

Emails to Members

If you have not received any recent emails from us and would like to be kept up to date with MRA's news, events or local issues, contact secretary@merrowresidents.org asking to be added to our email list and please include your name and address.

Remember to let us know if you change your email address. ❖

MRA's Website

We try to keep our website merrowresidents.org.uk up to date and interesting, with both current content and articles relating to Merrow's recent and not so recent history.

We would welcome any feedback, and any offers to help if you wish to become involved in maintaining it. ❖

Air Quality workshop update

Following last year's *Air Quality* workshop, Surrey University's team completed the two month study on air quality around Saint Thomas's school, focusing on drop-off and pickup times. The pupils did much of the measurement work with the equipment themselves.

The project's technical report has been submitted for publication to a scientific journal and attention has now moved on to communicating the results within the school and the local community. ❖

Our Local Councillors' Surgeries

The three GBC Councillors for Merrow are Cllr. Deborah Seabrook (Residents for Guildford and Villages), Cllr. Jan Harwood and Cllr. Steven Lee (both Liberal Democrats)

You can write to any of them c/o Guildford Borough Council, Millmead House, Guildford,

Surrey GU2 4BB. Their individual phone numbers and email addresses can be found on the GBC website

They will be holding their regular drop-in surgeries at St John's Church Hall, Merrow, from 5-6pm on

Tuesday 7th January; Tuesday 17th March; Thursday 11 June; Tuesday 22 September. ❖

DIARY NOTE

Autumn Meeting on Monday 26th October 2020 at St John's Centre

NOTICE OF MEETING

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO
The 50th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of MERROW RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

ST. JOHN'S CENTRE, EPSON ROAD, MERROW

MONDAY 1st June
Full Agenda enclosed separately

New AGM date Monday 1st June by ZOOM - see e-mail invitation

We are seeking nominations for Vice Chairman and also a new Webmaster.

Beating Hearts Merrow

Beating Hearts Merrow was set up by local resident Judith Hunt, who had a sudden and unexpected cardiac arrest while at work. She was fortunate enough to work in a hospital and underwent immediate and successful resuscitation.

Sudden cardiac arrest can happen to anyone and at any age. *Beating Hearts* Merrow is aiming to:

- Raise funds for a 24 hour access defibrillator in Merrow
- Arrange training for Merrow residents in how to recognise and manage a sudden cardiac arrest
- Build a map of Merrow showing where every public access defibrillator is located
- Ensure that every resident receives a copy of the map with details about managing a cardiac arrest

They hope to save lives in Merrow by providing 24 hour access to a defibrillator and providing training to give all residents the confidence to use one.

The next training event will be held on Saturday 4th April at 10am at St John's Centre. Training in Basic Life Support will be led by St John Ambulance, and is open to everyone including children (accompanied by an adult).



Basic Life Support is the first level of care given to someone who's heart has stopped working.

The training will last for around two hours (with a break for refreshments) and include lots of practical sessions, such as how to recognise a cardiac arrest, give chest-compressions and use an automated defibrillator.

There are some very simple skills which can be learnt in a short space of time, that could help save someone's life.

To sign up for the training or for more information about *Beating Hearts* Merrow email savealife@beatingheartsmarrow.uk, visit: beatingheartsmarrow.uk or follow the Facebook group *Beating Hearts* Merrow.

To donate, please visit: justgiving.com/crowdfunding/beatingheartsmarrow ❖

Subscription Renewal

This is a reminder for you to pay your subscription for 2020 if you haven't already done so. We much prefer payment by bank transfer or standing order rather than by cheque or cash. Details of our bank account are on your renewal letter. You will only receive a renewal letter enclosed with this newsletter if you haven't already paid for this year.

Please help the Treasurer by returning the completed slip at the bottom of your renewal letter, whichever method of payment you choose.

