



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.

Spring Newsletter 2011 – Vol. 8

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.*



From our Chairman

Dear members

The last few months have seen some exciting developments for both Mole Valley, and the Residents' Association. In particular the advent of Localism, which I deal with elsewhere, opens new opportunities for us. I suspect that the 'Big Society' concept will fade in the face of Localism. It is not the idea of taking over council services by unpaid volunteers, although there is much to be said for contracting out council services to people who know what they are doing and who can make savings by serving more than one council area. However the idea of involving local groups of people in recognizing need and delivering projects of direct benefit to their community is very attractive as, for example, the North Leatherhead Community Garden, which was described to our last open meeting.

In the past Mole Valley has been found wanting in terms of social cohesion. In Leatherhead particularly an isolationist approach seems to have pursued by many of its inhabitants. I have been trying to find the reasons for this. With help from the Council officers I have looked into the movement in and out of the area. Do people move into Leatherhead as a stage in their later working life, only to move on as they retire? Well there is a trend to do this when compared to our surrounding villages, and indeed to Mole Valley as a whole. But it is not very significant. So why do so many people not get involved with the community?

The number of people who responded to the consultation on the High Street and Town Centre was very disappointing – particularly when in the past we were able to pack the Theatre in protest to the plans which some Councillors wanted to impose upon us. I still believe that we need a vision of a future Town, which we can all buy into. We cannot turn the clock back to a day when traffic was so thin that we could have two-way traffic in the High Street – and indeed no-one is asking for that. But we have little agreement on how we should go forward. Without messianic inspiration, we must rely on coming together and discussing matters. However this needs technical input as well. Council officers can either provide that, or obtain it for us. Localism can enable that to happen. But as The Residents' Association we must rise to the challenges ahead. So let us try and recruit more members and bring more ideas together so as to be truly representative of our Town.

Kind regards

Hubert Carr

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From our Secretary

Dear members

In the Spring Newsletter a year ago I asked you to consider attending our meetings and joining our Committee. I do so again. As I said last year, I am very well aware that many of you have full time jobs, are bringing up a young family or have other commitments. Indeed, if all members actually turned up at a meeting we would not have room for everyone! But the more members who attend our meetings, the better informed we are of what members want and also members themselves are better informed of what their Committee is doing.

You may recall that we had a questionnaire and that as a result of that we changed the start time of our monthly open meeting to 7.30 pm. Furthermore, 79% of those who replied indicated that they thought meeting every month was too often. However, because Room G6 is booked monthly and because arrangements had already been made for speakers and police reports until the end of last year, we continued to hold monthly open meetings. There was also the point made by one of our Committee members that we needed to allow members a channel for bringing up concerns, asking questions and so on each month.

However, most monthly meetings have continued not to be quorate and this is not satisfactory. Also each month we hold a separate, closed Committee meeting, which often covers a good deal of the same ground as the open meeting. It means members of your small, but hardworking, Committee often spend up to five hours in meetings each month. This is not, in my view, the most efficient arrangement and may well be putting off people volunteering to join the Association's Committee.

At the January meeting of the Committee, we discussed following the practice of one of our neighbouring Residents' Associations and hold a single *open* Committee meeting each month; that is, the monthly meeting would become a Committee meeting at which other members of the Association are invited to be present to express their own opinions and concerns. This was adopted unanimously as the Committee's recommendation at its February meeting.

The advantages of such an arrangement are, in my opinion:

- We will no longer have a monthly open meeting which is not quorate.
- Committee members will make a far more efficient use of their time.
- By making the Committee meeting open for other members to attend, the Committee is more directly accountable to its members.
- Also members can voice their concerns each month directly to the committee.

The exception will, of course, be the Annual General Meeting which must remain an open meeting of all members at which the Committee is annually elected and to which the Treasurer presents a report and an audited statement of accounts. We are also considering having another open general meeting, probably of a social nature, in the Autumn.

If this new arrangement is adopted, we would need speakers only at the two open meetings, which some of you may also consider an advantage! Of course, if anything of significant importance occurred that required a more general open meeting, the Association's Constitution already allows the Committee to convene a *Special Open Meeting*.

Although the Constitution empowers the Committee to enact its recommendation, we thought it only fair that ordinary members be given a chance to air views or, indeed, make counter proposals at the **Annual General Meeting, which will be held on Monday, 9th May.**

You may also recall that it was suggested we amend Clause 7 of our Constitution to allow for a smaller Committee. We were not able to do this and, I think, we ought really to be aiming to get *more*, not less, people involved. So I am asking you again this year: ***please consider joining our Committee at the Annual General Meeting***

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. You will find them on the same page as the Constitution and the Code of Conduct, namely: <http://www.leatherheadresidents.org.uk/org.shtml>

Those members who do not have Internet access at home can read them on the computers in the Public Library.

