



Leatherhead
Residents Association

Bulletin for December 2023

Dear Member(s),

I hope you are all approaching the “Big Day” with some anticipation: At a personal level, hoping that all your friends and family will have remembered you with either a card or a phone call and, at a humanitarian level, hoping that some solution can be found to the current events in the Middle East.

As regards local issues, unfortunately, although I have tried, I have not yet managed to obtain any further information regarding our Town’s “Transformation.” So, the development proposals for both the Red House Gardens (i.e. “The Park”) and the Swan Centre remain a closely guarded secret.

However, there is one piece of particularly good news: The Appeal against the non-determination of the Planning Application for a large care home and some 54 new homes on Green Belt land to the south of Headley Road (east) at its junction with the A24 By-pass has been refused. Despite the contribution that the Development would have made to the Town’s residential stock, the Inspector concluded that this was insufficient to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss of this prime Green Belt land. The LRA spoke against the grant of consent at the Inquiry.

The LRA also supported the idea of a much improved pavement along the by-pass from the M25 roundabout to the Knoll roundabout (A243) for the many children who use this route to go to Downsends, St. Peters and St. Andrews schools, all situated on the other side of that busy road. We suggested there should be substantial fencing all the way along and a slightly raised concrete path to deal with the water and mud problems that accumulate. This would make for a much safer and more practical footway.

The **Leatherhead Library** recently wrote to me with a list of services it provides, though of course, most of it originates with the written word! Wednesday mornings are, at the moment, given over to coffee and chat mornings with the occasional speaker. In addition to “standard” books, there are large print volumes, some books in Ukrainian, children’s DVDs, computer lessons, free wi-fi, printers, a document scanner and a photo-copier all for general use, plus items for sale, help with applying for free bus passes and provision for learning and research. In a similarly educational vein, **The Hub** in the Swan Centre is offering Computer lessons (for beginners), general money management advice and Job-seeking help. In connection with this last item, there is to be a “Leatherhead Jobs Fair” in January

Email via www.leatherheadresidents.org.uk/contact

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2024 between the hours of 10.00am and 12.00pm in the morning, but the organisers would like to know if you are interested.

You may already be aware that the designated “Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty” (AONB) in England and Wales are to be re-named “National Landscapes.” They will retain the same protections, but, personally, I find the new name much less evocative.

Our new Chief Constable (Tim de Meyer) has also been writing round to interested parties. He seems particularly concerned about crime against women and girls – perhaps not before time. He is offering to send out a regular email and to host some online engagement events. I have signed up for both and will keep you all up to date with any relevant news.

I am pleased to report that, in line with Surrey County Council’s ambitious tree strategy, MVDC will contribute to the target of planting 1.2 million trees in Surrey by 2030. This not only contributes to a greener future, but will also address the loss of trees caused by “Ash Dieback” in Surrey. Ash Dieback is a relentless, non-native fungus affecting tree structure which can lead to unpredictable structural failure such as branch loss. This has necessitated SCC undertaking significant tree removal/maintenance, especially where public safety is concerned.

Finally, do not forget our next meeting on **15th January 2024** at the Methodist Church as usual. There will be a quiz and the main subject for this will be “Leatherhead “. There will be prizes, albeit on a modest level!

Together with all my Directors, old and new, I send you my best wishes in this period of energetic activity and joy!

Caroline (Brown, Chairman)

18th December 2023