



Leatherhead  
Residents Association

## Bulletin for July 2024

Dear Members

Well, now we have it, the plans for using **Bull Hill** (or, as we residents know it, Red House Grounds or “The Park”) for a huge development incorporating residential, offices, a hotel, a multi-storey car park and some ground floor café/community space have been revealed. I am sure that many of you will have gone either into the ex-Clintons shop in the Swan Centre or to “The Jam Place” on the Kingston Road, to view and comment on the proposals.

Opinions will no doubt vary, but mine is that constructing what I believe may amount to approaching 700,000 sq. ft of accommodation in buildings, some of which are 12 storeys high, is a massive over-development of this site. Not only will the Town lose its Park (albeit replaced by a green “postage stamp”), but the project will be completely at variance with the character and existing townscape of Leatherhead, when the draft Local Plan specifies that it should integrate well into that character.

On one of my visits to the public display of the plans, people were attaching their stick-it notes with their opinions on to the surrounding wall, which was then covered in them. I read quite a few, and the reactions were very similar. Everyone was saying that the buildings were *too many and too high*.

I realise that both **Transform** and the **draft Local Plan** require that there is substantial residential development on Bull Hill / the Park, and that there will need to be a multi-storey car park to replace the existing surface parking and we also need some replacement green space. But could there not be a smaller, lower and more harmonious project if the large office building and hotel were accommodated elsewhere? In any event, I understand it is questionable whether there is occupier demand for either of these uses. Also, on balance, a maximum height of 5 stories would also be far more in keeping with the town.

At an altogether different level, I have one piece of reasonably good news: the **Plough Roundabout** is going to be “tamed,” (or, rather, mown) and replanted. Not with Planters as was originally envisaged, but *with wildflowers, bulbs and a few new trees*. It must all be planned in line with Surrey’s scheduled mowing plans for the whole County. However,

Email via [www.leatherheadresidents.org.uk/contact](http://www.leatherheadresidents.org.uk/contact)

Registered Office: Fewston, St. Nicholas Hill, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 8NE

The LRA is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England & Wales, No. 10248803

Surrey will mow but not rake away the cut grass so, instead of a litter pick sometime, we may be looking for a volunteer or two to do some raking! However, this will need to be agreed by Surrey Highways.

Incidentally, I learn from "Hello" magazine that **Mole Valley is the third happiest place to live in the UK**, only bettered by the Ribble Valley and Wokingham. Whilst no doubt the cause of much recent frustration, the recent spurt of road works by Surrey Highways will only have added to the District's attractions!

As I mentioned in June's Bulletin, I have invited two police officers to attend our next meeting on **5th August**. I have often been told that the LRA should invite the Police to speak to us periodically. While I was preparing the invitation, I was astonished to discover that MV has 9 officers of various grades. I had thought we had about 4! Please bring a question or two, preferably on paper, which I can then hand to our Speakers for them to answer.

You will be interested to learn that the small donation we made for the restoration of a historic work of art in Fetcham has resulted in their **C17 Royal Coat of Arms** hanging in their church, now looking absolutely magnificent with all the detail clearly visible. At the time it was made, (ca. 1670), it was mandatory for every church in the country to display such a panel or "picture" so as to demonstrate their loyalty to the King and not to Cromwell! The church is open most of the time, so if you go to see it, it is in the far aisle on the wall on the left.

Finally, two reminders. Our **AGM** this year will be on **7th October** in the usual place and at the usual time. I would also like to remind you that sometime in 2025 I will resign from being Chairman and am still hoping that another person or persons will come on the scene to take things over.

Meanwhile, I will wish you all a warm and happy summer and hope to see you on August 5th.

With all best wishes,

**Caroline (Brown).**