

Chairman's Address for the meeting on 2 August 2021

I would like to welcome you all to this, our first proper Open Meeting in 18 months. I am not counting our clinically correct AGM last October!

I have had apologies from Tony and Pauline Russell, Pam and John Wilson, Fran Smith and Hubert Carr and Frank Lines

One of the most important tasks we have ahead of us this year is to build up our Committee, both Officers and Directors. It will not have escaped your eagle eyes that many of us are into our eighties, or very nearly, and, as you already know, some have sadly died. The loss of both Cheryl Allen and Susan Leveritt has hit us very hard as both were particularly energetic and performed a number of important roles for the LRA. So what we need is volunteers to fill vacant roles

I will start with the Environmental one. This is not just a question of being environmentally aware, but also of being interested in the local organizations that promote this aspect of our lives, like the Flood Forum, Norbury Park and Surrey Hills. We need an officer who will liaise with these groups and who will involve the LRA in all aspects of life in Surrey, which could become particularly relevant as the new Local Plan comes into effect.

Another area where help is needed is the social one. We would like to be able to look forward to our usual social events next year, including a small party in January, a Race Night in April, an Open Gardens in July and to provide assistance to the possible Duck Race whenever it is held. October could see a musical evening following on from our meeting and so on. But it needs people to step up and volunteer to do these jobs

My role as Chairman seems to have accumulated numerous additions which make it very difficult to perform satisfactorily. It would be a great help if we had a Minuting Secretary who could record these meetings, also we need a person to enter reports and announcements on to our Website and we need someone to draft and release the monthly Bulletins that we now produce instead of Newsletters. What would be particularly good would be for someone to come along with a couple of friends and try to fill these gaps as a group.

Lastly, I pose the question as to whether a different Chairman would have a new vision for the L.R.A. I am getting on a bit now and would love to see a younger person take over the position. So if any of the roles I have mentioned appeal to you, please do contact me and we can discuss how you can lend a hand.

I will now pass the microphone on to Mr. Martyn Williams who will deliver a combination of the local Planning Report on behalf of Mrs. Fran Smith, unavoidably absent, and also of the Forward Planning Report, which he normally does. Both are viewable here on our website.

I will now introduce our Speaker for the evening, Mrs. Jenny Moore and her companion, Ruth Shepherd. Jenny has always had her eye on those who find the demands of modern life hard to deal with and her answer to this has been to open the "shop" Beatitude and to play a part in the launch of The Hub in N. Leatherhead. Beatitude doesn't restrict itself to children's clothes and unbroken toys, it has a social function as well with tables and chairs inviting cosy chats plus space for

children to play and, possibly, to try out the toys! The expansion of the Hub presents many worthwhile opportunities for the whole town and I look forward to visiting the completed building.

After thanking both Jenny and Ruth for their interesting talk, I brought up some extra pieces of news that could be useful to everyone. Firstly, a sort of warning, Surrey Highways is planning to repair the parapet on the pedestrian bridge over the M25 near the Knoll Roundabout from 9th to the 31st August. The motorway will be closed between junction 8 and 9 and traffic will be directed to use the A 24, the A25 and the A217. I was not told, but it would seem likely that this will be an overnight closure.

Another big event that you will want to know about and plan for is Heritage Week, this year from 10th to 19th September. The theme is "Edible England" and many of the activities have sought to really echo this title. In the Institute here in Leatherhead, there are two demonstrations of "The Art of Fine Chocolate making," and Mr. Bill Whitman, formerly of the Leatherhead Food Research Association, will be giving a talk called "Chips with Everything." "Dining with History" in Dorking explains how eating habits and manners have changed, while the Dorking Brewery is offering guided visits around their premises. To complete the offering there is also a Zoom meeting (such as we have all got to like), called "Sweet Tooth, an Edible History of Art." I have not added the dates and venues of these events or this little warm up would become too confusing. But "Heritage Days in Mole Valley" brings up a clear, well ordered website.

On a more mundane level, you will have heard of the Boundary Review currently being conducted by the Government. This relates to parliamentary boundaries and the current proposal is to add Ashted and Leatherhead to Epsom and Ewell. I presume that Mr. Chris Grayling would be standing for the seat.

Our next meeting will be this year's AGM and will follow the same pattern as that for 2020 and will be held here on 4th October. If anyone here would like to be proposed for membership of the Board or of the Committee do let me know. There will be no meeting in September. Finally, could I ask you to renew your membership if it is due and also to let us know any new or changed email addresses. I am sure there will be a lot to talk about in October, quite apart from AGM business, as the new and final draft Local Plan should have just been released.