



A Bulletin for the end of August 2023

Dear Members,

I hope that you have all had a relatively peaceful, normal August, totally unlike scorching June or chilly July! With one large and extremely worrying exception, this month seems to have been fairly quiet although with one disappointment.

This disappointment is the lack of any progress on the Banking Hub project. The reason is that because we have "The Nationwide" still open, we do not qualify for a "Hub." As is well known, the Nationwide is a small, friendly bank, albeit with limited banking hours. But, even in this digital age it is difficult to see how it can replace the combined work of NatWest, Barclays, Santander, Lloyds and HSBC. I understand talks are still going on, as we are not the only town with this problem.

There are a number of areas in our Town which suffer from parking problems, where a lack of decision making has led to something of a "free for all." I am thinking of "Homelands" which is a particularly narrow cul-de-sac, favoured as a free parking area by non-residents which then renders it impassable for large vehicles like refuse or delivery lorries. Another such area is the far end of Fortyfoot Road, where there are two schools and a Care Home. Some properly organised parking should be available here, so access is freely available to those requiring it.

I have no doubt that some of you are wondering when on earth the railway embankment on the Kingston Road will be completed. It is not a comfortable scene: narrow, very busy road over an equally busy railway line with very steep banks on each side. But Surrey Highways and Network Rail have now resolved certain problems and work on shoring up the bank on the S.W. side will resume over half-term.

But the biggest worry of all is the proposed large development of Green Belt land on Headley Road on the east side of the A243, the Leatherhead By-Pass. This is for up to 125 "Extra Care Apartments" and 54 new homes. A Planning Application for this development was submitted to the Planning Dept. around this time last year, but, because discussions between the Developer and the Planning Dept. were ongoing when the statutory time limit for a decision was reached, the Developers elected to go to Appeal in order to obtain a decision. Aside from development on Green Belt land, which could set a very dangerous precedent for other Green Belt land throughout Mole Valley District, there are many other aspects of this plan which make it undesirable. These include the increase in traffic trying to access the By-pass at this very difficult junction, the traffic congestion that will result from the proposed pedestrian crossing at the junction and the vehicular and pedestrian traffic that will use the ill-suited Headley Road (west) / Highlands Road / Church Road to

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access the Town centre. The first day of this Appeal will take place at Pippbrook on 29 September (at 9.30 a.m. I believe) and it is hoped that a large number of Leatherhead residents will attend to demonstrate their opposition to this proposal.

And, now back to smaller schemes: I hope most of you will have seen the Mural under Waterway Road bridge. I have received (surprised) comments suggesting how nice it is and how it forms part of a very pleasant walk along the River. I have been asked if we would like to have another one under the railway bridge near our station. I am not sure. The pavement is very narrow there and I have often thought that a little passage under the railway, parallel with the road but separated from it by the current brick sides, would be a more useful (though less attractive) addition to our town.

Finally, there is some money available (around £25,000 I believe) for some larger projects in our area under the UKSPE "Community Capacity Building and Infrastructure Support Grant Scheme, (CCBISG). Perhaps my idea of a passage under the railway line could be suggested. It would certainly require a lot more money than a mural. Opinions (or alternatives) please!

Meanwhile, I am sure we will all be looking forward to seeing and experiencing the refurbishment of our library, together with the re-purposing of the former Santander Bank.

We shall have our next Litter Pick on Sunday, 29 October, meeting in the bigger of the two car parks off Randalls Road (i.e. station side) and starting at 11 am and finishing at 3 pm.

Our next meeting, our AGM, will be on 16 October at 7.30 in the Leatherhead Methodist Church when Mr. Robert Edmondson (a former scientist at Brockham Park) will give a talk entitled "Local wild flowers and their photography."

With very best wishes,

Caroline (Brown)-Chairman