



## Report following the AGM on 11 April 2016

### **Dear Fellow Merrow Residents**

It was a real pleasure to see so many of you at our Annual General Meeting on 11th April; thank you all for coming along. We counted over 140 attendees.

The official part of the meeting was quickly dispensed with and we went on to hear from our speaker for the meeting, Councillor Matt Furniss. Cllr Furniss has been a Borough Councillor for 9 years, is on the Planning Committee and has lead responsibility for infrastructure and the environment. He is very supportive of the residents of Merrow.

Following is a summary of his presentation: Guildford Borough Council (GBC) have no official say over the infrastructure in our area, however, strongly believes that a robust infrastructure must be put in place to support any new developments. GBC are heavily involved with stakeholders and are starting to get good traction and influence with the various groups.

The new **Guildford Borough Transport Strategy** was published only four hours before our meeting so we were the first public group to hear about it. It has been produced by independent professional transport planners, commissioned by GBC. The aim of the plan is to reduce hold ups and queues at the 36 identified hot spots around the borough. The majority of these are on the A3 and A31. The expectation is to achieve a normal traffic flow status that equates to the traffic loading we experience during school holidays!

Cllr Furniss stated that Guildford has

significant transport issues and has outgrown the current infrastructure. Businesses are starting to consider moving out of Guildford due to the challenges. Although we have excellent links to Gatwick, there is no Heathrow link. An overland link to Heathrow is planned.

To achieve all items in the transport plan, a large investment would be required. The realistic expectation is that we would receive funding for some of the proposals, mainly for **A3 improvements**. An amount is designated to the A3 for 'quick wins', which could include junction improvements at Tesco, Stoke and the 50mph sections. Plans might also include southbound on/off at Burpham and/or a 4-way junction slightly further north of Burpham.

From 2020 onwards, there should be Highways England funding, which could be used for A3 lane widening (3 lanes all the way) or to tunnel the whole road. The tunnel option is the one preferred by GBC. The M25 junctions 10 to 16 will be upgraded by Highways England.

**Rail Infrastructure:** Funding has been earmarked to upgrade the mainline station; increase in train numbers; new railway station at the Merrow Depot and a second at Park Barn, outside the hospital.

GBC has had funds granted to assess the **gyratory system** and come up with plans to improve it and plan to increase the number of car parks, encouraging us to park in the nearest car park. The number of Park & Rides will be increased.

## **Slyfield Area Regeneration Project (SARP):**

there are plans to move the sewage works and council depot and to build new houses on the site.

**Emergency Planning:** GBC have published a surface water management plan and are working with the Environment Agency (EA) to mitigate river flooding. The EA have purchased quick deployment barriers for Guildford.

**Recycling and Waste:** 20% of all our recycling is garden waste; almost 60% of general recycling levels but there is a need to reduce the amount going into general waste, which goes to landfill.

**Guildford Crematorium:** GBC are looking at replacing the crematorium with a new facility.

**Burial Provision:** There is less than three years burial space left in Guildford. GBC are looking at acquiring sites to last for the next 150 years.

**Guildford Spectrum:** The roof needs replacing and this will take more than a year. An improved combined heat and power plant is planned.

Next, Keith Meldrum gave the MRA Annual Update. The MRA Newsletter, Merrow Life, is the main record of work undertaken on your behalf by MRA.

**Parking at the Merrow shopping parade:** There will be 3 hour restricted parking with no return within three hours, Monday-Saturday, 8.30am-6pm.

**School in Down Road:** Fennies Nurseries had planned to open a nursery here. Due to residents' concerns, they have decided to consider converting the site and the existing building into 6 flats with gated parking.

**Newlands Corner:** There is an enormous amount of concern regarding Surrey County Council's (SCC) proposals for the development of Newlands Corner. These are: **Phase 1** Parking charges and play

structures; **Phase 2** New building for a Visitor Centre/Café/shopping opportunities. Some SCC Councillors are unhappy with how this is being handled by SCC and have forced this to be 'called in' for scrutiny. More information on [www.savenewlandscorner.com](http://www.savenewlandscorner.com) and a petition with over 10,000 signatures.

The new **draft Local Plan** has been published and will go to formal consultation in June 2016 for 6 weeks. The housing target is 693 new houses per year. The Guildford Residents Association (GRA) will be fighting this figure. MRA is heavily involved with GRA.

The new local plan includes, amongst others, the following development sites: Gosden Hill Farm, a new rail station at Merrow Depot and the Wisley airfield development.

**Merrow depot** is no longer in the Local Plan for residential development.

**Gosden Hill Farm** is for up to 2,000 houses. This will have a large impact on Merrow. MRA is in discussion with the Burpham and Clandon Residents' Associations about this.

**Redwood site:** The first planning application by Linden Homes was refused which they have appealed. The 2003 Local Plan contained a figure for the number of care home places in Guildford; this has been carried over into the new local plan, which may mean there is an issue with the Redwood site being used for residential purposes.

This was a big update this month but we felt we wanted to share as much of the information from the meeting as we could.

With good wishes from the Merrow Residents' Association Committee.

*Sarah*

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