

## Local Plan (again!)

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ning consultant, Neil MacDonald. Nevertheless, it is a mixed result from a community viewpoint. On the face of it, the level of development has been pegged back but not as far as might have been expected from the ONS data. None of the originally proposed Green Belt strategic sites have been restricted or removed. Delivery will still be highly challenging with major infrastructure such as roads, water and sewage facilities needed. The impact on the locality, both during development and after delivery will be significant.

The Inspector's written report is expected to be published towards the end of March and GBC are thought to be keen to formally adopt the Plan before the elections in May. Various groups including the *Wisley Action Group* are believed to be considering whether to challenge it by way of judicial review.

Notwithstanding this, assuming final adoption of this Plan, attention will then immediately move onto the detailed planning applications required for development to start and focus will again be on the major strategic Green Belt sites which are responsible for the majority of the next 15 years of housing delivery. Local community associations will continue to be confronted by a major task to monitor and

## Merrow History Group

The *Merrow History Group* meeting in February took the form of an illustrated talk by local military historian, John Glanfield, on the prisoner of war camp on *Merrow Downs*. The following is a summary of his talk.

After the Italian defeat in north Africa in 1942, prisoner of war camps were needed in the UK and *Workcamp 57* was built in Merrow, near to the Guildford golf clubhouse. It consisted of a series of wooden huts terraced into the slope with prefabricated concrete huts for the guards.

The prisoners' area was surrounded by a barbed wire fence, with watch towers at each corner and entrance was through two gates, only one of which was open at any time. Even today traces of the camp can still be seen including the main entrance road and a lev-



## NOTICE OF MEETING

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO  
**The 49th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
of MERROW RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION**

ST. JOHN'S CENTRE, EPSOM ROAD, MERROW

**MONDAY 8th APRIL 2019 at 8 PM**

**Full Agenda enclosed separately**

where necessary, challenge these submissions on their individual merits. *A longer version of this article can be found on the MRA website* ❖

### A message from the Community Wellbeing Team (formerly Community Wardens)

The New Year already has your *Community Wellbeing Team* working on many projects and improvements. We are planning a lively year ahead to look at how we can engage with the community, reduce social isolation, and increase communication within communities - just to mention a few! We are looking forward to several collaborative projects in Merrow for 2019. Our work covers many dif-

ferent aspects of the community including events and projects for local people, visiting groups and individuals and working with others to make our local areas as strong and empowered as possible. We believe in change, inspiring people to achieve goals to create their best future as well as helping improve health and the environment.

Please look out for our posters and come along to join us on local projects and neighbourhood events. We are happy to share any community news, come to an event or help support your goal. We are also looking to hold drop-in sessions in Merrow. Contact us on: *Community.Wellbeing@guildford.gov.uk* or call Claudia on: 07890 591971. ❖

ferred area that was used for football matches. The prisoners were vetted and only compliant ones were sent to Merrow. 880 men were accommodated 40 to a hut, with a coal stove and electricity, and each man had one blanket in summer and two in winter. Hot water was provided once a week together with 4oz. of soap and rations were the same as for our depot service men. Work was allocated on local farms or Clandon saw mill and the pay equivalent to £4.50-£9 per week was paid in camp money which could buy extras.

### Subscription Renewal

A reminder that you can pay your subscription by cheque, bank transfer or standing order.

Details are on the renewal letter, which will be enclosed with this newsletter if you haven't already paid for this year.

Please would you assist the Treasurer by returning the completed slip at the bottom of the letter, whichever method of payment you choose.

Military establishments could not be photographed however John found alternative ones of interest to illustrate his wider talk. He told us anecdotes of a sergeant helping his work team whilst a prisoner cleaned his rifle, and of the prisoner who missed his transport back to camp and being found still waiting the next morning!

The camp closed in 1948 and subsequently the huts were refurbished into basic housing to rehouse two families each until they could be moved into new houses locally after which the site was cleared in 1959/60.

