



**Minutes of Annual General Meeting (AGM) for the Leatherhead Residents' Association (LRA)**

**on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2022 at 7.30pm at the Methodist Church, Church Road, Leatherhead**

**Present:** Caroline Brown, Martyn Williams, Ray Brown, Louise Herrity, Geoffrey West, Cllr Simon Moss, Cllr James Chambers, Cllr Tim Hall, Paul Sutherland-Waite, Simon Ritchie, Percy Hawkins, Paula Sabine, Nigel Sabine, Gill Whitman, Bill Whitman, Jill Rose, John Wilson, Pam Wilson, Julia Jarrett, Helen Tribe, Carol Webster, Bridget Carr, Terry Richards, Cllr. Joanna Slater, David Woodhead, James Chambers (Cllr in Bookham), Alison Houslander, Pat Harris, Fran Smith, Vicky Wallace, Cllr. Keira Vyvyan-Robinson, Steven Phillips.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to this meeting of the LRA, which is the AGM for the LRA's financial year January-December 2021. She proceeded with the meeting agenda as follows-

- 1. Apologies for absence:** received from Irene Seifert, Ian Seifert, Mary Fletcher, Hilary Porter.
- 2. Approval of last AGM Minutes (held 4/10/21):** the Chairman asked if there were any comments on the minutes of the last AGM. There being none, she asked for a show of hands as to whether they were approved in accordance with Resolution 1. There was unanimous approval (including the one proxy received).
- 3. Matters arising:** the Chairman noted that despite the request for new volunteers to take the place of those directors/officers seeking to retire, no-one had come forward. She said she would comment on this in more detail later in the meeting.

The Chairman also noted that all the points that had been made about the draft Local Plan had been incorporated into a Representation which had been submitted in November 2021.

- 4. Re-election of Caroline Brown:** MW notified the meeting that CB falls for re-election at this meeting and being eligible puts herself forward for re-election. He asked for a show of hands as to whether her re-election was approved by members in accordance with Resolution 2. There was unanimous approval (including the one proxy received).

**5. Chairman's Report: (full report on line)**

The two biggest events in 2021 were progress of the "Transform Leatherhead" project and the formulation towards eventual adoption of a new "Local Plan." These have continued into 2022.

In respect of "Transform Leatherhead", 2021 saw much background work done by the Council in seeking development partners for the two major projects (the development of Bull Hill / the remodelling of The

Swan Centre and the redevelopment of Claire & James House / the creation of the Riverside Park). Both seem to have been successful in as much as partners have been identified and contract negotiations are in hand.

The draft of the new Local Plan was agreed by the Council at the turn of the year and submitted to the Secretary of State in early this year. It is now being scrutinised by a Planning Inspector. A Director of the LRA appeared at a hearing into the Visual/Spatial Strategy policies on the 30<sup>th</sup> September and will appear at a hearing into Site Allocations on the 26<sup>th</sup> October. It will be several more months before we know the outcome of the Inspector's findings.

At a more local level, the Community Hub on the Kingston Road spent much of 2021 formulating its plans for the conversion of the old school buildings into a Community Centre and this year the work has been completed. The Chairman visited it and found it a credit to those who put in all the work to make it happen. 2021 also saw the news that the URC Church on the Epsom Road would come to market and this was eventually bought by a developer of assisted senior living communities. Finally there is a new magazine about to be pushed through all our letter boxes later this month. It takes the place of the "Look Local" magazine.

For some time the Chairman has been receiving adverse comments on the general appearance of the Town and asked members for their ideas as to what improvements could be made. A long list resulted. Following the announcement of the "Neighbourhood Fund" the most popular improvement, namely the cleaning up of the High Street plus the replacement of the existing planters with a lesser number of more elegant ones, was submitted for consideration. The proposal has been accepted although ongoing maintenance will need to be dealt with by volunteers. The repair of the high-level clock in the High Street, another idea suggested – with a donation – is now under way.

On the subject of improving the appearance of the Town, the LRA has continued with its "Litter-Picks." The last one took place on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> October. The weather was perfect and it was a very satisfactory Pick with about 25 large bags being filled.

Our Chairman then offered a few words about a subject that has been geo-political in cause, but local in effect, namely the war in Ukraine. The plight of refugees from the Russian invasion has led to much assistance being offered nationally and locally. Money has been donated and in that regard, the LRA ran a stall in the Swan Centre in early June which raised around £200. A number of refugees have been offered local accommodation and jobs.

Finally, the Chairman's report finished with two comments: if you know of anyone who would like to join the Association, please do let one of us know as you go out. Secondly, the Chairman again repeated that she is still intending to retire next year and to hand over to a younger person. Once the Planning Inspector has reported her findings, it is thought that much of the really time consuming work will be over and the LRA can revert to our more normal low-key activities. If volunteers are not forthcoming, the future of the LRA may be in question.