MERROW LIFE

The Newsletter of the



Spring 2020

Issue No 47

MERROW RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

your community voice for over 40 years

www.merrowresidents.org.uk

Don't forget

AGM
Monday
30th March
8 pm
at St John's Centre

Chairman's Notes

Spring 2020 and the MRA's AGM are both once again just around the corner. You will find the AGM agenda enclosed with Merrow Life. We really hope that you can join us for our 50th AGM to hear what is happening in Merrow and in Guildford, use the opportunity to discuss local issues and finally enjoy a glass of wine and nibbles as you catch up with your neighbours.

Activities past

I am writing this on a gloriously sunny morning sandwiched between major storms so it feels appropriate that MRA are very involved in spreading the environmental message locally. We recently hosted *The Climate Emergency in Guildford* by Guildford Environmental Forum. There was an excellent turnout for the evening, likewise for our Autumn Meeting where we enjoyed an outstanding presentation by GBC on recycling.

Activities present

We continue to keep an eye on all local developments and comment on planning proposals within our village. The **Local Plan** has now been approved and its impacts will be with us for many years. The planning details, sequencing of infrastructure and the impact of increased traffic will be aggressively scrutinised by your committee. We are also actively involved in constructive challenge on major developments in Guildford, such as the recent *Casino* development proposal. The major GBC consultation on parking restrictions and yellow lines throughout Guildford was completed in November. The results of this consultation are still to be discussed by councillors and we will actively track the changes that relate to Merrow.

Activities future

Looking ahead - with 2020 vision (boom boom) - what do we see for the coming year? More of the same, planning applications and appeals, traffic and building disruptions, updates from local councillors and news from GBC and SCC. And plenty of change, with the new activities of the *Merrow Highway*

Volunteers, a push towards more participation in wildlife projects in Merrow, spin off activities from our new association with Guildford Environmental Forum - all of which offer new areas for participation by members. Hopefully something for everyone, across the increasing range and variety of areas that MRA is becoming involved in. Many of these topics are covered in greater detail later in this newsletter.

Committee changes

Every year at the AGM we say goodbye to old friends and bid a warm welcome to new neighbours who are happy to give their time to keeping MRA up and running. This year Denise Hilton is standing down as our Treasurer after thirteen years keeping our accounts and finances in apple pie order. Denise wishes to remain on the committee as an ordinary member so we will retain access to her expertise. Fortunately, Dave Smith our Webmaster has agreed to stand as Treasurer, but in turn he would like someone new to take over his current role updating our website. Kate Dumbleton has already stood down from the committee after an incredible 18 years of service, details which have been covered in previous issues of Merrow Life. In her place Stephen Rudd has been co-opted as Environment Officer. He is interested in conservation and has ideas for involving members with the wildlife of Merrow. John Pitkin has volunteered to stand as an ordinary member at the AGM as he has a particular interest in planning matters. We extend a warm welcome to both Stephen and John. If there is anyone else out there who wishes to help with the work of organising any of the aspects of MRA, or has a burning desire to change the way that something is done in Merrow, don't be shy and contact me or any other member of the committee, to see if we can work on it together.

Thanks to members

Finally, a big thank you to all the members of MRA. We exist for you and because of you; and work hard to represent you as well as we are able. With that in mind, we aim to encourage wider participation in activities through

2020 and look forward to broadening our range of interests to engage more widely with the local community.

Andrew Strawson *Chairman* ❖

Community Highways Volunteers

Merrow Community Highways Volunteers is the new group set up locally to help SCC with simple maintenance of the areas around our roads. It now has an amazing 30 volunteers and appropriate training has taken place to ensure everyone is safe whilst they undertake the voluntary work.

The recent winter weather has not been conducive for us to be very active, however some of the team took advantage of the planned local road closures during February to get ahead with our verge clearing activities. We hope to be out more once Spring arrives. SCC Highways and Skanska have provided funding for our collapsible signs, high viz vests and various tools. A formal hand over by Cllr. Matt Furniss is being planned.