You will find more on the POW camp in the history section of MRA's website. The *History Group* will meet on Wednesdays 3rd April, 5th June, 14th August, 2nd October and 4th December at 7.30 at *St John's Centre*, usually in the upstairs meeting room. ❖

When Italy left the war the prisoners became "compliant reparation workers" with more freedom. As nearby *Tyting House* was used as a base for secret agents, no Germans came to the camp until the war ended and the Italians were moved into hostels.

The Merrow War Memorial in St John's Churchyard was beautifully cleaned and refurbished ahead of the November 2018

# MERROW LIFE

The Newsletter of the



## MERROW RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

*your community voice for over 40 years*

Spring 2019

Issue No 45

[www.merrowresidents.org.uk](http://www.merrowresidents.org.uk)

Don't forget

AGM

Monday  
8th April  
8 pm  
at St John's Centre

## Vice Chairman's Notes

### AGM on Monday 8th April

Spring 2019 and the MRA AGM are both once again just around the corner. You will find the full AGM agenda enclosed with *Merrow Life*. We really hope that you can come and join us to hear what is happening in Merrow and Guildford, use the opportunity to discuss local issues and concerns and finally enjoy a glass of wine and nibbles as you catch up with neighbours.

### Clandon Golf

We have received a letter from Clandon Golf asking for our support to discourage residents from walking dogs across the golf course. They are concerned about safety for the walkers, potential damage to their boundaries and the trespass over what is private property. Whilst we recognise that the fencing off of Clandon Golf course still remains a very emotive issue for many Merrow residents, rights of way and access have been amended in the correct way and no longer permit pedestrian access across the golf course and Clandon Golf course request that this is acknowledged and observed by the local community. Continuing antisocial and destructive behaviour is not a responsible or mature approach, nor is it legal.

### Planning

We have continued to monitor local planning applications and highlight significant changes which impact on Merrow. The development at Wellington Grove has been completed and we will again request *Linden Homes* to make good the damage to the green at Levylsdene. The current major planning application locally is to add another storey of flats onto the roof of the most westerly parade of shops in Merrow. (see the Planning Report overleaf for more detailed information).

### Merrow War Memorial

The Merrow War Memorial in St John's Churchyard was beautifully cleaned and refurbished ahead of the November 2018

anniversary commemorations, with significant thanks to the MRA, from money raised at the Autumn meeting and a contribution on members' behalf from MRA funds.

The War Memorial is a focal point for the village and for village history, with new discoveries still being made. We have known for some time that the names of George Triggs and George Willard, both of whom died in the First World War, do not appear on the War Memorial. We now know that the name of George Palmer, who died in the Second World War, is also missing although he is buried in the churchyard. An estimate has been obtained by the PCC to provide a new plaque for these three names and your Committee have agreed to contribute to its cost as we represent Merrow and those who both live and have lived here. We shall be organising a retiring collection at our AGM to supplement a donation from our own funds.

### Local Plan

The Guildford Local Plan continues. Its development, progress and timetable are covered separately. It is just worth saying here that we expect that the Gosden Hill Farm development, with 1800 homes, will go ahead and that detailed planning applications are likely to be submitted very quickly after the Local Plan is adopted. The infrastructure for the development will be difficult to deliver and there will be major impact on the Burpham and Merrow traffic flows and environment, both during and after the building work is undertaken. So this story will continue.

### Independent Councillors

As a result of specific dissatisfactions with the content and direction of the GBC led Local Plan, there has been a significant borough wide push towards the evolution of Independent Councillors, to promote local issues and avoid national party politics and policies. This has been widely reported in the local press. As MRA is a non-political organisation, we have declined to share material with members that has been sent to us promoting independent councillors and their meetings.

### Executive Committee

There will be significant changes to the Executive Committee this year. Keith Meldrum stood down from his second period as Chairman at the last AGM, though he remains on the Committee and retains his overall responsibility for the Guildford Local Plan. After eighteen years Kate Dumbleton has decided to stand down from her role as Environment Officer and Sarah Smith is stepping down from her role as Publicity Officer. Great thanks are due to Kate and Sarah as they have both made major contributions in their key roles. They will be hard acts to follow, but we would like to fill these key officer roles as soon as possible. As ever, we will be looking for new members of the Committee at the AGM. Do get in touch with me or any member of the Committee if you would like to find out more about how you can support your community.

