyrrells Wood golf course. The two separate entrance and exit gates onto Reigate Road will not be altered, but the road from the entrance is to be changed to join the old road to the exit, so creating a single two way access road to clear the area for the course. Two ponds are to be created near the road.

David McLay Kidd emphasised that his philosophy was to work with the terrain and use existing features so as not to change the landscape. He has previously built a golf course in Scotland on an area which included a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), so sheep are used to graze the area between the holes as mowing is not allowed. The area for the course at Cherkley Court is quite large, even though it will not now encroach into the wood to the east of Stane Street. This means that about only half the area would be mowed for fairways and greens and all existing groups of trees will be kept.

The rights of way will not be affected and the course would be designed so that the water requirement would be about half that normally needed. The water supply has not been finalised, but could either come from bore holes, or mains. Fertiliser use would also be restricted. There was concern expressed about water taken from bore holes as at Tyrrells Wood golf course they are unable to extract water from their bore holes in summer. It was also stated that the golf course would not be used for competitions, and helicopters would not be allowed to land.

There still remains the problem of building a course on rare chalk grassland, in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Representatives from the Campaign to Protect Rural England group and the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Beauty group were both at the meeting as they are very concerned about this encroachment on a rare habitat.

Fran Smith

Get Composting

Whether you're a keen gardener or just want to choose the greenest, most natural way to deal with your food and garden waste, composting is the perfect solution.

Grass cuttings, dried leaves, twigs and vegetable peelings are just some of the ingredients that can go into a compost bin or heap to make peat-free compost – ideal to use in potting or planting in your garden or allotment.

Getting started is easy. All you need is a compost bin or a small space in the garden to create a heap. Then just follow our easy guide to creating your own supply of natural food for your garden.

Why compost?

Compost is a natural, nutrient-rich food product for your garden. It will help improve soil structure, maintain moisture levels, and keep your soil's PH balance in check while helping to suppress plant disease. It will have everything your plants need including nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium and will help buffer soils that are very acidic or alkaline. Compost improves your soil's condition and your plants and flowers will love it!

Because home-made compost is peat-free, it's good for the environment outside your garden too. It reduces the need to buy peat products, which have been commercially sourced and extracted from peat bogs, resulting in the release of carbon stored in them.

Felicity Stanbridge, SCC Campaign Communications Officer

A step-by-step guide

1. Find the right site. Site your bin or heap in the garden on bare soil. If space is limited, put your bin on concrete, tarmac or patio slabs; but make sure there's a layer of soil or existing compost on the bottom so garden creatures can colonise.

2. Add the right ingredients. Fill your kitchen caddy with the right ingredients such as tea bags, taking care not to compost cooked food, meat or fish.

3. Fill it up. Empty your kitchen caddy and your garden waste into your bin or heap. A 50/50 mix of greens and browns is the perfect recipe for good compost.

4. After 9-12 months. The ingredients you have put in your bin or heap should have turned into a dark brown, earthy smelling material at the bottom of the bin, which can be dug out, with the newer material being left. But don't worry if your compost looks a little lumpy with twigs and bits of eggshells – this is perfectly normal. Simply sift out any bits and return them to your bin or heap.

5. Ready! Once your compost resembles thick, moist soil and smells very earthy, it's ready to use.

6. Collect the compost. Instructions will be delivered with your bin. But all you have to do is lift the bin slightly or open the hatch at the bottom and scoop out the fresh compost with a garden fork or spade. If you have built your own, simply rake out the ready compost.

7. Use it. And watch your garden bloom. Compost can be used for all your planting needs – vegetable plants for allotments; general potting (if mixed with something like ordinary soil); flowerbeds and enriching new borders by mixing in existing soil; or around trees by spreading a layer around the roots. Or use it as mulch material, mix with a layer of soil, and help prevent plant diseases.

Get started

To find out more about how to build yourself a compost heap, or to buy a bin, starting from only £14.00, visit www.surreywastepartnership.org.uk or call 0844 571 4444.

You'll also find lots of other helpful tips and information there too.

Recipe for success

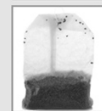
Right ingredients

Greens

Tea bags
Coffee grounds
Vegetable peelings
Fruit scraps
Salad leaves
Grass cuttings
Old flowers
Dead plants

Browns

Dried leaves, twigs
Toilet/kitchen roll tubes
Scrunched up paper
Vacuum bag contents
Wood chippings, straw
Crushed egg shells
Cereal/egg boxes



Wrong ingredients

Cooked vegetables
Meat
Dairy products
Diseased plants
Dog mess or cat litter
Nappies