Clearing verges in Trodds Lane

You can contact us via communityhighways@merrowresidents.org and you can also go to GBC's web site and *Adopt a Street* to help keep your area clean. ❖

Bulb Planting

Thanks go to our local Community Wardens Lesley and Claudia who organised helpers, including children from Bushy Hill School, to plant 850 daffodil and crocus bulbs around Hall Dene Close on a sunny winter's morning. These are now popping up and they hope many of us will get to enjoy the display when passing. ❖

Environment Report

Recycling works or is it just Rubbish?

Last October's *Autumn Meeting* saw a fantastic turnout of well over 100 MRA members and other residents. Thank you to those who came, your engagement means that we all work together to make sure that Merrow remains a great place to live.

Stuart Riddle, GBC's *Recycling and Waste Projects Officer* gave a very informative talk about waste processing locally. His presentation *Recycling works or is it just Rubbish?* was preceded by a quiz to help us understand which of ten different regularly used items could be recycled. A copy of the quiz, and most importantly the answers, are on the MRA website. You may be surprised how much can be recycled so it is worth giving the quiz a go! Please remember the one very important rule is that recycling material must be clean; if it is contaminated, it cannot be used. It is also so important for us all to reduce our use of single use plastics.

Stuart took us through the history of recycling in Guildford which started in 2009 with recycling boxes and alternate weekly collections of refuse and recycling. In 2012 waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) collections commenced, with an increased range of plastics and tetrapacks collected. We now have collections of food waste, recycling, refuse, WEEE, textiles and batteries. Garden waste is an optional extra, paid for by individual households.

It can be surprising how much more is recyclable and GBC

continues to extend the range of materials that it is able to process, which now includes aerosols and plastic cleaning bottles and their pumps (but please separate all pumps and lids). The annual flyer that we all receive with the collection dates also updates the Recycling Guide. You can look up exactly what can be recycled via the search box on guildford.gov.uk/recyclingdirectory or download the *Surrey Recycles* App.

The Climate Emergency – get angry, get active!

In February MRA were delighted to host a talk by the *Guildford Environmental Forum* (GEF) which presented the evidence behind the current global climate emergency and explored what measures we in Guildford can take to help tackle it. With over 80 members and non-members in attendance, it was clear that the subject matter was of great local interest. The presentation was delivered by Henrietta Stock, who studied under environmentalist Al Gore.

During the presentation we learned that carbon dioxide emissions, which contribute to capturing heat, are rising at a faster rate than at any time over the last 66 million years and that the heat trapped by these emissions is equivalent to exploding an astonishing 500,000 atomic bombs every single day! This, we were told, is evidenced by 19 of the 20 hottest years on record occurring globally since the year 2000 and a UK winter record of 21°C recorded in February in 2019.

We were warned not to be complacent. While it is accepted that temperatures vary naturally, what is happening now is occurring at such a rapid rate, scientists are concerned that

our infrastructure and food supply chains will be unable to adapt fast enough to keep up. And it isn't just we humans who are at risk, it is estimated we will lose 50% of all land based species this century if warming continues as predicted.

The presentation was not all doom and gloom however and encouragingly we were told that the solutions to this emerging crisis are already within our grasp, but we must make changes quickly to avoid the worst effects of climate change. We heard about how the economy is already decarbonising through great breakthroughs in renewable energy production, especially wind and solar and we were told that in 2019 the UK set a new record by going 18 continuous days without needing to burn coal for the production of electricity.

Finally, we were presented with ideas for reducing our own carbon footprints, including making our houses more energy efficient, reducing our overseas travel and eating less meat. We were also told that Guildford could do much more to reduce carbon emissions, which per head of population is 25% higher than in Woking!

The enduring message was a call to arms, that being proactive is the best antidote to climate change anxiety. According to former president of Ireland, Mary Robinson, you should make climate change personal, get angry with those in government and get active, using your voice for positive change.

GEF has kindly invited MRA members to attend their wide range of events, which are listed on gefweb.org.uk ❖

PLANNING REPORT

Merrow Croft

Building continues of two five-bedroom houses following the demolition of a house on the double plot, with temporary construction access allowed via Epsom Road. Parking of contractors' vehicles has started to impinge upon Levylsden roadside and the green, which the Project Manager has been monitoring, as well as MRA and residents.

