

MERROW RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION
MINUTES of the FIFTY-THIRD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
held at St John's Centre and on Zoom on Monday 17th April 2023

The Chairman Andrew Strawson welcomed 70 members in the room and 17+ families who attended by Zoom, GBC Councillor Deborah Seabrook and SCC Councillor George Potter.

1. Apologies for absence were received from Kathryn Craven, Dorothy Seymour, Chris & Michael Buerk, Michael Eagle, Jackie and Tony Hills and from Committee member Claire Rymell.
2. The Minutes of the AGM held on 28th March 2022 were approved. (Proposed by Henriette Whitehead van Prooije, seconded by Chris Holiday)
3. Matters Arising: the Horseshoe Lane West traffic calming proposal is still under consideration by SCC. The speeding review of Trodds Lane hasn't taken place but a consultation is ongoing about restricting traffic speed in the whole of Trodds Lane up to the A25.
4. Chairman's Report: All topics are covered in Merrow Life. The membership numbers are in decline. MRA's boundary will be amended in line with the recent changes to the ward boundary.
5. Planning Report: Also see Merrow Life.

Merrow Planning

Chris Holliday reiterated that MRA can support members and review relevant planning matters.

Tretower House, Merrow Street - Aspen Homes have now commenced work on the construction of six new houses in the grounds. The house itself is now part of the development.

176 Epsom Road 23/P/00139 - Outline planning application for the demolition of existing house and build 6 new houses. The access drive is alongside Cape Veterinary Clinic, within 15m of pedestrian crossing, which becomes very busy at school leaving time. MRA has objected on the grounds of traffic dangers and density of the proposed development. Environmental Services have objected unless bin collection is provided within 5m of the Epsom Road since refuse truck will not negotiate the driveway.

25 & 25a Horseshoe Lane West - MRA was advised by Aspen Homes of their intention to submit a planning application for 3 new houses in the grounds, on the corner of HSLW and Greencroft, behind No 23. MRA is concerned to ensure adequate on-site parking provision.

Guildford Planning: Keith Meldrum

There is real concern about the height and massing of new buildings as GBC has no current policy on height or massing. For example, the Solum site by the railway station which was approved on appeal, St Mary's Wharf (Debenham's site) approved by the planning committee, Onslow Street which will be heightened by three floors after being approved by officers and North Street development which was refused by planning committee due to its height, scale, massing and cramped layout. The consensus appears to be that we need a policy on building height, but it is contentious. Drafting would be tricky as height should be related to the terrain and height of neighbouring buildings. This will be a task for the new Guildford Borough Council after the May election.

6. Environmental Report: Stephen Rudd

MRA is actively involved with Zero Carbon Guildford and Guildford Environmental Forum.

Merrow Downs and Golf Course partnership: the MRA with Guildford Golf Course, GBC, Surrey Wildlife Trust and local wildlife enthusiasts is controlling invasive species, influencing the management of the golf course and improving practices on the local Downs. Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty: MRA will be responding to the Boundary Review consultation.

Merrow Pollinator Reserves: it is intended to create a series of insect friendly and pesticide free pollinator reserves across Merrow in conjunction with GEF and Guildford Zero. Anyone with a garden can join.

7. Financial Report: due to an error in the accounts, the accounts were adopted at a later General Meeting held on Zoom on 28th April. Philip Ross was appointed as Voluntary Independent Examiner for 2023.

8. Election of Officers

The Officers elected for 2023-24 were:

Chairman	Andrew Strawson
Vice Chairman	Vacant
Treasurer	Dave Smith
Secretary	Henriette Whitehead–van Prooije
Environment Officer	Stephen Rudd
Membership Secretary	Claire Rymell
Publicity Officer	Vacant
Webmaster	Dave Smith

Keith Meldrum proposed Andrew Strawson as Chairman, Deborah Seabrook seconded.

Ian Anderson proposed the officers be re-elected en bloc, Rob Graham seconded. All agreed.

The Ordinary Committee members remaining in post for 2023 are:

Gordon Farquharson, Lorna Seymour and Keith Meldrum (for the 3rd year of their 3-year terms)

Chris Holliday, Denise Hilton and John Pitkin had completed their 3-year terms and were willing for their names to go forward for re-election. **Clare McVicker**, who was co-opted during the year, is willing for her name to go forward for election.

Joanne Shaw proposed the election of **Chris Holliday, Denise Hilton, John Pitkin and Clare McVicker** as Ordinary Committee Members en bloc. Steve Grove seconded. All agreed.

9. Questions

- Potholes in roads. George Potter encouraged everybody to use the SCC website to report where potholes are. If the holes are not mended, please let George Potter know.
- Is the MRA aware of the problems at Urnfield? The MRA is very active in this area although the planning consent has been obtained on appeal the MRA is aware of problems with badgers and potential light pollution.
- Would it be possible to reduce the speed on Park Lane to 30 miles an hour? George Potter commented that it is difficult to reduce the speed at this moment, but he agreed with the idea and the suggestion to have a warning for users of Park Lane of traffic going in and out of Partridge Way.
- The consultation by Surrey County Council to reduce speed in Trodds Lane is a first step but might not be enough according to users of the Lane. This will be discussed further with George Potter.
- Deborah Seabrook has been talking to Stagecoach about the bus service. There is no money to make changes to bus routes 1 and 7 as they are not subsidised by the Council, but they will try to make the timetable of the buses more reliable. The reliability of the announcements in the bus stops cannot improve until SCC has decided who will be the provider of this system. The rerouting of bus route 18 might be possible as it is partly subsidised.
- The closure of the post office in Merrow might be temporary as Nisa is taking over the McColl's shop and is in discussion with the Post Office to reopen in the building.
- George Potter promised there would be a proper consultation about proposals to build new cycle lanes and pedestrian footpaths in London Road. The Government money for this work is ring-fenced and cannot be used to fix potholes.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting and for the useful discussion and he closed the meeting at 9.45pm, followed by drinks and nibbles.