



MERROW RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

your community voice since 1969

Dear Fellow Merrow Residents

We hope you all had a good summer and enjoyed the colourful displays in the tubs outside the Horse and Groom which were a real treat to look at this year. The well-chosen flowers withstood the summer heat - thanks to Edwins Garden Centre at Clandon for providing the plants and to those of you on the watering rota for keeping them alive.

Gosden Hill Farm Development

The site lies between Burpham and West Clandon beside the A3, and has the potential for up to 1,800 new homes, a new park-and-ride and new schools. Since our last report here in March, the anticipated outline planning application has been submitted to Guildford Borough Council. We haven't yet studied all the details of the application but we anticipate that our concerns about traffic and access to the A3 won't have gone away. By way of background, when the site was included in the 2019 Guildford Local Plan we recommended to the Government Inspector that there should be a four-way junction with the A3 on the site to reduce the number of cars going through Burpham or the outskirts of Merrow.

Abolition of Surrey's Existing Local Councils

Many of us are aware that the Government has decided that all the local authorities in Surrey should be integrated into two or three new unitary authorities in 2027. This means that Surrey County Council and the eleven other local authorities in Surrey will be reduced to either two or three unitary authorities and that Guildford Borough Council as we know it will disappear completely. After a hasty public consultation which we responded to, the government will decide in October how many unitary authorities there should be in Surrey. This initiative is going forward even though Woking Borough Council is effectively bankrupt and the government has not yet decided how their debt mountain should be addressed. It would be grossly unfair if council taxpayers of Guildford were asked to bail out Woking through no fault of our own.

It now appears from recent news reports that the government has significantly overstated the savings that could accrue when new unitary authorities in Surrey are fully established and in fact there may not be any savings at all!

There is one more angle to the unitary authority initiative that we on the MRA Committee are currently considering. Guildford Borough Council is consulting on whether new parish councils should be established to cover those areas in the Borough

which don't have a parish council. We are consulting our members on this as we are concerned that it will become even more difficult for residents' associations like us to influence events and decisions taken by an authority based some distance away. This appears to be an issue where views are split and it may be quite difficult to come to a consensus view.

Lighting Issues

As we move into autumn, you may notice some of the very tall lighting columns installed on local sports pitches. The lighting issues connected with the new sports provision at Urnfield on Merrow Downs have not yet been resolved by Guildford Borough Council and the Planning Department is considering another planning application for a playing field in Horseshoe Lane East. Both MRA and many neighbouring residents have been extremely involved because various aspects of the application have raised significant concerns. We hope that our numerous and detailed approaches to the Planning Department will be taken into consideration when this application is finally determined.

Social Evening

We are looking forward to greeting many of you at our open Autumn Event on 3rd November at St Johns Centre Epsom Road when the Chief Executive of the Surrey Wildlife Trust, Sarah Jane Chimbwandira will be talking about the work of the Trust and answering our questions. We expect it to be an interesting and lively evening and we welcome both members and non-members.

Sign up to MRA - make your voice heard!

As Merrow doesn't have a parish council, Merrow Residents' Association is the best way for the community's voice to be heard. You can sign up to increase our numbers and enable MRA to represent your interests and help us achieve the best outcome for Merrow.

You'll get more information on the matters above and hear about other local issues as they arise in our occasional relevant emails, you will also receive our detailed twice yearly newsletter and be invited to our two social evening events a year.

Scan the QR code with your mobile phone or go to www.merrowresidents.org.uk and click on 'Join us'.



The MRA Committee

