



A Bulletin for the end of September 2023

Dear Members,

Many things have happened recently, including a thunderstorm like no other from the point of view of noise volume and lightening frequency. But that has now passed and more ordinary, but large problems remain.

Headley Road east: The biggest item on the Agenda as far as our town is concerned, is the proposed development on Headley Road east on the far side of the A243. This area of the Green Belt is considered significant in preventing the merging of Headley, Ashted and Leatherhead. The proposed development is not just a small collection of houses, but a very large estate badly placed on the far side of an exceedingly busy road and with no local amenities like shops, surgeries or schools. Every time one of the residents needs one of these "facilities" he/she will have to get in a car or undertake a long walk down Headley Road west into Highlands Road to finish at the narrow, single file road just before the Church, a distance of just over a mile to get to our High Street. Returning is all up hill, sometimes at quite pronounced gradients. The LRA has joined the long list of objectors to this proposal, which includes a privately employed Counsel, and will be making a statement of objection at the Planning Inquiry which starts on 29 September in the Council Chamber at Pippbrook.

The Arts Alive Festival: Turning to lighter things, October is celebration of Arts Alive and because I know some people who take part, I looked up the full programme on Google. I was astonished at the sheer number and variety of events listed and one of them is very close: Leatherhead Art Club's Autumn Exhibition in the Old Chapel in St. John's school from 21st October to 29th October. I recommend sampling some of the offerings.

LCWIP: Some of the fit and energetic among you will be pleased to hear that the cycle routes and footpaths between Epsom, Leatherhead and Bookham which have been the subject of much discussion are still on the table. However, the following email from Piers Mason will, I fear, dampen expectations for a speedy resolve.

"None will start this year, or next I suspect. Stage 2, which District members are currently considering funding, is a feasibility stage. Through public engagement actual proposals will be determined and then they will subsequently need to be designed in detail before looking to the government for funding. I very much doubt anything beyond consultation will happen for several years."

Email via www.leatherheadresidents.org.uk/contact

Registered Office : Fewston, St. Nicholas Hill, Leatherhead, Surrey. KT22 8NE

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The (proposed) Banking Hub: Most readers will be aware of the sad fact that there are many difficulties in establishing a Banking Hub in Leatherhead, one of which is the existence of The Nationwide, i.e. a bank which still exists in our town.

The Leisure Centre: A new Contract has been signed to take over the management of both Centres, here in Leatherhead and in Dorking. It will be interesting to hear and experience their new ideas.

Railway Ticket Office: A number of residents needed to go to London on Saturday, but found the Ticket Office closed. One of the machines outside was not working and the other had quite a long queue while people “learned” how to use it. All wondered if this was the shape of things to come.

Another Mural: On a brighter note (!), it has been suggested that the LRA ask M.V. as the Administrators of the Government’s UKSPF CCBISGS* Grant Applications, to enable the painting of another mural, this time in the Red House Grounds, aka “The Park.” It is suggested that this artwork should go on to the side of the brick Tools Garage on Station Road. It is believed that the Artist will choose pictures and icons particular to Leatherhead.

Community Input on Draft Council Strategy for 2024 to 2028: Finally, I must bring to your attention the public consultation on the above. A big survey of the whole of Mole Valley is being carried out and can be accessed online using these headings: “Draft Council Strategy Mole Valley, 2024-2028” and then, with your answers: “Feedback Survey.” Understandably, they are particularly anxious to reach both new residents and those who have just turned 16. The survey runs from 25 September to 5 November 2023.

Litter Pick: Some people have asked me about this and Julia Jarrett and I have agreed on Sunday 29th October. We will meet in the Station Car Park (Randalls Road side) at 2 pm and will await the bags of rubbish until 4 pm.

And now a piece of really good news: two people have contacted me about helping with various aspects of running our Association. This will make us more efficient because our “brief” is wide and challenging. They do not ask to be Directors, nor Chairman (!), but to do the really essential which is keeping ears to the ground and coming up with accurate reports.

Finally, don’t forget our AGM on 16th October at 7.30 in the Leatherhead Methodist Church, where, after the meeting, our Speaker Robert Edmondson will talk to us about “Local Wild Flowers and their photography.”

With best wishes to you all,

Caroline (Brown), Chairman

* UK Shared Prosperity Fund; Community Capacity Building and Infrastructure Support Grants