



Leatherhead  
Residents Association

## Bulletin for August 2024

Dear Members

I hope that you are all well and able to appreciate this nice, sunny weather that we are having at long last.

### Transform Leatherhead

Unfortunately for me, this pleasant interlude is somewhat spoilt by the psychological “cloud” that hangs over me in the form of the “Transform Leatherhead” proposals. You will recall from my July Bulletin and from the discussion that took place at our “Open Meeting” on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> August, that there appears to be almost universal concern in respect of the principal element, namely the development of Bull Hill to include our Park. It is proposed that far too much floor-space is built (we estimate approaching 700,000 sq. ft) in buildings that are far too tall (up to 12 storeys). By comparison the proposals for the Swan Centre are relatively benign to include a small multi-screen cinema at deck level and the conversion of a couple of shops to yet more eateries. Whether this will be sufficient to rejuvenate our High Street must be debateable!

Of course you may have different views, but whatever they may be, I do think it important that you let the Leret Partnership know what they are. You can do this either by filling in the “Feedback” form, or, **better still by writing more fully. The email address is [info@theleretpartnership.co.uk](mailto:info@theleretpartnership.co.uk) or you can post to FREEPOST leret.** For those who haven’t yet been to one of the presentations of the proposals, there is one at the **Ashted Peace Memorial Hall on 5<sup>th</sup> September** and one at **The Old Barn Hall in Bookham on the 11<sup>th</sup> September**. Both run from **17.30-19.30**. Our local Councillors would also like to know our opinions, so a copy of your letter to the Leret Partnership could also be sent to them. Our Head of Planning in MV, Piers Mason, has asked me to remind you that letters do not need to be sent to MV., only to the Leret Partnership, but your councillors would like to hear your views.

Our Councillors are: Bridget Kendrick, Gareth Parsons, Joanna Slater (All for S. Leatherhead) and Ben Wall, Benjamin Wear and Keira Vyvyan-Robinson.

Alternatively, you could also send me an email if you are wondering how to frame your letter: [<chairman@leatherheadresidents.org.uk>](mailto:chairman@leatherheadresidents.org.uk)

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

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## **The Fetcham Seating Area**

By contrast, I went to Fetcham the other day and could not help being struck not only by their new seating area (complemented by the names of the donors on bricks laid on the ground) but also by their array of some 15 or so shops, all appearing to be trading well. What a pleasure to see such a prosperous little centre, aided I am sure by one's ability to swing into a free parking space, to do one's shopping and then leave with the minimum of fuss and bother. Such a seating area could be made at our "**Waterless Feature**", making it flat from the upper pavement. It would certainly encourage people to linger and thus, perhaps, to do a bit more shopping. (But, yes, I do remember the covered Band Stand and why it went!)

Incidentally, Fetcham is up in arms against the Solar Panel "farm." (Situated on the Cobham Road, just before the bridge over the M25, roughly opposite the Yehudi Menuhin School). They say (quite reasonably) that Surrey itself could harvest sunshine by covering all the car parks and other municipal buildings with such panels AND collect the financial reward! In contrast, the farmer who uses these fields will lose his livelihood and we would lose the pleasant sight of crops or animals in the fields.

## **Police Eastern Headquarters in Leatherhead.**

You may have already seen that the Surrey Police is seeking to locate the Eastern Divisional Headquarters in Leatherhead. They tried to move the whole Surrey Headquarters to Leatherhead a few years ago, after buying the former E.R.A. and Cobham Industries site on Cleeve Road, but, after further studies, decided to remain at Mount Browne in Guildford.

However, the discovery of unstable concrete (RAAC) in the modernisation of Reigate Police Station last September has made them come to the difficult decision to re-site the Eastern Divisional Headquarters from Reigate to Leatherhead. It will be a while before this happens, though, as they are awaiting a decision on the Planning Application for the re-development of the Mount Browne HQ first.

## **Epsom Hospital**

The Epsom & St. Helier University Hospital Trust's Annual Public Meeting is on **Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> September** at the **Epsom playhouse from 17.30-19.30**. Attendees can have a free blood-pressure test and the talk will include a description of their cutting-edge "nuclear scanner." For further info go to [www.epsom-sthelier.nhs.uk/annual-public-meeting-2024](http://www.epsom-sthelier.nhs.uk/annual-public-meeting-2024).

## **The LRA Website**

Some of you may have noticed that our website has not been fully functional and the fact that the contents of "Documents" has disappeared. However, most of those items can now be accessed from the Home page.

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## **A new Chairman for the LRA.**

The last matter I want to bring up in this Newsletter is the fact of my retiring from this highly interesting “job” which I have been part of for 25 years, secretary for 15 years and Chairman for 10 years. The Association will therefore need a new Chairman or even a little “team” of about 3 people to include a Vice-Chairman and Secretary as well, to step into my shoes and work with the remaining Directors on issues such our Finance, Health, Roads, Planning Applications, meetings etc.

To protect ourselves and our members, we are constituted as a Company Limited by Guarantee and have Public and Directors insurance. We are privileged to be recognised by our Council as an accredited consultee on matters that impact on Leatherhead residents. To be part of this group is a wonderful way to take part in, and make a contribution to the life of our Town. I will be resigning in April 2025 which is when a new Chairman/team can take over.

With all my best wishes

Caroline (Brown, Chairman)

Since writing the above, I have since learned of another, worried action group, “Save Bull Hill.” If you would like further information, do contact them at [savebullhill@gmail.com](mailto:savebullhill@gmail.com) They tell me that they are a group “of concerned local residents passionate about Leatherhead’s future.” I am going there for a quick meeting on Friday afternoon, but they are handing out flyers on Saturday morning (24<sup>th</sup> August) in the park. I will ask for some if you get this too late.

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