



Bulletin for the end of January 2022

Dear Members,

Clearly Covid restrictions are gradually being eased and the quality of our lives will surely be improved if we can see and talk to each other directly. At the L.R.A. we have managed to have some very carefully arranged meetings in person, albeit with less attendees. Hopefully attendance levels will now be able to revert to more normal levels.

At a meeting on 20th January, between Mole Valley District Council (MVDC) and the Chairmen of the local Residents' Associations (Teams of course), some interesting information was divulged:

- Our long-awaited **Local Plan** will be published prior to being presented to Cabinet and Council on 3rd February. It will then be submitted to the Secretary of State on 14th February, who will appoint a Planning Inspector to carry out a formal public examination in June. All being well, the finished document will be shown to the public in the Autumn and then adopted by MVDC in December.

-Regarding **changes in Leatherhead Town centre**, it is, as usual, a question of "wait and see." A legal agreement regarding Claire and James House was due to be signed on 20th January so that a Planning Application could be submitted by June. March is the closing date for submission(s) for the Swan Centre and Bull Hill developments. We were also informed that some interest had been shown in the former premises of Santander and Barclays Banks. Emma Day, the Transform Leatherhead lead officer, will be outside the Employment Hub at the entrance to the Swan Centre to answer questions on the Town Centre on Thursday 27th January from 11.00-14.00 and on Saturday 5th February from 10.00-13.00.

-Lucy O'Connell of MVDC Democratic Engagement Team gave us an update on the **Boundary Commission's** consultation into the election of local Councillors. She reported that there had been a really good response, so good and numerous that the Council was unable to detect any pattern and so has handed the results on to the Commission for them to study. For the time being at least, we shall remain on a 3 year cycle and in 2023 all councillors will be elected.

-Meanwhile, it has come to light, via the BBC, that **the River Mole** is one of the worst polluted rivers in the UK and unhealthy to swim in. During the program, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-60040162>, it was claimed that "...the sewage treatment works at Dorking run by Thames Water was responsible for the highest number of unpermitted spills (in the country!). Also, untreated sewage was discharged into the River

Mole on 223 days over the last four years.” Dorking Climate Emergency (who gave us a talk last November on Climate Change) are hosting a meeting in Old Pixham School, Dorking, RH4 1PJ, (just 200 metres from the Thames Water sewage treatment works) on Friday Feb. 11th: 7.30 pm for 8. Contact needs to be made to book a seat, or just turn up on the night, contact@dorking-climate-emergency.net There will be a short talk by an expert on rivers from the University of Reading, a short documentary, then discussion time. There will be a Licensed bar. Come prepared with thoughts about (sensible) action! Another meeting or, rather, Conference, connected directly with our rivers is being organised by “The Rivers Trust” on 15-16 March. If you wish to attend, you are asked to write to Rebecca at <events@theriverstrust.org>

The meeting also heard from the Police about their response to residents’ multiple complaints regarding **motor cycle noise and anti-social driving on the A24**. Sadly, the Police officer present, Sergeant Dan Henderson, had to admit that the lack of positive action was basically due to a lack of money. However, a report is shortly to be sent to Rykkas Café where many motor cyclists gather.

The group of local MVDC Councillors known as “**The Local Committee**” will, in future be run by two Surrey County Council Officers: Rowena Zelle and Jess Lee. They will use the Internet as a means of communication and titles like “Make it happen,” and “Your Fund Surrey” will be the named subject of their emails. It is aimed at sending problems straight to SCC, rather than await the rather distantly spaced Pippbrook meetings. There were a lot of attendees at the session on 13th January and the next one will be on 7th February at 3 pm.

CCTV: It was reported that most of the equipment in Mole Valley (some 40 cameras) is out of date and in need of costly renewal. Upgrading is essential if they are to be of any use, but budgets are tight.

Joint Waste Service: the dust-cart drivers have recently received a wage increase which is helping alleviate the driver shortage enormously. There is a proposal that the Garden Waste Collection service will continue on a monthly basis until April and meanwhile direct debit payments are suspended.*

Meanwhile, do not forget our LRA meeting on 7th February at 7.30 in the Methodist Church Hall. We have a very important speaker, Jacqueline Totterdell, Chief Executive Officer of the Trust that runs our three local hospitals, St. George’s, Epsom and St. Helier. It is hoped she will bring us up to date with the progress and plans for the new hospital in Sutton and I am sure she will accept questions.

With best wishes,

Caroline Brown (Chairman)

* "At the time of publication by email, the author of the Bulletin had understood that this was about to happen and not that it was, in fact, just a proposal."