

**MERROW RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION**  
**MINUTES OF THE FIFTY-SIXTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
**Held at St John's Centre on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2026**

The Vice Chairman Keith Meldrum welcomed 70 members in the hall including Guildford Borough Councillors Yves de Contades and Jo Shaw and Surrey County Councillor George Potter

**Apologies** were received from: GBC Councillor Joss Bigmore, Claudine Letts, John and Mavis Martin, Paul and Claire Brown, Michael Savage, Bob Britt and Gordon Farqharson

**Approval** of AGM minutes from 2025 were proposed by Richard Collins and seconded.  
Approved unanimously

**Matters arising:** Urnfield and reduced speed in Park Lane were covered later in the meeting.

### **Chairman's Report**

The Vice Chairman summarised the activities in 2025, including the fascinating talk by Sarah Jane Chimdwandira in October and thanked everyone for their support over the year. He mentioned the problems around the proposed St Peter's School hockey pitch, the objections of Sport England if the pitch wouldn't be available in the evenings and weekends, the new 40 mph speed limit in Park Lane, the consultation of a 20 mph speed limit in the areas around the schools in Merrow within the area bounded by Park Lane and Epsom Road, although these speed limits will not be enforced by the police, the Urnfield playing field, and the proposed housing development in 18 Trodds Lane where the application has changed from 6 houses to 4 using the same footprint, which is not in keeping with the housing density in the area and finally the Gosden Hill planning application which is still active.

The Vice Chairman thanked: Edwins Garden Centre for providing the plants outside the Horse and Groom, Kate Dumbleton and her team for watering the planters, Ian Anderson as MRA's voluntary independent examiner, Tony Hills for laying out Merrow Life twice a year, Committee members and officers Claire Rymell, Kate Dumbleton, Andrew Strawson, Henriette Whitehead-van Prooije, Dave Smith, Richard Collins, Gordon Farquharson, Lorna Seymour and Bruce Bennett for their work for the Association in various ways as without their work and support the Association would fold. The Vice-Chairman thanked the four local Councillors - George Potter, Jo Shaw, Yves de Contades and Joss Bigmore for all the work they do for Merrow and implored attendees to vote at the election for new councillors in May.

**The Financial Report** presented by the MRA Treasurer Dave Smith

The accounts were shown at the meeting and had been examined by Ian Anderson. Approval of the accounts was proposed by Andrew Strawson and seconded by Richard Collins, and approved unanimously. Ian Anderson agreed to continue as voluntary independent examiner of the accounts and was proposed by Andrew Strawson and seconded by Richard Collins. Approved unanimously.

### **Elections**

The following officers were proposed and seconded and unanimously elected to the Committee for 2026/2027 -

Vice Chairman	Keith Meldrum
Treasurer	Dave Smith
Secretary	Henriette Whitehead-van Prooijje
Membership Secretary	Claire Rymell
Webmaster	Richard Collins

Richard Lingard was proposed as a Committee member by Keith Meldrum, seconded and approved unanimously.

## Recent Updates

The Vice Chairman then introduced a proposal from Surrey County Council of a **School Street Scheme**, where Horseshoe Lane West would be closed off between 8 to 9 am and 2.30 to 3.45 pm, with exceptions for authorised vehicles, including residents. MRA had met SCC in person and responded in writing, published on our website explaining that MRA understands that something needs to be done to address the traffic problem and suggested the use of the Park and Ride or introduction of a tidal flow system. Whatever scheme is put in place the safety of the children crossing Epsom Road must be a priority. The consultation has attracted a great deal of criticism from Members and residents both before and at this meeting. George Potter spoke to put the proposal in context and emphasised that no decisions had been taken and that he was at the centre of the consultation and any decision taken by SCC.

The Vice Chairman advised the meeting that **the new West Surrey Council** will start on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2027. All 12 existing local authorities in Surrey will disappear on that date and two very large authorities will be formed in Surrey. The Election on 7<sup>th</sup> May will be for 2 Councillors in our ward, an overall reduction from 4. Merrow is in Guildford West Ward together with Burpham.

West Surrey Council will be responsible for most services, though Parish and Town Councils will continue and have some responsibilities with a small budget to spend in their area. GBC had asked for the opinion of its residents whether they wanted a Parish Council to cover the unparished area in the centre of the Borough which includes Merrow. The verdict was 46.48% in favour and 47.14% against. GBC have decided to recommend to the executive of the future West Surrey Council that it creates a Guildford Parish Council from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2027. It was decided this could cost £69 per household on the rates, though it might be less in the first year. There would be 24 unpaid councillors in any new parish with a budget of about £300,000.

## AOB

A member mentioned that **The Horse and Groom** side entrance is squalid. MRA will investigate.

Another member raised a question about **MRA's relationship with the police** and their support officers. The Vice Chairman responded that this was an area where MRA should and must do more.

**Clandon Park Estate** had sent a leaflet to residents consulting on their proposals to enhance a section of Clandon Park's historic parkland in line with the original landscape by bringing in thousands of tonnes of inert material through a new access off the A25 with the park-and-ride roundabout. MRA will be responding to this consultation and asking questions both on the rationale and detail.

Andrew Strawson congratulated Keith Meldrum on behalf of the MRA committee and our members on his recent **Mayor's Award** for services to the community.

The Vice Chairman **closed the meeting at 9.45pm** with thanks to all those who organised, attended and contributed to the meeting. Wine and nibbles followed.