On that topic, you may wish to know that I am putting my name forward for nomination as Chairman and am pleased to have received a nomination for Julia Ellis to join the Committee. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the AGM on Monday 8th April, and we will have yellow *Introducing the MRA* cards available to take away, to help you encourage neighbours and newcomers to Merrow to join MRA.

### Andrew Strawson Vice Chairman

### Want to volunteer?

The Mayor of Guildford's *Volunteer Fair* is being held on Thursday 4 April from 11am - 3pm in Guildford High Street.

The fair will have a similar format to the *Farmers' Market* and allow local voluntary and charity groups to showcase their work and recruit potential volunteers.

It is a fantastic opportunity to find something you may become passionate about and to see how you can help others meet new people, make a difference in someone else's life and get involved in the local community. ❖

DIARY NOTE

**Autumn Meeting on Monday 28th October 2019 at St John's Centre**

# PLANNING MATTERS

## 27 Merrow Croft

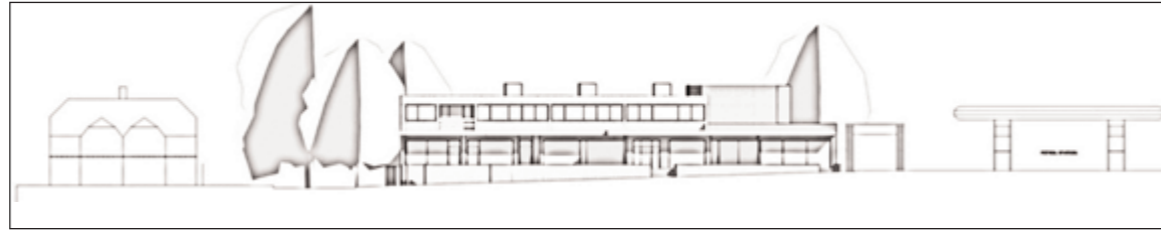
The latest application for a double garage is an amendment to the original single garage approval, and was refused by the Planning Committee due to the overall size and design being out of scale and character with the already extended dwelling and the wider surrounding area. Furthermore, the extension in front of the building line would be overly dominant and the proposal did not respect the existing pattern of development within the locality.

## 199-209 Epsom Road

(The parade of shops between Bushy Hill Drive and the BP Garage)

An application for a first and second floor extension to the existing building to provide five additional self-contained residential units with associated works to the rear parking courtyard.

There are 13 objections to this development, one of which was sent by the MRA Committee. We considered that there could be potential parking problems in the rear car



Current appearance of 199-209 Epsom Road with BP garage canopy on the right



Proposed changes and final appearance

park and displacement parking in surrounding areas. We are concerned about the adverse appearance on the street scene and we requested further drawings and details about the context of the build within the street scene and neighbours' amenities. If the Case Officer recommends approval the application will be decided by the Planning Committee.

## 160 Epsom Road

Application to convert an existing garage into living space, which will be used as a garden room/guest room. MRA was asked to consider this application by a neighbour, as an approved application in 2011 to extend the house and build a garage was approved. The garage built in 2018 had strict

# Environment Report

## GUILDFORD IN BLOOM

Formed in 1981, *Guildford in Bloom* brings together community groups, schools and residents to promote imaginative ways to make the Borough look its best and to promote health and wellbeing, community working and champion Guildford's natural environment. We are pleased that MRA have once again been awarded a **Certificate of Appreciation** to acknowledge our commitment to *Guildford in Bloom*. This year MRA will be entering the tubs on the corner of Trodds Lane by the *Horse and Groom* and the raised bed in front of *Domino's Pizza* - for which help is needed.

