



Leatherhead
Residents
Association

Amended - Bulletin for the end of May 2023

Dear Members,

I want to start this email with thanks and praise for one of our Councillors who has gone way beyond the call of duty in trying to improve the look of our High Street. Hounded by the L.R.A. and, no doubt by others, Councillor Keira Vyvyan-Robinson has been pushing the Council for Planters and other improvements to our High Street. I even had an email saying that there were hopes for NEW planters and plants to be installed in time for the Coronation. On the Thursday evening before the Coronation this appeared improbable as the same old planters with the same old cigarette butts and crisp packets were still very much in evidence*. But, unbeknown to most of us, early on Wednesday morning, Keira had been at the Wholesale Nursery where she had bought, on behalf of MV, a large quantity of petunias etc. and was all prepared to plant them herself. However, at the last minute Council workmen came to the rescue and did the job on Friday, just in time for the start of the Coronation!

* I must exonerate the owners of some cafes and restaurants here – they have been doing their very best to keep their Planters looking pleasant and welcoming.

As I write this we are barely half way through May, but what a busy and active month it has been! Trying to get all the ordinary tasks done and fitting in some long Coronation TV sessions, if not an early morning trip to London! The Institute offered a particularly pleasant and comfortable view of the Coronation. There was a very large TV screen (with special permission to broadcast), extremely comfortable chairs, a variety of people to chat to, refreshments offered by the kind office staff, coffee, cake and finally a glass of champagne! Much more fun than staying at home! It was a complete contrast to the sad situation outside, where wind and rain were the order of the day. However, luckily the wide entrance to the Swan Centre allowed the musical and singing performances to continue, albeit with rather smaller audiences than would have been hoped for.

The second outstanding attraction was, of course, The Coronation Dog Show! I was amazed at the sheer number of categories and their entrants – but then I am not accustomed to Dog Shows! The refreshments in the church were delicious and well chosen – the jam and cream scones in particular. One cannot help admiring the extensive and time consuming organisation behind the event and hope that a satisfactory increase in funds was realised.

Email via www.leatherheadresidents.org.uk/contact

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Three days after the Coronation, I had a meeting with Dr. David **Slater**, a member of the Leatherhead Rotary Club (which, in this area, covers both Leatherhead and Fetcham), and a parishioner at St. Mary's Fetcham. As part of the Rotary Club's general aim is to help others wherever possible, David asked if he could become a member of the LRA with a view to Leatherhead Rotary collaborating with the LRA in matters of common interest, such as litter picking and other charitable events as they come along. I am sure you will remember the wonderful response to the desperate situation in Ukraine when many of the people there were facing winter without the usual warm clothes. A shop in the Swan Centre got filled to the ceiling with warm coats and blankets etc. The Rotary Club saw to their collection and delivery in that stricken country, no small effort.

Now, a new and very different opportunity has presented itself: St. Mary's Church in Fetcham has an extremely old and rare Royal coat of Arms, painted on an oak board measuring 2.06 m tall and 1.74 m wide. It is dated 1660, and so it was likely to have commemorated the coronation of King Charles II. It is in urgent need of restoration and the Coronation year of King Charles III seemed to the parishioners as an ideal moment to do this. St. Mary's is located just off the bottom of the Ridgeway and is open to the public during daylight hours. There is an interesting history attached to this panel and, at my request, Mr. Slater has asked another, more knowledgeable parishioner, to give us a talk about its history. This will be given during our August meeting, on Monday 21st.

Coming back down to earth and to the present day, I shall be attending a meeting of MV Council on 18 May and will have an opportunity to mention any particular problems we are having in Leatherhead. I intend to mention the serious potholes which have appeared in some roads, like St. John's Avenue, Kingston Road (where the blue hoarding is), the curve in Leret Way around Wesley House and Poplar Road. I am sure there are others. A further problem is Maintenance of Roundabouts. The very reason for their existence is traffic, and traffic is what makes their maintenance a big problem because of the difficulty of safe access. In particular, the LRA with Councillors and other concerned people have been trying to arrange for the maintenance of the Plough Roundabout. It is particularly visible and busy, so should, in theory, present an attractive, organised entrance to Leatherhead.

I am afraid I have no news regarding Mr. Gove's suggestion that the housing targets seem rather high throughout the country, nor regarding the possibility of retaining rather than using our Green Belt. Let's hope some (favourable) decisions are reached soon.

Meanwhile, don't forget the next LRA meeting is in just a few days' time, on Monday, May 22 at 7.30 pm in the Leatherhead Methodist Church. Our Speaker will be Mr. Richard Keel, manager of the Swan Centre. He will talk about his job, his hopes and expectations for the future. (The meeting after that will be on August 21st.)

I wish you all a warm and peaceful summer.

Caroline (Brown) Chairman.

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