Any inappropriate parking should be reported to *Aspen Homes*, which has been very considerate to neighbours during construction. Sometimes cars are parked on the green, but they are swiftly removed. Unfortunately, without yellow lines, little can be done about parking on the roadside.

9 Greenside Close

The first planning application submitted in November for a roof conversion was withdrawn due to objections from neighbours and advice from the Case Officer.

In this new application, the roof is still intended to be raised up to the same height but instead of one dormer there are two, which does not mitigate the objections from the first application.

MRA consider that it would be too dominant within the character of the small cul de sac and its surroundings as two dormers with two glazed windows overlooking neighbours' gardens would impact upon their privacy. MRA has objected and there are eleven objections in total, so the application could be decided by the Planning Committee.

Major Developments in Guildford and the Local Plan

There is never a dull moment on the planning front! The Judicial Review of the Guildford Local Plan took place in October and the appellants, not surprisingly, lost. One of the groups that challenged the Plan took their case to appeal and lost again. The challenge to the Waverley plan that went to the Court of Appeal was also lost so the development of the old Dunsfold aerodrome will go ahead as planned and, as a result, more traffic will spill onto the roads around Guildford.

A planning strategy document has now been produced by GBC, called a Strategic Development Framework, for the development of the five major sites in Guildford - Blackwell Farm, Slyfield, Gosden Hill Farm, Ash/Tongham and the Wisley airfield. We have commented on this framework, with particular reference to Gosden Hill Farm and to that end have had detailed discussions with both the Burpham Neighbourhood Forum and the Burpham Community Association as there are so many elements that cause us concern.

We are also in discussion with West Clandon Parish Council as 60% of the site lies in their parish. This is a pre-cursor to the production of master plans for each of these sites.

As you might expect our concerns centre around access to the A3 from Gosden Hill Farm and the traffic from this significant development that might be encouraged to be routed from Burpham, under the railway bridge, up Park Lane and onto the roundabout by the Golden Gates before going to the Clandon cross roads, through Clandon and up to the proposed new slip road onto the A3/A247 junction at Garlick's Arch. ❖

We still hold the view that there should be a four way junction with the A3 on the Gosden Hill Farm site and, failing that, a link road running south of the A3 to the new junction proposed at Garlick's Arch which is just short of the Send roundabout. We are fearful that GBC will take the soft option, play down the significance of the additional traffic and do nothing to reduce the additional traffic that will impact on Burpham, Merrow and Clandon.

Whilst on Garlick's Arch, the plans for the development of the 520 houses on that site were published in January and we have objected as it appears to be no more than a housing estate plonked in the middle of some green fields close to the A3 without any real regard to the aesthetics of the development or the impact on the villages of Send, Send Marsh and Ripley.

We have also joined with the Guildford Residents' Association and objected to the new plans for the development of the Casino site in Guildford as the new building would look totally incongruous next to the listed Rodboro building and we still have concerns about possible flooding which occurred as recently as 2013 and the risk to the public who could be occupying the two floors below ground level. It is still too high with ten storeys above ground and would add nothing but a high stark building to our historic and most attractive town centre.

We are also keeping a watching brief on the development of Slyfield and the removal of the Thames Water sewage works there and the development of the land adjacent to the Cathedral. ❖

Noise nuisance

In the past MRA has supported members dealing with noise and traffic problems emanating from local authority and commercial businesses. We thought you might be interested to know more about the issues involved in proving that a noise nuisance has occurred.

In a recent case, following complaints from neighbours, GBC Environmental Control undertook noise assessment in accordance with British Standard BS 4142 "Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound". GBC's objective was to establish if there was a case of Statutory Noise Nuisance that would have a likelihood of successful prosecution.

Hedgehogs in Merrow

Stephen Rudd recently became MRA's Environment Officer and wants to make a positive impact on the wildlife in Merrow. This is his first project report.

