



Leatherhead  
Residents  
Association

## A Bulletin for the end of January 2023

Dear Members,

I hope that you have been able to keep both warm and healthy. The two generally go together and, apart from the current few days, we have been rather lucky as regards what could have been considered real winter weather.

**1. Draft Local Plan:** Perhaps the most important event over the past month is that of Mr. Gove deciding that the overly prescriptive housing targets set by Government are inappropriate and that local councils can have more discretion as to what they judge appropriate, bearing in mind local circumstances. In particular there should be no requirement to remove land from the Green Belt to meet housing targets. As a result, our Council has decided that it would like to remove nearly all the Green Belt sites currently included for housing development from the Draft Local Plan. They will, therefore, be asking the Inspector whether she is prepared to view these changes as “Major Modifications” to the existing draft and continue with her consideration of it in its newly amended form. Prior to confirming that she should proceed on that basis, however, there will be consultations on each site to be removed and if these indicate that there is a wish for it to be retained for housing purposes then it can be. However welcome this change may be, it only exacerbates the imbalance between what the District’s major population centres will be asked to provide in the way of new housing units. Because Leatherhead had only 1 (or 2 if the River Lane site is included) small Green Belt sites, its target has declined very little. By contrast, Ashted, Bookham and Dorking had many more Green Belt sites so their targets have declined more significantly. As a result, Leatherhead will be saddled with approaching 40% of all new units over the Plan period, whereas Ashted’s proportion is around 10%, Bookham’s around 5% and Dorking’s approaching 30%. The remaining approx. 15% will be located in the District’s smaller settlements.

**2. The Riverside Quarter Proposals:** This is part of the “Transform Leatherhead “ project and seeks to make the Riverfront at the bottom of Bridge Street a more important attraction within the Town. Its scope includes the River banks from Waterway Road to the Town Bridge and thence on to Vicarage Lane. We attended a preliminary meeting with the Council’s consultants on the 19th and I am pleased to note that there was a universal view that while improvements could be made, consultees wanted the area to remain as a somewhat wild natural habitat. A surprise addition to this walk will be, under Waterway Bridge, a Mural depicting aspects of river life. Email via [www.leatherheadresidents.org.uk/contact](http://www.leatherheadresidents.org.uk/contact) Registered Office : Fewston, St. Nicholas Hill, Leatherhead,

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**3. Roundabout:** Another piece of news which I know will be welcomed by those of you who complained about our messy roundabouts is the offer by the proprietor of "The Plough" to maintain four planters on that very visible and much used feature. Some steps have yet to be taken, like obtaining the agreement of Surrey Council, as it is their responsibility.

The other planters, the ones for the High Street, have got to wait until the fate of the (slippery) Lime trees outside the theatre etc. has been decided. Sadly, those who chose them did not realise they had this unattractive habit of dropping slimy sap on the pavement.

**4. Planning Applications:** St. Faiths, (in Cleeve Road), up till now a "Family Centre," has applied to also become a Doctors' Surgery. It is a modern building and even has a car park so the idea seems quite reasonable. The U.R.C. on the Epsom Road, has decided to request permission to alter their layout, mainly resulting in the two large buildings at the back becoming just one. I have not heard of any reaction from the residents of Linden Gardens, but it just might improve the view from their back gardens.

Another Planning Application, which I personally find hard to endorse, is for a Gaming Arcade in the Swan Centre. The applicant will also have to apply to the Licensing Committee.

An application has (at last) appeared for the former Building Supplies premises at the top of the High Street. It preserves the old-style frontage and has some distinctive flats on the upper floors. Meanwhile, the poor old Santander building sits forlornly at the bottom of the High Street with no scheme in sight to protect its 300-400 year interior.

**5.** It is to be hoped that one or even two of our vanishing **banks** will set up a small customer helphub in one of our community spaces to offer face to face contact to those that need it. Even those with computers would be grateful on occasions.

#### **6. Subscription renewals for 2023:**

An email has been sent out to all members whose membership is now due for renewal and a hard copy of the membership renewal form has been attached to the January 2023 bulletin that will be delivered to those who don't have email.

If you don't receive a reminder, your membership does not need renewing. As our bank now charges us for depositing each cheque, please pay by cash or on-line if at all possible.

Paula Sabine, our Hon Treasurer, will be at the 6 February meeting if you want to give any cash to her instead of leaving it at the LRA box at the Institute."

**7. Our next meeting will be on 6th February at 7.30 in the Leatherhead Methodist Church** when we shall discuss some of the above items. If YOU have anything you would like brought up, please

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email or write to me and I will try to follow it up.

Finally, I am very pleased to tell you that the Councillor chiefly responsible for pushing items 2, 3 and 5 above, **Keira Vyvyan-Robinson**, will be attending this meeting and will be happy to answer questions.

With all best wishes for a Happy New Year.

Caroline Brown

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