We are endeavouring 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*.

Please come to the AGM on the 9th May if at all possible.

Kind regards,.

Ray Brown
secretary@leatherheadresidents.org.uk

Community Garden - Take Two

On Saturday, 5th February, Andy MacFarlane, Assistant Head and Director of Science & Maths for West Hill School, welcomed Simon Woodhams, Project Worker and Manager for the Garden, and a bright eyed group of 15 - 20 community volunteers to the first meeting and work party of the new Community Garden

The original site for the Community Garden in Wood Bridge Road was closed in late 2010 due to flooding with sewerage contaminated water. This was a hard knock for Simon, who was moving Heaven and Earth to get the Centre up and running. However, it seems it was all for the best, and excellent grounding for this new, larger and ideal site.

The school, which caters for students with learning difficulties, "has a wet and soggy field that will not only provide an outstanding outdoor classroom for the pupils, but also a replacement community garden for North Leatherhead, and enable joint working between the school and the community."

The Community Garden will support flowers, crops, art project and, said Andy, "Part of our job is to raise standards and also raise awareness of science in the wider community."

The project is seeking more volunteers to help develop the site. No specialist skills required. For more information contact Simon Woodhams, North Leatherhead Project Worker:

telephone 0 7845 143356
email: swoodhams.lcg@live.com

Flip Cargill

A Goodnight's Sleep Now Possible for All



Many of you probably read in the Leatherhead Advertiser of 17th February how campaigners Councillor Rosemary Dickson and Roy Allen of the Leatherhead Residents' Association persuaded Sainsbury's to change "horrendous" delivery times which kept nearby residents awake at night.

Cllr Rosemary Dickson has fought a good fight on behalf of town centre residents who have suffered much too long from being awakened several times each night. Over the years the LRA has existed, steps have been taken to curb the noise made by frequent, nightly deliveries to Sainsbury's. The result always seemed to be short term with lapses in procedure every time there were staff changes or different lorry drivers.

It took the team work of the MVDC, Environmental Health Officers (EHO), Cllr Rosemary Dickson, our own Roy Allen and Alan Lacey, Sainsbury's regional affairs manager, to come to the decision that something had to be done to prevent this noise nuisance. Residents were supported by the this Association and by the Trustees of the Leatherhead Community Association.

Although there is no legally binding decision, Sainsbury's has taken the exceptional decision to cancel overnight staff and deliveries between 11:30 and 6:00. Some people might think this is a very short night's sleep but it is such an improvement that the affected residents are delighted with the results.

A lesson to be learned is that, at the time planning permission is given conditions should be imposed on delivery times, thus preventing heavy goods vehicles from arriving in the early hours of the morning.



A Sainsbury's spokesman has said: "We always aim to be good Neighbours." Some of the residents of Leatherhead Town Centre are beginning to believe that quote. Long may it be true.

Cheryl Allen

Editor's note:

I am sure we are all grateful to the commitment and dedication shown by Roy in his part in achieving the above agreement. Another of our members, Alan Thornhill, and our Chairman have complained to Sainsbury's over the past two months or so about one of their shopping trolleys left in the River Mole. Impatient at Sainsbury's lack of response, on 9th March Alan with another of our members, Tom Musoke, and Tony of the Amici café retrieved the trolley from the river and, collecting another two vandalized Sainsbury's trolleys on the way, returned all three trolleys to the store.

LOCALISM

The Localism Bill was published in December 2010, and is currently making its way through Parliament. No doubt with some modification it will become an Act later this year. It is very significant for Residents' Associations, and it will turn much of our national decision taking on its head. Quite simply it will enable planning and housing policies to be influenced at the very local level of Residents' Associations (RAs) and Parish Councils. Clearly the elected members of District Councils will still be responsible for decisions, but in future they will be under greater obligation to take note of the neighbourhood views expressed by the RAs and Parish Councils. What is more the council will have

to assist these neighbourhood groups by providing officers to assist with the formulation of realistic policies.

Local Planning policies will in future have to be guided by what the neighbourhood communities want in terms of the future of their locality. Similarly the Council's Planning Committee will have to take account of local representations in reaching their decisions. In Mole Valley this is more or less what happens anyway, as the RAs are consulted in the same way as the Parish Councils.

