



Minutes of Meeting for the Leatherhead Residents Association

Held on Monday 4th April 2022 at 7.30pm in the Leatherhead Methodist Church,

Church Road, Leatherhead, Surrey, KT22

Present: Caroline Brown, Martyn Williams, Ray Brown, Paula Sabine, Tracey Rowley, Hilary Porter, Percy Hawkins, Geoffrey West, David Woodhead, Helen Tribe, Diana Carr, Jane Pratt, Andi Ryan, Maureen Conrad, Margaret Sims, Julia Jarrett, Paul Sutherland Waite.

In attendance: Speaker Graham Hanson.

1. Apologies received from: Fran Smith, Louise Herrity, Ian Seifert and Irene Seifert.

2. Chairman's Report: (Full report on line) The Chairman welcomed all attendees and was pleased to provide the following report:

1. The Ward Boundary Review has proposed an increase in the size of South Leatherhead, believed to be based on the aim to even out the number of voters and hence the number of councillors for each of the wards. Each of our two Leatherhead wards should eventually have 3 councillors , but the total number in Mole Valley will remain at 39.

2. The Chairman of Fetcham Residents' Association, Tim Waller, who is on the League of Friends for our Leatherhead Community Hospital recently had a Zoom meeting with James Blythe the new CEO at Epsom and Dr Hilary Floyd of the Molebridge Practice. Leatherhead is considered an important site for Epsom and St. Helier Trust because of the number and variety of therapy and diagnostic services it provides on an outpatient basis, thereby creating more space for acute services on the Epsom site. The Managers at Leatherhead are hoping to bring it out of NHS England and to put it under the umbrella of Epsom Hospital. Another change being mooted is that of de-merging the Molebridge Practice from reliance on Epsom Hospital funding and instead to operate jointly with Eastwick Medical Practice.

3. Members may wish to know how they can give some help to the citizens of Ukraine . On Saturday 9th April, at roughly 1 pm, a van is due to come to the Catholic Church Car Park in Garlands Road to collect items for the driver to take on to Ukraine. This is being organised by a Ukranian priest at St. Erconwald Church in Walton on Thames who will remain a point of contact after this date. Items being sought include-

-all in date medicines and medical supplies; Re-hydration sachets for babies and adults; Over the counter medicine/herbal remedies to help with sleep and anxiety; Water purification tablets; Dettol/disinfectant, inc. wipes; Cold remedies, allergy, hay fever pills etc.

NEW thermal wear; Sleeping bags; Sleeping camping mats; Thermos flasks; Torches and Batteries; Heat patches (e.g. "Hot hands").

Dry and tinned food/non-perishable food, inc. snacks and gluten free food; Baby formula (especially new born 0-3 months) Formula milk; Infant and toddler food

Power banks (please provide fully charged if possible and labelled "charged"; Tape (to fix up shattered windows and for packaging our goods); Adaptors for EU sockets; Washing powder/gel for clothes .

Items NOT wanted include used sheets, towels, general clothing, shoes, perishable food and cuddly toys (for hygiene reasons).

4. The Leatherhead Community Hub had a very successful Opening Day a couple of weeks ago. They had lots of guests and superb weather. On 19th April their Advice Cafe will be opening and, as is understood, on a rota basis there will be people there ready to offer advice on a wide range of subjects, often financial.

They are asking for people to become "Friends of the Hub" and commit to regular donations to help with the upkeep and running of the site. They would like to hear opinions on the possibility of a new care home being built on the former school site next to the hub. Also on offer is space in front of the home for a small "Community Building." But this would have to be run and financed completely separately.

5. To repeat an item in the March Bulletin: The Projects Officer at Joint Waste Solutions has come up with a scheme (WRAP) to help people to save food and money. He has produced a (free) kit for people to try out, but he does want them to share the scheme with others and to also answer some questions, probably online.

3. Guest Speaker: The Chairman then introduced guest speaker, Graham Hanson.

She commented that Graham is eminently knowledgeable about household water supplies in Surrey, acting as the go-between for customers and the SES Water Company for many years. She hoped all would find his talk informative, following which there would be time for questions.

Graham Hanson formally introduced himself as being the immediate past-Chairman of the SES Water Customer Scrutiny Panel (CSP), a position he had held for a number of years until the end of 2021. The CSP panel are an independent group, who advise, scrutinise and challenge the Company on the development and implementation of their plans for meeting their customers' priorities. And despite being independent of the Company, the CSP still forms part of the governance structure with links to the Board, they hold management to account at quarterly meetings and they formally report as part of SES Annual Report & Accounts.

