



DRAFT

**MINUTES of the MEETING of LEATHERHEAD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION
Held on Monday 4th November at 7.30 pm at the
Leatherhead Methodist Church, Church Road, Leatherhead**

Present: Caroline Brown*, Chairman; Hubert Carr*, Vice Chairman; Cheryl Allen*; Louise Herrity*; Martyn Williams*; Susan Leveritt; Tim Jones, Minuting Secretary; Ian Seifert; Irene Seifert; Andi & Rory Ryan, Percy Hawkins, Tony Russell, Pam Chouls, Ray Brown, Maureen Conrad, Christine Milsted, Frank Lynes, Pam Wilson, Terry Richards, Terry Savage, Kathie Oakley, William & Gillian Whitman, Jane Pratt, Lesley Pearce, Diane Gee, John Long, Margaret Sims, Lesley Knox, Bridget Carr, Fred Meynen, Geoffrey West

*Denotes Director

In Attendance: Cllr Tim Hall, Jonathan Lees, (Epsom and Ewell Food Bank). Total Attending 35

AGENDA

1. Introductions of Committee Members and Councillors

2. Apologies: Cllr Keira Vyvyan-Robinson, Paula Sabine*, Fran Smith*.

2. Matters Arising from the October LRA meeting:

i] Application by Prezzo, Church Street, for chairs & tables on the pavement

Following a letter from Fran Smith, Prezzo have submitted a modified application increasing the available width for pedestrians from 1.8m to 2.0m, which doesn't seem much of a difference. Several members expressed doubt that Prezzo will keep to the revised space.

ii] Condition of the road from Randalls Road to the Recycling Centre

The poor condition, as well as the narrowness, of the road to the Recycling centre caused concern, and it was unclear previously who was responsible for maintaining it. Cllr Tim Hall provided an update that this part of the problem had been resolved, and that the road was the responsibility of Mole Valley Council. The decision that now needs to be made is whether to repair the worst parts of it, or a full resurface, which Cllr Hall preferred.

3. Chairman's Report (report online)

The first five items discussed are as listed in the Chairman's report:

i] The Health Day organised by Hilary Porter on 2nd November in the Leatherhead institute was a success, and hopefully all those who attended will have more knowledge about taking control of their own health.

ii] So far there is no decision from the Supreme Court about Leach Grove's status as a Village Green.

iii] The fracking ban is good news for those in south Mole Valley.

iv] There will be a litter pick in North Leatherhead on Saturday 16th November, at 2 pm for 1 hour, with tools provided. Meet at the Bridge building at the Kingston Road Recreation Ground.

v] The Surrey Hills, which are currently designated an "Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty" [AONB], may have extended powers and purposes, and be renamed a "National Landscape".

vi] Transform Leatherhead

The remainder of the Chariman's presentation was focused on the latest activities and potential consequences of Transform Leatherhead.

a] On a show of hands, 10 attendees at this LRA meeting had been to visit one of Transform Leatherhead's "conversations". The Chairman was shocked that of those 10 who attended, 4 of them did not see Transform Leatherhead's proposals for revisions to Leatherhead's road network.

b] It seems that Transform Leatherhead do not have any funding for any of their plans, (only being funded to do surveys and pay consultants), and so, to achieve any of them, they need to generate funds from elsewhere, such as from the building and selling of flats in the Red House Grounds. They are planning:

- to reverse the direction of the traffic in a large part the Leatherhead gyratory system
- to build a new road across the park, adjacent to and parallel with the railway line
- to build 450 flats over what will be left of Bull Hill & the Park in the centre of Leatherhead

c] Transform Leatherhead propose to remove all parking from Leatherhead High Street, based on comments from a public consultation they conducted to which just less than 300 anonymous responses were received. This is in direct opposition to the request for the extension of parking in the High Street from a petition signed by 1200 local residents and 100 local businesses.

d] The original plans to improve the Leatherhead "shopping experience" were put forward in 2015/16 and were based on attracting larger high street names to Leatherhead. Since then, retailing has had its own problems, and, as a consequence, this will not now be possible.

e] Transform Leatherhead plan to re-configure the entrance to the Swan Centre, by demolishing the current Book Potato shop and enlarging the Boots Opticians premises.

f] Now the focus is on "smaller units for smaller or start-up retailers", chiefly by reducing the depth of many existing shops from Book Potato to Next.

g] Transform Leatherhead's plans also have a multi-screen cinema, in the space o Boots the Opticians. Exactly how a multiscreen cinema could be squeezed into that space is an interesting question.

h] Also shown on the artist's impressions, is a "medium" quality hotel between the multi-storey car park and Leret Way, which seems to be another idea that would be a technical challenge, again due to the existing space being far too small.

i] There is also further housing proposed to be built on top of the current Swan Centre, covering Sainsbury's and the current Fairfield Centre.

j] Finally, it is considered feasible to add extra floors of parking to the existing Swan centre carpark, and to top these off with Leatherhead's own high-level vineyard.

