

Minutes of Open Meeting of the Leatherhead Residents Association (LRA)

on Monday 20th January 2025 at 7.30pm

at the Methodist Church, Church Road, Leatherhead

1. Present: Members = 34, Non-Members = 6, Total = 40

2. Apologies received from: Fran Barnby-Smith, Louise Herrity

3. Chairman's Report:

The Chairman (CB) welcomed everybody to the first LRA meeting of 2025. She explained that the absence of most local Councillors was due to their attending a specially convened meeting at Pippbrook at which the new Transform proposals are to be revealed. She confirmed that Martyn Williams would up-date the meeting on Transform later in the meeting.

CB highlighted the availability of free household energy surveys to qualifying residents from Zero Carbon Guildford, a charity supported by Surrey Council and Government grants. For more info visit zerocarbonguildford.org

CB also mentioned the availability of various locations where residents struggling to heat their homes could visit to relax and warm up. Go to surreycc.gov.uk and look for "warm welcome venues" for Leatherhead locations.

There are also available Home Fire safety checks. For more information, Google "Safe and well check for Surrey" or tel: 0800 085 0767 or Text/SMS: 07971 691898.

Finally, CB confirmed she will be giving up her role at the end of April 2025 and encouraged anyone interested in this, or any other role in the LRA, to make contact.

4. Transform Leatherhead

Martyn Williams (MW) recounted that the 2024 proposals by the Leret Partnership had been relatively uncontroversial as regards the Swan Centre but much more so as regards Bull Hill, where there was considerable development, in very high buildings, which is likely to cause considerable traffic issues. The provision of replacement open space was also considered to be inadequate.

Not content with their responses to the public consultation in respect of these proposals, over 1900 residents had also signed a petition objecting to these plans, which was presented to the Council on 15th October 2024.

Leret have recently announced that they have drawn up revised plans, which are being presented to Councillors this evening (20th January 2025) .They have also announced a Forum meeting in the Theatre on February 12th at 7.00pm, at which the new plans would be revealed and to which all residents were invited. MW urged that as many residents as possible should attend this meeting to study the new proposals and raise any questions they may have thereon. LRA member, Steve Preston, who presented the petition to the Council in 2024, re-iterated that it was crucial that there was maximum attendance at the Forum meeting and that residents make their views known.

MW confirmed that, shortly after the 12th February, the LRA would hold another meeting to discuss what was revealed at the Forum meeting.* Thereafter, Leret would be conducting another public consultation which would give residents a chance to express their views to the Leret Partnership.

5. Health Matters

Hilary Porter (HP) reminded the audience that well-being is not just relying on medical intervention but is also a function of having a well-balanced diet and organising one's life to avoid stress.

She commended Steve Preston for the work that he and his colleagues had put into organising the petition and for the help he had given her in promoting the LRA. However, she cautioned that we probably have to accept some development on Bull Hill, given the cancellation provisions in the Leret contract. However, any project needs to take on board the knowledge of long-standing residents.

HP reported the recent announcement that the doctors recently recruited to run the Molebridge_Practice have notified the Health Authorities that they wish to hand back the contract. Apparently, a new consortium of doctors is being sought.

HP confirmed she had secured funding for an IT Workshop in order to teach IT skills to older residents who have difficulty with IT.

Lastly, HP continues to work to bring back the "Duck Race" in 2026, although "Health & Safety" rules that MVDC must abide by make it difficult.

6. Closing of the meeting by the Chairman:

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and as this first meeting of the Year is partly social, she invited all to partake of the buffet on offer. This part of the meeting went down particularly well and members seemed reluctant to leave at the end!

*This date since been confirmed as **Monday, 17 February 2025** at the Leatherhead Methodist Church at 7.00pm for 7.30pm.