



Leatherhead  
Residents Association

## Bulletin for January 2024

Dear Members,

I do hope you were all equipped to deal with the recent sudden onset of cold weather. On the night of our Quiz, Monday 15th January 2024, our car was frozen solid on the inside and needed 15 minutes of determined defrosting before it was driveable.

As often seems to be the case, a major announcement was made just before Christmas when the Government finally put forward its new NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework). As was indicated when this was first mooted a year ago, it allows councils some latitude in how many houses they must provide for in new Local Plans and if meeting Government targets would involve building on Green Belt land. Hoping to take advantage of this was precisely why our Council paused the consideration of its Plan at that time. Unfortunately, as finally drafted, the new NPPF provides that councils who are well progressed through the Local Plan process cannot complete their plans using the new NPPF. They must adhere to the provisions of the old NPPF. Our Council, therefore, had to decide whether to reactivate the Inquiry into its current draft Plan, or, 1) to attempt to modify it by removing two contentious sites or, 2) to withdraw the Plan and redraft another. In the event the latter option was removed when Government prohibited withdrawal of the current Plan. It was also considered that withdrawing two major sites at such a late stage of the Plan's consideration would be so fundamental as to strike at the validity of the current Plan. Accordingly, at a meeting on Thursday 25th January 2024 our Council decided to proceed with the current draft by asking the Inspector to resume her consideration of it.

I am sure Gatwick Airport's desire for another runway will not have escaped you. A very large, wide-spread consultation on this is being mounted. However, Leatherhead is well north of Gatwick and it is believed that our plane noise mostly comes from high flying aircraft going to or coming from Heathrow. If this is confirmed this may be one issue that is not of significant concern to our Town.

The project to landscape the **Plough Roundabout**, which now has finance, permission and a proposed meeting date with the construction and maintenance company, has just been told that a new contract regarding planters, seating and notices is about to be signed by Surrey Council and so we must now hope that this does not delay the project beyond the time when the finance offer expires, meaning we would have to start all over again.

Email via [www.leatherheadresidents.org.uk/contact](http://www.leatherheadresidents.org.uk/contact)

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

The LRA is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England & Wales, No. 10248803

I am informed that finance has now been made available for the access improvements at our **Station** where, we understand, a new bridge and two lifts will bring access between the two platforms up to modern standards. The work is apparently to be complete by 2025.

We have a new **Police Commissioner, Timothy de Meyer**. We already have two extra police officers, one for North Mole Valley and one for the South, which, of course, includes Dorking. At a recent meeting, we were informed about a number of successful police initiatives which have resulted in a number of arrests. Surprisingly, we also heard about the efficacy of rubbish bins being adorned with stickers with large eyes painted on them! Apparently, this does deter casual burglars and shop lifters. The stickers are available at local Police Offices.

As you will have noticed, after much campaigning on our part to have the dilapidated **planters** in the High Street renewed, we do seem to have been given a somewhat over-generous supply of very large planters. When I questioned their size, I was informed that they are deep to ensure that the soil does not dry out in the summer months. Notwithstanding the logic of this explanation the overall reaction I have received from residents I have spoken to has been uniformly negative and clearly our Council has had the same response because it has now been announced that the numbers will be reduced and the positioning improved. The surplus planters will be relocated to other areas in the Town. Planting will take place at the end of February 2024, and it has been confirmed that our Council have a budget for the all-important maintenance. I have suggested that our Council might also consider staining the timber a pale green colour, to reduce the visual impact that the planters make and to tone with their contents.

Still connected to our desire for our environment to look pleasant and cared for, a new guest came on to the recent meeting between Residents' Associations and Mole Valley Council. This was **Ms. Emily Ayres** whose special interest is Community Gardens and other Environmental Projects. She felt that many of our social activities like Litter Picking, pond clearance, tree planting and even watering could be eligible for some money from the Shared Prosperity Fund. When I complained about the state of many of our verges near main roads, she asked for a list and promised to look into the situation. (So please let me know of any that you know about).

With apologies for this Bulletin being a bit late. I had wanted to include the result of the meeting about our Local Plan, para. 2 above. It is hoped that our next meeting will be in April or May. Some details need to be worked out first. But, meanwhile, please do continue to look around for a new Chairman as I would like a rest next year!

With all best wishes,

Caroline Brown

(Chairman of the Leatherhead Residents' Association)

**NOTICE FROM OUR TREASURER:**

“Please do not renew your membership for 2024 until you receive a reminder from the Treasurer. This reminder will either be an email or a hard copy of the membership renewal form attached to the January Bulletin. This will avoid memberships being renewed prematurely.”

Email via [www.leatherheadresidents.org.uk/contact](http://www.leatherheadresidents.org.uk/contact)

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

The LRA is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England & Wales, No. 10248803