A member, Bridget Carr, asked what was happening to Leatherhead's Post Office now that Martin's, which contained the old Post Office, has closed.

Tony Russell said that the owner of Bookham's Post Office would be dividing the Martin's shop into two stores, and would be opening a new Leatherhead Post Office in one of the two new stores. (*note: It re-opened on 6 Nov*)

4. Forward Planning Group Report – Martyn Williams (report online)

a] Publication of the Local Plan Consultation Document HAS BEEN delayed again, with the probable consultation period now starting in early February 2020.

b] Transform Leatherhead's website is at www.transformleatherhead.com

c] Mole Valley District Council have asked residents which alternative they preferred if the Council's income was not sufficient to cover their expenditure. Three alternatives were suggested:

i] Cut costs - by reducing discretionary spending on things like community grants, or antisocial behaviour grants.

li] Raise income – by increasing fees for car parking etc

lii] Increasing the Council's share of the Council Tax by the maximum allowed this year, which is 2%, of the council tax bill.

A Show of hands showed a lack of enthusiasm for either of the first two choices, and a large majority in favour of increasing the council tax.

d] A member, Geoffrey West, asked which area the Forward Planning Group considered – was it all of Mole Valley, or only Leatherhead? His enquiry was related to whether Leatherhead was getting unfair treatment in respect of being asked to supply more new housing than other areas in MV, or was Dorking for example having the same requirements?

The resulting discussion confirmed the FPG concentrated mainly on Leatherhead, but checked with other areas of MV in regards to policies for the whole district.

Aspects of the North v South parts of Mole Valley were discussed, and with reference to the practical aspects, particularly the geographical location of the Leatherhead / Bookham / Fetcham / Ashted conurbation being close to M25 J9, and it being easier to fit new housing into an existing area.

The history of the LRA suggestion of creating a new settlement or town in the south of Mole Valley was mentioned. Originally it was decided by MVDC that a new settlement was not needed because they could find sufficient new housing in existing towns. But then, on closer working, it was determined that they couldn't find enough housing, but MVDC claimed it was now too late to consider a new settlement.

5. Planning Report – Fran Smith (report online)

No extra comments were made about the report

A member, Bridget Carr, asked what could be done to object to the large development of 450 flats on Bull Hill / Red House grounds.

Cllr Tim Hall explained that the way to resist this proposal was via the Local Plan Consultation. No detail had been available publicly until this meeting about the number of flats, and the 450 number had been heard for the first time today. Leatherhead has been viewed as a prime target for extra housing.

The time to fight back is now, and the local plan is the opportunity.

6. AOB: nothing to report.

7. Date of Next Meeting Monday 6th January 2020 7.30 pm

8. Speaker Jonathan Lees was welcomed to talk about "Epsom & Ewell Foodbank". The Epsom & Ewell foodbank is one of several operated by The Trussell Trust, and is based in Ewell.

It operates in 5 towns, one day a week in each location:

Tadworth – Tuesday
Ewell – Wednesday
Banstead – Thursday
Epsom – Friday
Leatherhead – Saturday

More details about the locations and times can be found at

<https://www.trusselltrust.org/get-help/find-a-foodbank/epsomewell/>

Mr Lees explained how food was just one of the services their Foodbank provided, and their aim was for each customer to receive support and any help they needed that might have contributed to them needing to visit the Foodbank, with the aim that they visited the Foodbank fewer than 4 times.

To do that, the Foodbank also helps with benefits application advice, energy cost advice, housing, furniture, and several other areas.

Mr Lees explained that almost all of the people visiting the Foodbank were at their wits end, and there were few, if any, free-loaders who didn't desperately need the help. Most were embarrassed about having to visit the Foodbank, and some even went to the Foodbank in a different town to avoid being seen in their own area.

As well as needing donations of food, furniture is also welcome.

The Epsom & Ewell Foodbank can be contacted on 0208 786 8221, or by email at foodbank@generation.org.uk

The meeting ended at 9.30 pm.