We British love hedgehogs. They used to be such a common sight. Indeed, many of us grew up with hedgehogs in our gardens, local woodlands and playing fields and no doubt have fond memories of watching them and even leaving out bread and milk for their supper (which we now know is a very bad idea indeed - hedgehogs are lactose intolerant!).

It is a sobering fact that hedgehog numbers are in steep decline. In the 1950s it was estimated there were tens of millions of hedgehogs throughout Britain but by 1995 this had reduced to just 1.5 million. It gets worse, it is thought we have lost over half the hedgehogs from our countryside and a third from our towns and cities since 2000. When we look closely at the reasons for their precipitous decline, all fingers point to....us. The way we live doesn't leave much room for nature and even our beloved hedgehogs are finding it hard to fit in. The increase in roads and sheer number of cars appear to have had a big negative impact as has the steady loss of habitat such as woodland and wilder areas, leaving less space to support viable populations. The way we keep our gardens is also a cause for concern. Hedgehogs like to roam, an adult male will wander an average of 3 km each night, but the trend for removing hedgerows and fencing off gardens with tight fitting gravel boards has greatly reduced their ability to move between houses to find food or seek a mate.

Having lived in Merrow for fifteen years, I tried to remember the last time I had seen a hedgehog locally and could only remember one occasion when I saw a poor animal wandering around in circles during the daytime. When observed during the day it usually signifies something is wrong and this animal was quite possibly the victim of slug pellet poisoning. Unfortunately this occurs not because they eat slug pellets directly, but they consume slugs and snails which themselves have eaten the poison (hedgehog friendly slug pellets are readily available these days and they work).

Ever since my encounter with a sick hedgehog, I feared that hedgehogs were all but gone from Merrow. Some years later, after my children came along, I wanted them to see hedgehogs for themselves in the wild, so I decided to do something about it. I began working with their school, Boxgrove, to setup a hedgehog project with the

The concept of noise nuisance is somewhat subjective, and the BS is a complex standard that includes sound level measurement and application of various correction factors for frequency of occurrence, tonal attributes and so on.

MRA helped the residents understand some aspects of the noise assessment and why GBC concluded that there was no Statutory Noise Nuisance in this case. MRA's input enabled the results to be challenged, helped focus on the key noise sources and encouraged GBC and the operator to work on mitigation measures intended to reduce noise.

The local residents are monitoring the situation and hoping that the noise levels will drop accordingly. ❖

aim of raising awareness. Now in its third year, we've delivered assemblies and run practical lessons to help the children think about how to monitor hedgehogs in their school grounds and our fundraising has also bought the school a hedgehog house, wildlife monitoring camera and footprint tunnels. We've arranged for a captive hedgehog from a rehabilitation centre to be brought into the school so the children could see and touch one for real. Needless to say, the children loved it. The aim is that the children learn about hedgehog conservation and what they can do to make their gardens more habitable and accessible to wildlife so that the Merrow hedgehog population will increase and even flourish.

Through this project there is now a small network of locals who keep a look out for hedgehogs, and we have begun to record them around Merrow. And the good news is there appear to be more here than I first thought and within a few weeks of making an access hole in a fence in my garden last year, two hedgehogs appeared outside my kitchen window!



Creating gaps in garden fences allows hogs to roam

I remain optimistic that Merrow, with its abundance of mature gardens and remnants of old woodlands, could become a haven for hedgehogs and to help achieve this I have plans to expand the project into other schools and engage more people locally.

To help us understand more about the size of our hedgehog population, we need to record sightings, alive or dead, on the *Big Hedgehog Map* (www.bighedgehogmap.org) which is run by the *Hedgehog Street* (www.hedgehogstreet.org), an amazing online resource for hedgehog conservation. If you want to get involved locally in some way, e.g. delivering leaflets, putting an access hole in your fence, or just want to talk about hedgehogs that you've seen, please email me at hedgehogs.merrow@gmail.com ❖