It is hoped that Merrow residents of all ages will also show their green fingered creativity and enter the *Guildford in Bloom* competition, which runs until 16th June with judging from 1-19th July and an award ceremony on 10th September at the *Yvonne Arnaud Theatre*. Publicity stalls will feature at the 7th May *Farmers Market*, the *Surrey County Show* on 27th May and *The Picnic in the Castle Grounds* on 1st June. More details can be found on [guildford.gov.uk/guildfordinbloom](http://guildford.gov.uk/guildfordinbloom) and on the MRA noticeboards.

## FLOWER TUBS

Once again Merrow residents have been enjoying the Spring display in the tubs. Just an hour twice a week is what it takes to water the summer planting to keep the tubs looking spectacular. If you would like to volunteer for a week on the watering rota please talk to Kate Dumbleton at the AGM or email her through [environment@merrowresidents.org.uk](mailto:environment@merrowresidents.org.uk) as she will be continuing to organise the rota. MRA Committee would like to thank everyone who has given of their time in past years and especially to *Clandon Garden Centre* who so generously plant up the tubs.

## CLANDON CHALK DRAGON

In February, the Mayor of Guildford, Mike Parsons, officially inaugurated the restored roadside carving of a dragon made of compacted chalk that was originally created in 1977 to commemorate Elizabeth II's Silver Jubilee. It can be seen on an embankment on the A426 just after the

boards. Lorna can be contacted through [secretary@merrowresidents.org](mailto:secretary@merrowresidents.org).

## Floral displays in Guildford

Readers may be interested to know that we have been quizzing GBC about their floral displays and discovered that in 2017/18 its *Parks and Countryside Service* maintained 1,671 flower/shrub beds across the borough and spent £42,000 on flowers and plants. This included £30,000 on the Castle Grounds with its spectacular themed carpet beds. There is also planting at Quarry Street, Quakers Acre and Stoke Park which, along with the troughs and baskets elsewhere in the borough, are chosen for two reasons. Firstly because of their cultural or historic significance or secondly that their location demarcates the entrance to the town centre, in the case of Quarry Street. The bedding comes from a nursery at Loxwood, supporting local jobs and businesses. Some plants are reused but bulbs are given away to residents as they can transfer disease if repeatedly planted.

Three years ago the number of planted troughs on railings and roundabouts was reduced to 50-60 in appropriate locations and where they were safe to maintain. You may have noticed that troughs were removed from the gyratory system and from York Road and Stoke Road crossroads. Roundabouts that are sponsored, with two displays a year, raise an impressive £40,000 pa. Of the 280 hanging baskets, 42 out are sponsored at £70 per basket, totalling almost another £3,000.

The team have been awarded nine *Green Flags*, the national standard for Parks and Open Spaces and are proud of what they deliver and the income derived to support it. The many compliments they receive about their displays from individuals, tourists and businesses indicate the positive impact on Guildford's reputation and economy. They welcome sponsorship to support their work.

## Changes to Reporting Lost Property ...

Historically police reports were taken for lost property that

conditions upon its use, which would not permit its use for dwelling. The current proposal is for a habitable, fully insulated building including a kitchenette and bathroom facilities.

MRA has objected on the basis of the very close proximity of the building to the boundary of neighbour in Holford Road (160 Epsom Road is on the corner of Holford Road) and the potential impact upon the neighbour of noise disturbance. It is noted that the garage has been built in front of the building line, despite the drawings illustrating that it is to be in line. The application has been recently submitted, so it is very early days for a decision.

## Burchatt's Farm

There is a pending planning application for the change of use of *Burchatt's Farm*, on *Stoke Park*, from 'assembly and leisure' to 'non-residential institution' from a long established Guildford chiropody practice.

MRA objected to the proposal on the grounds of change of use (it was a condition of the original GBC purchase that the building should be used for the leisure of the people of Guildford); and concern over the internal alterations envisaged for a listed historic building. This application has yet to be determined.



was found in public places and handed in by members of the public for safekeeping or to be returned to the owner. However, there is no statutory duty for the police to record non-evidential lost and found property and to reduce costs they will no longer record and retain all types of lost property.