## **6. Treasurer's Report and Accounts for 2021: ( full report on line)**

MW reported that whilst the Report and Accounts for 2021 had been prepared by the Treasurer, Paula Sabine, he had been asked to speak to them at the meeting. In respect to the Profit & Loss, subs and project income was reduced and we did not have the benefit of the £2500 donation made by the Allen Memorial Fund. However smaller donations had improved and costs were reduced. As a result, there was

a modest surplus for the year of just under £150. As regards the Balance Sheet, members funds declined but only marginally from just over to just under £8000.

A question from the floor asked about the cost of the meeting room. The answer being that it was £35 per meeting, although this was expected to increase to £46 in the near future. MW pointed out that this was cheaper than our previous venue at the Institute.

## **7. A.O.B.**

The Chairman reported that on Friday, 14 Oct., there was the first ever meeting of all Leatherhead Councillors together with interested residents. This was something that had always been thought lacking. Possibly as a result of the LRA complaints about the condition of the High Street, Cllr Vyvyan Robinson confirmed that there is money available to pay for new and better planters together with appropriate plants. Just at the moment, there was no chance of jet-washing the pavements but they would be brush-cleaned. Unfortunately, replacement paviers are not on the shopping list yet, in spite of what the Chairman had been told. Options for new Planters, in the form of a series of detailed photographs, were available at the meeting, where all attendees were encouraged to give their views and comments.

There were some other news items but the Chairman said she would include them in the next Bulletin.

The Chairman repeated that she still intends to retire from her position as Chairman sometime next summer. There are definitely three, possibly four, people prepared to carry on. But the following tasks need some fresh eyes and brains: Looking at the Planning Applications each week (they are emailed out), a secretary to receive and send letters (not a Minuting Secretary), an Events Secretary to organise the occasional fun or Social Evening and, of course, a Chairman to attend other meetings and thus make sure Leatherhead is represented. Once the Local Plan is more or less sorted, the Chairman thought that 3 – 4 meetings each year would be sufficient. Needed and requested were volunteers who could meet to sort out the jobs. In Fetcham, it is understood that there are THREE chairmen who take it in turns to run the meetings. It would be such a shame to have to liquidate our Association completely, but that is what it might come to if volunteers do not step forward.

Martyn Williams then gave a short account of his attendance at the Hearing with the Planning Inspector on 30<sup>th</sup> September. Issues discussed included the timing of the Plan, which seems likely to not cover 15 years from adoption as is required; the justification for the up-grading of National Building Regulations in Mole Valley; how the strategic approaches to development in Leatherhead and Dorking were formulated; and the contradiction between what development may be permitted in the Dorking Conservation Area and national policy in this regard.

The Chairman informed the meeting that the next meeting would be in February 2023 with the date to be announced in due course.

## **8. Meeting Conclusion:**

The Chairman declared the formal part of the meeting concluded at approx. 20.10.

## **The Speaker**

The Chairman then introduced the speaker, Mr Simon Ritchie, who spoke on the evolution of the Ordnance Survey.

Simon gave the meeting a brief history of the Ordnance Survey, a huge key undertaking covering many centuries, only to be gradually superseded in recent decades by the onset of satellite navigation systems, positional tracking and the like.

The talk began with a large number of books and references including TV programmes, on the subject of the history and development of the Ordnance Survey, particularly related to maps and cartography and with our Chairman agreeing to provide a list of references, post-meeting.

The first equivalent to our UK Ordnance Survey mapping did not in fact originate in the UK. Instead it is traced back to 1672 when Louis XIV commissioned a map to be made of France. After time, southern England was then invited to link up and do a similar exercise, which proved to be of great interest to the whole population, with even George III witnessing the process along with vast crowds wherever Ordnance Survey work was taking place. The process involved the establishment of a precise 5-mile baseline on Hounslow Heath. From both ends of this, lines of sight were taken to Leith Hill and Banstead Church Tower and the angles of the triangle so formed used to calculate the distance of these high points from the baseline. Subsequent sightings from this first triangle then repeated the exercise until the whole country was covered. This methodology remained in use until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century when the development of satellite positioning superseded "Triangulation".

Simon commented that many of the "Triangulation Points" have now fallen into disrepair or are hidden in undergrowth and he provided a number of slides and photographs of local examples. However, local volunteer groups do attempt to maintain this history for future generations but there is no directive from national government level, which Simon acknowledged as being impractical in terms of the vast numbers of points (approx. 3000) that exist across the Country. Locally, Leith Hill remains one of the most easily visible parts of this history, with the point being a large bolt situated in the middle of the floor on the roof of the Tower.

Questions from the floor included comments regarding world wide navigational references taken by Captain James Cook around South Australia and New Zealand that are still used to this day, along with requests for the details and information contained within this presentation to be made available post-meeting.

Our Chairman gave a vote of thanks to Simon Ritchie on behalf of meeting. Great appreciation was shown in the usual manner.

N.B.The Timeshift programme about the Ordnance Survey on the BBC website is not available in full, but this page includes some clips from it that can be viewed: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b06b36q3>

The October Bulletin lists further sources of information on this subject.