The provision of housing, both in terms of new provision, and management of social housing is to be referred to local requirements rather than dictated by Regional Assemblies. Indeed the Regional Assemblies have already been disbanded. Under the anticipated Act, the RAs will have a responsibility in determining the location and type of new housing. But there does not appear to be a planning link to this and the provision of support services such as roads, water supply or even adequate educational provision. Although there is mention of local knowledge being used in matters of flood control. This latter is a particular concern to Leatherhead as plans in Reigate Borough to build housing in the area north of Gatwick will increase the rate of storm water run-off in the headwaters of the River Mole. Although the amount of water may not be any greater it will all arrive in Leatherhead much more quickly causing greater flooding than is currently experienced above and below the Town.

Localism is also being seen as an opportunity for local initiatives to be carried out by local people using funds from outside the council's budget. For example such schemes may be funded by lottery funds, or other grants which may become available to such schemes. It should be remembered that following the Leatherhead Health Check, the formation of the Leatherhead Area Partnership Ltd. (LAP) enabled funding to be obtained from SEEDA. Although SEEDA has now been disbanded, LAP is currently investigating other sources of finance for community projects.

One must look ahead with optimism, for under these proposals the Leatherhead Residents' Association should be able to bring much greater influence on the future of the Town. Its time to get involved.

Hubert Carr

RAMBLINGS OF A BORN-AGAIN CYCLIST

I go on some of Flip and Ian Cargill's walks, but I wanted to get fitter to give me some hope of keeping up with my younger lady-friend who goes to the gym three times a week. After some discussion with my children they bought me a hybrid bike for my 75th birthday last year. So I've got to use it!!!

I hadn't cycled for 40 years, and I didn't fancy going on busy main roads – so I've been cycling off-road to Polesden Lacey, or to West Horsley via Bookham and Effingham Commons to visit my daughter.

A few weeks ago I cycled up to Bockett's Farm for coffee, and started on a 7-mile Family Ride which took me up to the Sawmill at the top of Norbury Park, down to Box Hill and Westhumble Station, (detour to Denbies for lunch), back up to the Sawmill from Mickleham (had to stop about 10 times to get my breath back), down to Bockett's Farm for tea, and then back home – a total distance of 14 miles.

Initially I thought that cycling would be a lonely pastime unless I was with my family. But I've since been on three GO50 Easy Rides, where I discovered that there were around 35 people, mainly ladies, and all very friendly. Also, I've joined the Mole Valley Cycling Forum (MVCF). They have recently prepared a Survey of Cycling Links - Epsom Road Area. This can be viewed on www.mvcf.org.uk, select Schemes, and then click on the link under East Leatherhead.

Now there is the excitement of the Olympic Cycle Races coming through Leatherhead and up the zig zag on Box Hill (6 times for men, twice for ladies) on 28th July 2012, and a test race in August this year. Councillor David Sharland, Mole Valley Olympic Cycle Race Lead Member said:

“Having the Olympics come to Mole Valley is fantastic. A once in a lifetime opportunity. The cyclists have a real challenge in having to climb Box Hill several times which will clearly add to an exciting race. Preparations are already under way and we are determined to make this a successful event for all involved – competitors, residents, visitors and businesses.”

The organisers are expecting that a million people could turn up to see this race. The National Trust are, quite rightly, concerned about the impact this could have on the 20 varieties of orchids which grow on Box Hill, including the rare Man Orchid, and will be protecting these sites. We were very lucky last year to be told where to see some Man Orchids – and found them – growing just off the cycle track on the Ryka's Cafe side of the A24!

Rod Shaw, Principal Conservation Officer for MVDC, has advised the MVCF that the theme for this year's Mole Valley Heritage Weekend in September is “Work, Rest, and Pray”. The Olympics Cycle Races have given him the idea of including something on the history of the bicycle in the Mole Valley. I've suggested that he contacts Linda Heath in the Leatherhead & District Local History Society. If anyone has some other interesting information please let me know (email alan.thornhill@tecrec.net)

Life begins at 40? No, life begins at 75! My only regret is that I didn't return to cycling many years ago.

Alan Thornhill

Transition Towns News

The Transition Towns Movement is an international movement and locally Ashted, Bookham and Dorking have become Transition Towns. Some people have asked why Leatherhead is not part of this movement; accordingly some Committee members have been attending neighbouring transition meetings with a view to finding out more.

1. Transition Bookham:

Holds open meetings 7.30pm to 9.30pm at St Nicolas Church's Pastoral Centre on the third Wednesday of each month. All are welcome.