Graham stressed that SES provide water only; it is another company, Thames Water, that deal with waste water. SES provide drinking grade water to 730,000 customers, who consume on average 143 litres per person per day, the highest consumption in the country! Of this supply, 85% originates from natural underground resources from under the North Downs, the remaining 15% is sourced from the river Eden and stored in Bough Beech reservoir near Edenbridge. It is then delivered via 8 water treatment works through 24 Pumping Stations and 3,500km of pipes. They are the only UK water company required to soften their water prior to household supply. Their entire SES workforce is little over 300 employees.

The company has 8 key focus points of interest, defined as: Customer Service; Leakage; Mains bursts; Water quality; Household usage; Drought risks and planning; Vulnerability schemes; and Environment. Against such criteria, SES Water rank well against all other such companies in the UK. Of the 27 operating water companies, SES are 1st overall in supplying to water standards and 2nd in reliability of supply and, by all measures given by customer performance monitoring research criteria, remain in the top 25% of companies throughout the UK.

Such performance and discussion with regulator OFWAT has resulted in agreed funding for SES to complete the final phase of their 15-year resilience programme and to enhance further their expenditure on leakage reduction and mains replacement, although they are still tasked with achieving a reduction in household water use, ensuring greater customer satisfaction and in their complaints handling programmes.

By comparison Thames Water has one of the worst records in the UK. Currently Thames are officially recorded as the custodians of the most polluted UK river (the river Mole – 223 ‘illegal’ pollution releases in the past 4 years alone) and the worst sewage treatment site in the country, which sadly for us is located at Pixham Lane in Dorking !

Graham Hanson then fielded questions from the floor, as follows:-

Question 1: What is happening with the Pixham Lane, Dorking facilities? Answer: it is a Government level matter, although additional pressure from Local Action Groups is key.

Question 2: What is conducted at the Elmer Works on Hawks Hill? Answer: it is a treatment works, in the final processes prior to being drinking water quality.

Question 3: How is sewage water treated? Answer: Sewage treatment is not within SES Water scope, but for those companies that have this responsibility it is initially a series of filtration and chemical processes, followed by a number of purification exercises if it is to meet drinking water standards. OFWAT are in turn attempting to increase capacity throughout the UK.

Question 4: Is it illogical to mix storm water and foul water in the way that we do? Answer: absolutely, and in these days of increasing rainfall and flash floods, that is the very reason why OFWAT are in turn attempting to increase capacity.

Question 5: If the SES workforce truly around 300 employees (or do sub-contractors increase this number significantly)? Answer: yes, 300 is an accurate figure. There are little or no subcontractors

operating for SES, although these numbers do not include 3rd party companies, such as those with county authority to dig up roads following a burst main incident, for example.

Question 6: Is there Local Authority consultation with SES regarding new homes? Answer: yes, and indeed water companies include such predictions within their own future water supply calculations.

Question 7: How is the 143 litres per person figure calculated? Answer: this is simply on the number of households / occupants divided by overall usage, although it is additionally worth mentioning that there is split usage data available too, with two different SES units, for SES business water and SES domestic water. With nearly 2/3rds of customers now being metered, it becomes increasingly easier to define.

Question 8: How are potential water restrictions towards customers handled? Answer: firstly, it is in general foreseen as an unlikely event for SES Water, simply because the great majority of supply is from natural resources located under the North Downs. But regardless, the SES website provides status constantly, so the information is available to the public at all times. That said, however, it was acknowledged that one of the few SES improvements demanded by OFWAT related communications with customers.

This completed the Speaker session and a vote of thanks was given to Graham Hanson by the Chairman.

4. AOB / Matters arising : Two items were raised, as follows:-

1. Hilary Porter gave details on a meeting set for Saturday 9th April in the Leatherhead Institute between the hours of 10.30am and 3.30pm. The aim is to provide advice to local residents on how make money savings and to address and cope with increasing domestic bills. It was being attended by MVDC / Local Councillors / The Chamber of Commerce / local Service companies, among others and a number of pre-set features included subjects like 'life after Banks'; 'Internet literacy'; 'help for the visually impaired'; etc.

2. Julia Jarrett provided details on the litter pick set for Sunday 10th April, between the hours of 10am to midday, meeting up in the car park on Randalls Road near Leatherhead railway station. As many as possible were encouraged to attend and were asked to deposit filled sacks back by the car park ticket machine. Arrangements were in place for local authority refuse personnel to collect. Julia confirmed that personal litter pick packs were to be made available at the outset to those who attended.

Finally, the Chairman informed the meeting that there would be NO LRA meeting in May, the next was set for the month of June, details to follow.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.