The public are now encouraged to retain property they find and make reasonable enquiries to find the owner if it appears to be valuable. They suggest you ask people nearby or in offices or shops, and consider leaving a note with your details. If you still can't find the owner and for any items that contain data (e.g. laptops and phones), for unidentifiable cash or items suspected of being involved in crime, take them to a local police station or call 101 for further advice. Items found on private property, for example shopping centres, should be handed in to customer services or the management team. Bank cards, driving licenses and passports can be returned to the issuer. Dangerous items such as firearms, ammunition, drugs, explosives and chemicals should be reported by calling 999. Surrey Police offers step-by-step guidance at [surreybe.at/c65un](http://surreybe.at/c65un) for dealing with found items.

## ... and Lost Dogs

GBC have announced a change in the way lost and found dogs are dealt with. A new service called *Dogbusters* will deal with all strays or lost dogs. If you lose your dog or find a stray, call *Dogbusters* on 07769 972 813. They operate 24/7 including weekends and Bank Holidays.

For issues with nuisance dogs (dogs that are regularly allowed to roam, noisy dogs, dog fouling, dogs being out of control) you should still report this to GBC on G 505050.

## Alert for dog owners

There has been a recent *Neighbourhood Watch* report that a lady was walking her dog at *Newlands Corner* when it disappeared. She found a man in the bushes with his arms around her dog and hands around its jaw to stop it barking. She shouted at him, he then dropped the dog and ran off. The police at the cafe area were alerted. It is being suggested that this may not be an isolated incident.



# Local Plan (again!)

As the Planning Inspector, Jonathan Bore, closed the resumed *Examination in Public of GBC's Local Plan* in February, he indicated he would accept GBC's proposal to reduce the housing target to 562 dwellings per annum (dpa) from the 672 that had been provisionally arrived at in June. This results in a total requirement of 10,678 houses over the 15 year period of the Plan compared to the 12,600 originally proposed. Seemingly, this was a significant step forward for those who had believed too much Green Belt land was being sacrificed. However, as usual the devil is in the detail.

GBC is still proposing to retain all the original site allocations including *Gosden Hill* in Burpham despite a reduction of nearly 1/6th in the housing number. Moreover, the sites can actually accommodate 14,602 dwellings, many on land taken out of the Green Belt. Those site allocations provided an original 20% buffer of housing land to meet unforeseen need. By leaving those site allocations unchanged, that buffer has been increased to nearly 40%. How could this possibly make sense? Especially as the local community representation had compiled a powerful case to support an even lower annual number, no higher than 460 dpa – 8,740 houses over the Plan period.

The final two days of the Examination hearing in February were held to assess the impact of the latest *Office of National Statistics* (ONS) household projections on housing numbers. Those ONS figures were published after the main Examination was completed in the summer and indicated a significant reduction from previous projections.

Key conclusions which are still subject to the Inspector's final report can be summarised as follows:

- It was established that the revised 2016 ONS figures should be used as the basis for the final determination of the *Objectively Assessed Need* (OAN). However, whilst it was accepted that the new numbers actually pointed towards a much lower base figure of 313 dpa, it was made clear that a number of significant adjustments had to be made to that baseline, including allowing for housing delivery shortfalls in previous years, economic and student growth and 'affordable housing'.

- Consequently, in spite of this apparent significant downwards shift in the baseline, the Inspector did not consider that GBC's revised OAN figure of 562 dpa (79% more than the figure of 313) was so unduly large as to call into question the soundness of GBC's Plan.

- It was accepted by GBC that its Plan now allows for nearly 4,000 homes more than the OAN (nearly 40% more) but they were happy that this added robustness and headroom capacity to the Plan.

- GBC do not consider that the original provision of 42 dpa extra housing for Woking that GBC was being expected to absorb as part of its legal obligation to accept unmet need from a neighbouring authority, is now required. Whilst the Inspector was unconvinced that this would be sustainable for the long term, he noted that the headroom in the Plan did at least provide a buffer if the need for GBC to accommodate Woking's unmet need did arise in future.

This was still a major achievement for the local community groups led by the *Guildford Residents Association* (the umbrella organisation for local residents' groups) relying on the excellent analysis and presentation by their plan-