

## Leatherhead Residents' Association

### Minutes of AGM – 8<sup>th</sup> April 2013 at 7.30 pm

#### 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from [Dave Howarth](#), [Jane Pratt](#), [Diana Carr](#), [Frank Haslam](#), [Tim Jones](#) and [Lynn Todd](#).

#### 2. MINUTES OF 2012 AGM

No corrections were requested to the Minutes of the AGM of 28<sup>th</sup> May 2012 and they were approved.

#### 3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

It was noted that the Association's Statement of Accounts was due to have been circulated with the March 2013 newsletter. The Acting Secretary regretted this had been overlooked and confirmed copies would be attached to the Minutes of the present meeting.

#### 4. CHAIRMAN'S COMMITTEE REPORT 2012/2013

The Chairman presented his Committee Report for 2012/2013, a summary of which together with reports from the Environment and Planning Sub-Committees were provided with the AGM Agenda.

#### 5. TREASURER'S REPORT & STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

The Acting Secretary presented the Treasurer's report for the financial year 2012/2013. This showed a surplus of £166, income being received mainly from membership subscriptions together with some donations. Principal outgoings were for hire of meeting rooms and printing of the newsletter. Income had risen to £4,530 due to increased membership. The sum of £700 had been transferred from the General Reserve to the Leach Grove Wood Fund since it had previously been earmarked for this purpose prior to amalgamation of the previous Associations. [Copies were available for viewing.](#)

#### 6. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Hubert Carr (Chairman), Hilary Porter (Vice Chairman) and Paula Sabine (Treasurer) were proposed for re-election by Lucy Quinnell [seconded by Peter Humphrey](#) and this was carried by vote. [Fran Smith](#) proposed that Caroline Brown be elected as Secretary, which was [seconded by Ian Cargill](#) and carried by vote.

## 7. ELECTION OF AUDITOR

Cheryl Alan proposed that Lindsey Thynne should continue as Auditor and this was carried by a show of hands.

## 8. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Carole Neeser proposed re-election of all existing Committee members. This was seconded by Bridget Lewis Carr and confirmed by voting. Carol Tunstill proposed the nomination of Ann Crowhurst and Roger Hardwick as new Committee members and this was seconded by Tim Hall and was carried by the meeting.

The Chairman indicated it had been proposed to re-designate the existing LRA Sub-Committees (currently Planning and Environment) as Interest Groups. The question of a different name for sub committees and whether any other groups should be formed would be discussed at the next monthly Committee meeting.

## 9. LEACH GROVE WOOD

Flip Cargill outlined the present status of the application to accord Leach Grove Wood status as a Village Green. Usage by local people during the preceding 20 years would be taken into account and she indicated that whilst some 120 or so "Evidence of Use" forms had already been completed and returned, a further 380 or so would be needed for the next stage of the application process. She accordingly urged those present to return forms to her if they had not already done so and to canvass further documentary support for this initiative amongst local users of the wood with a view to its achieving permanent protection from development.

## 10. AGM CLOSED

Chairman Hubert Carr formally closed the AGM

At 8.10 the Acting Secretary, Flip Cargill, introduced the Panel of speakers.

### SPEAKERS

**John Howarth**, Chairman Leatherhead Area Partnership Ltd and Director 'Action for Market Towns' outlined the development of out-of-town shopping since its inception in this country in 1969 and talked of potential developments planned in the Green Belt close to Junction 9 of the M25. These could include housing, a large hotel complex, shopping mall or a luxury retail outlet similar to several established elsewhere in 'Heritage' areas of the UK, notably at Bicester Village in Oxfordshire. His talk centred on the question of whether such developments should be regarded as an opportunity or a threat to neighbouring towns. Evidence from existing sites rather suggested the latter since the boost in visitor numbers and spending was almost entirely focused on these purpose-built developments and tended not to filter down to traditional town centre shops. He suggested this threat could be met by gathering as much retail information and data as possible concerning the Leatherhead area in advance of such planning applications being made, with a view to either preventing development altogether or else ensuring that its financial benefits would spread to existing retailers and the wider community also.

**Lucy Quinnell**, Proprietor of the Fire and Iron Gallery, Leatherhead and organiser of the 'Save Teazle Wood' campaign described the erosion of the Green Belt around Leatherhead with the coming of the

M25 motorway in the early 80s and the consequent destruction of large areas of grassland and woodland. She outlined how the campaign to save this last remaining area of ancient woodland had mobilised and updated the meeting on what had happened since its purchase in June 2012. She indicated that charitable status had been applied for and that the local community and businesses (most notably Wates) had been extremely supportive of current initiatives in respect of both finance and manpower. These included rubbish and litter clearance, flora and fauna surveys, therapeutic opportunities for the disabled and ex-servicemen and most notably establishment of an educational programme involving local schools. This included a newly-established interactive link with the conservation group charged with preserving the Great Barrier Reef in Australia for future generations

**Andy Smith**, Surrey Branch Director of the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England explained the origins of the Green Belt and outlined the reasons why it had come under threat and particularly so in Surrey. Broadly these included pressure from Government to provide low-cost housing, pressure on local authorities to find additional funding through selling land previously designated as “Strategic Open Plan” (often adjoining Green Belt) and pressure from developers to allow luxury house-building on high-worth parcels of previously undeveloped land. He indicated that the CPRE opposed any and all encroachments into the Green Belt since this undermined entirely the aims for which it had been established, among these being to prevent separate geographic communities becoming merged through urban sprawl. He expressed concern that too little was being done to ensure that brownfield sites were prioritised for low-cost housing development by local authorities themselves, who in order to increase income were all too often granting permission for luxury developments in virgin countryside (Cherkley Court being a case in point). This in turn often had the effect of putting further pressure on already stretched public resources and infrastructure in the South East and for that reason the CPRE was in the process of preparing a report on housing issues nationwide with a view to changing the current approach from government. Certainly the CPRE’s position as regards development locally was clear, the uncompromising message to those intent on eroding the Green Belt being: “Surrey is Full”.

The meeting closed at 9.30 p.m.