



MERROW RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

your community voice for over 40 years

Local Issues for Merrow

Dear Fellow Merrow Residents

We are writing this just after the very cold spell, which brought snow and ice to our area. We hope that you are all well and kept safe and warm.

It has been a busy time since we last wrote, with the Local Plan and Planning issues being at the forefront.

The **Local Plan** went forward to full council in November 2017 for approval and was subsequently submitted in December 2017 to the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. A four to five week long Public Examination of the plan commences on 5th June 2018 and will be held in the Council Chamber at Millmead. This is an important part of the process for the Local Plan adoption. The plan will be examined by Mr Jonathan Bore, an Inspector from the Planning Inspectorate based in Bristol. He will assess the plan to see if he deems it sound. He cannot make changes, however, can identify any areas where he has concerns and can seek discussion with interested parties prior to submission of his comments and recommendations to the local authority. Guildford Borough Council (GBC) has submitted a large volume of documentation for review, together with its own summary. Guildford Residents Association (GRA), of which MRA is an active member, is preparing itself for this public examination. Neil MacDonald has been retained by GRA to put forward our arguments that the housing need figures are too high and need to be reduced.

Further details can be found at: www.guildford.gov.uk/newlocalplan/examination and also www.guildfordresidents.co.uk

You will probably have heard that the **Solum, Guildford Station development** has been approved. Many objections, including one from MRA, were made to this proposed development of the station area. Reasons given included the lack of affordable housing and the monolithic scale of the proposal. The original application was rejected by the GBC Planning committee. Solum took the planning rejection to appeal and after a six-day Public Enquiry, the GBC decision was overturned by the Planning Inspectorate and the application was approved. The Leader of GBC, Councillor Spooner, has made it clear that they are extremely disappointed by this decision but have

now concluded that there is nothing further that they can do about the appeal decision. MRA wrote to our MP, Anne Milton, who emphasised her own disappointment with the decision. She has spoken with the Secretary of State for Transport to express her concerns.

One of the other ongoing issues in our wider local area is **Newlands Corner**. The plan to build artificial play structures has been dropped for the time being and the idea of a new building is not currently being discussed but has not been abandoned. Parking charges are, nevertheless, still due to go ahead. Charges are now set as follows: £1.30 per hour, £5 a day or £60 for an annual ticket, which will be linked to individual cars and not transferrable to other vehicles. The annual ticket would need to be paid as a one-off payment. Other sites; Chobham, Rodborough, Ockham and Whitmoor Commons and Norbury Wood will also see parking charges introduced. Payment will be by phone and card at the larger car parks and phone only at the others. Regular mass events continue to be permitted by Surrey County Council and Surrey Wildlife Trust, even though the Save Newlands Corner group say that Planning Inspectorate (PINS) consent is required. The concern is the damage to the environment and for the protected species that live there.

MRA continue to work closely with other interested parties regarding the access cut across Common Land at Merrow Lane onto **Gosden Hill Farm**. Concern is that Martin Grant homes might at some time in the future, attempt to claim a right of way for the potential Gosden Hill Farm development.

We will be keeping a very close eye on all of the above, and other issues, ensuring that the voice of Merrow is heard.

Important dates for your diaries: The **MRA Annual General Meeting** will be held at St John's Centre, Epsom Road on Monday 26th March 2018 at 8pm, and our Autumn Meeting is on 22nd October 2018. If you are not an MRA member already that is not a problem, you can join at the door. The annual subscription is only £4 for a single membership or £6 per household. We look forward to seeing you there!

www.merrowresidents.org