February 16th: Love Food Hate Waste

Surrey chef, Carmela Tomkins, was the guest speaker and demonstrator for the evening. She is a creative caterer and consultant with a passion for healthy, tasty, quick and easy to prepare meals. She is also involved with Surrey County Council's "Love Food Hate Waste" campaigns and is endorsed by some well known celebrities, all promoting the value of simple home cookery.

Carmela spoke about how to reduce food waste (8.3 million tonnes of food and drink going to waste each year in the UK) and she and her mother demonstrated left over soup, a frittata and a sweet dish for all to taste. She was surprised to realize that her audience actually consisted of people who could and did cook but rose to the occasion and animated discussion of the pros and cons of various foods followed.

2. Transition Ashtead

February 2nd :Solar & Photovoltaic Energy Presentations.

On Wednesday 2nd February, over 70 people gathered to hear the four speakers, Richard Warren and Fergal O'Driscoll of Solstice Energy, Sam Tilley of Infinite Energy and Alban Thurston of "Juice from your Roof." They explained the latest solar technology, and how to get the most out of the Government's renewable energy Feed-in-Tariffs.

They covered electricity generation, hot water generation, solar energy "farms" and organising "buyers' clubs" so that local people can join together and get these solar generation products at reduced prices. They also answered the many very relevant questions raised by the lively audience.

Ashtead Transition are now planning to take part, with other Surrey groups, in organising a "solar systems buyers' club".

If you are interested in this or any other Transition Ashtead event, please contact info@transitionashtead.org.uk or telephone the Secretary, Caroline, on (01372) 275404.

3. Other future Events

Saturday 26th & Sunday 27th March: Surrey Eco-house event

Action Surrey, an organisation set up by Woking Borough Council, is organising this event to inspire the public and homeowners to learn about energy saving measures and renewable technology from those who have already been there and done it.

Viewing a Surrey Green Home is free but booking is strictly required. Please visit www.actionsurrey.org/surreygreenhomes to find out more and book free tickets

Sunday, 19th June: Wildlife Aid Open Day

Wildlife Aid will be holding their annual from 10am to 5pm.

The day is open to all and entrance is just £10.00 per car (£3.00 each if on foot).

They would welcome any offers of help on the day itself, so please email them if you would like to be a part of the day: mail@wildlifeaid.org.uk

More details on the Open Day will be published on the website www.wildlifeaid.org.uk as they are confirmed

*Flip Cargill
Caroline Brown*

A Right Royal Occasion

Leatherhead Town Centre: 30th April 2011

In celebration of the wedding of Prince William to Kate Middleton on 29th April, the Leatherhead Festival Committee have planned a joint event in honour of the Royal Wedding and St. George's Day with the town bedecked with flags.



Activities planned throughout the day will include something to please all:



- A fancy dress competition for young and old that encourages people to **dress as their favourite British Hero** (past, present, or fictional)
- **Atlantis**, a musical group, will perform hits of British Artists
- The **Downsmen** will give two performances
- **Morris Dancing** by Ewell and St Mary team during the day
- **Puppet show** St. George and the Dragon
- Enter a **"Where's (Prince) William?" contest** chance to win a prize. Spot him in shops throughout the Town Centre
- Learn about **Animazing** life reptiles
- See **Granny Turismos and Bridie the trolley dolly**
- **Face painting** as a Prince, Princess or Dragon

Hilary Porter

Flyball Racing in Leatherhead For First Time

On Sunday 27th February, we happened to walk past the Leisure Centre late morning and were audibly and visually bombarded by the sound and sight of dogs - all shapes and sizes mostly in groups of four.

Curiosity getting the better of us, we enquired and were directed to enter the massive sports tin roofed building. We went inside (free for spectators) and stood, fingers in ears, mesmerised by the cacophony and activity within.



Dogs and humans working in teams were totally engrossed in relay racing. We could have stood/ sat there for hours. The happiness factor must have been something like 150%!

Viewing this fascinating activity live is a must for all animal lovers. They'll be returning in a months time - I'm sure details will be found online or by enquiring at the leisure Centre:

http://www.petplanet.co.uk/training_flyball.asp

Fans call it the most exciting and unique dog sport ever invented. Dogs love it – and why not? It involves running, jumping, retrieving and loads of approval and interactive play with their owners.

Flyball, or more properly, International Flyball Racing, is a competitive relay race for teams of four dogs and their owners. Each dog runs a short course over four low hurdles (the height is determined by the shortest dog on the team), snatches a tennis ball, which is replaced for the next dog, runs back with the ball to the starting line. Once the first dog returns, the next is off. The first team to return four dogs with four balls, without fault, is the winner.'

Ian Cargill
