

LRA Open Committee Meeting Minutes

Letherhead Institute 7:30 January 7th 2013

In Attendance (10)

Committee Members: Hubert Carr (Chair) Caroline Brown, Norma Tatham-Thompson, Flip Cargill, Ann Cardew, John Hayball. Members & visitors: Roger Hardwick, Jane Pratt, Percy Hawkins, John Howarth

1. Apologies for absence: Hilary Porter, Tim Hall, Fran Smith, Cheryl Allen, Bridget Lewis-Carr, Kristina Kenworthy

2. Minutes of December 3rd Meeting: Accepted as correct

3. Matters arising from the minutes: (Reference 4.2 Dec. meeting)

Hubert Carr has spoken to Jack Straw about meeting with the LRA Committee concerning a Neighbourhood Plan for Leatherhead. Given a choice of the 23rd and the 30th January, 7.30 at Park House on January 30th was chosen. After a series of questions and answers concerning Parish Councils (their advantages and disadvantages) and the need to produce a Neighbourhood Plan, it was decided that discussion would continue after meeting with Jack Straw.

4. Correspondence and members concerns:

4.1 Hubert Carr received an email from Rod Shaw reactivating the High Street Advisory Group, now that Rod has received info from the Surrey Highways Department. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss street furniture.

4.2 The requests of Councillors are being disregarded and the Help Shop is being moved to the Library. The current computer room will be the Help Shop, reducing the space to approximately a half of the present space.

4.3 Following the 'Cherkley Express' publishing a statement that the LRA had engaged in malicious accusations, HC wrote a letter of objection. He pointed out that Richard Lingard's report said that the accusations were not malicious. As a result, there was an admission that the Conservative Party supplied the article. HC wrote to the MV CEO asking for the Lingard Report to be made public. He was told that the report was confidential because it was commissioned by the Standards Committee. Ironically, the Standards Committee are not allowed to see the report.

ACTION: HC will write to the CEO / Chris Harris.

4.4 Local Enforcement Plan Consultation The LRA was supplied with a list of 13 ways of insuring that developers adhere to planning laws. CB pointed out that information from the public should be handled discreetly to protect complainants.

4.5 Kingston House Gardens Percy Hawkins supplied an update on the removal of plants from his housing complex by the **Housing Association (HA)**. Percy spoke to Mandy from HA who explained that Percy did not own the place and Burley's had decided that they wanted it nice and tidy. Burley's have stated that the plants were not maintained in the Autumn. This complaint led to discussion about how the older residents, for whom the housing was developed, are now exposed to people of all ages who make noise late at night. NT said that the council had broken a covenant when they brought in all age groups and that the elderly feel threatened. To deal with the garden problem, Norma suggested that photos taken before (supplied by Percy) and after might be helpful to illustrate what has happened.

5. Reports

5.1 Planning:

http://www.leatherheadresidents.org.uk/Reports/Planning_January_2013.pdf

(summary of report was given by CB)

The good news is that Hamsey's located on North Street is not to close. Apparently another branch is going to sell dining tables and chairs.

More good news is that after a long period of vacancy, the former Harrington's Bakery site on Bridge Street is creating some interest among town folk and groups.

John Howarth, was able to provide some information concerning some options being considered. Ideas are varied and the building is in need of refurbishment but the upstairs could provide some social housing or office space while the downstairs could become an indoor market space. The frequently mentioned Leatherhead butcher is one of the possibilities for use for some of the downstairs space according to Peter Snell.

JH had written to the CEO and councillors suggesting that the Council should buy the building and put the Help Shop there. He is waiting on follow up. The Local Enterprise Partnership could possibly help with the purchase of Harrington's with their Growing Places Fund

5.2 Environmental Report

http://www.leatherheadresidents.org.uk/Reports/Environment_January_2013.pdf

(Summary by FC in CA's absence)

5.3 LAP Report

http://www.leatherheadresidents.org.uk/Reports/LAP_January_2013.pdf

(Summary by FC in CA's absence)

In CA's absence the following statement was read in its entirety:
The LAP Report suggested that a temporary way of funding the administration of the LAP should be discussed.

Cheryl's statement

I see that LAP is on the agenda. In discussing this you should know that the required contribution would only be £80 for a year.

At the last LAP meeting Hubert said that because of our very small dues that we cannot afford to contribute. I do not agree with this for the following reasons:

- With 630 members the £80 would mean that about 12 pence of each membership would be required
- There is about £2000 in a fund that was transferred from the Leatherhead Society to the Residents' Association
- The money could come from either of these funds.
- I believe that we should pledge our support while the LAP is struggling to keep afloat but not to finance it indefinitely.
- The LAP could be set up in other ways that does not include company directors and a limited liability company and I believe these should be explored.

As this report suggests, the LAP has an interest in making Leatherhead a better place just like the LRA. I believe that in this transitional period we should support the LAP cause and look for solutions to finance in the fullness of time.

HC said that these figures did not agree with PS's last report.

5.4 Leach Grove Report

http://www.leatherheadresidents.org.uk/Reports/LeachGroveWood_January_2013.pdf

5.5 Community Garden Report (Summary by FC in CA's absence)

http://www.leatherheadresidents.org.uk/Reports/Communitygarden_January_2013.pdf

5.6 Norbury Park Liaison Group

http://www.leatherheadresidents.org.uk/Reports/Norbury_Park_Liaison_Group_December_2012.pdf

(Summary by FC in CA's absence)

6. AOB

6.1 Observations provided by John Howarth:

John Haworth took the opportunity to share some of the observations he has made about Leatherhead while focusing on our town.

- More residents in the town centre would be useful to shops
- Leatherhead has become a town that services the business community
- Towns that seem to weather hard times have an appropriate balance between 'comparison' and 'convenience' shops. This is about 64% to 36%.
Leatherhead is about 79% to 21%.
- Thus Leatherhead is out of balance in comparison with other areas.
- Leatherhead has a favourable vacancy rate(8%) when compared with the National average (15%). However a better comparison is with towns in the South East, or even Surrey.
- Charity shops are a successful part of current trade
- Lidl's car park was the busiest in Leatherhead when we did our survey.
Perhaps because it is free.

6.2 Ann Cardew requested that the High Street Advisory Group report back to the LRA Committee.

The meeting closed at 9:35

The next meeting will be on Monday 4th February at 7:30

Please mail or email topics for AOB prior to the meeting