



Local Issues for Merrow

Dear Fellow Merrow Residents

As I sit and write this I am looking out at a wonderful blue sky. We are in the middle of a heat-wave and everyone seems to be spending time outside enjoying the sunshine. Many of you will be getting out the barbeque, enjoying your gardens or taking advantage of the wonderful green spaces that surround us. Between doing all those things, if you could, just take a little time to check on any more vulnerable friends, family and neighbours. Ask if they are coping in the heat or if they need anything. Sometimes just making a cuppa for someone and having a chat is thoroughly welcome.

Since we last wrote we have been busy working on various local issues. The topic of parking is becoming a regular discussion point at our committee meetings. There are three sites locally where we are seeing increased illegal or dangerous parking, with some local residents asking for support from MRA. We are talking to our County Councillor, Graham Ellwood, and voicing the concerns of our members. The council are due to review parking arrangements soon and we will be ensuring that residents' thoughts are fed back. One situation of particular interest is the one of the Linden Homes development. Guidelines were put into the planning approval regarding parking arrangements for those working on the site, however, these have not been adhered to and the council are not now able to take action. We will ensure that, in future, the planning department are pressured to include robust and enforceable procedures regarding parking for developments during construction.

The major topic currently is the Examination of the Guildford Local Plan which is taking

place in public in Guildford at the time that we write this report. The examination took place over of nine days and may have another day to run in late summer. Keith Meldrum, Andrew Strawson and John Dumbleton from MRA have, between them, attended the examination every day and Keith was involved with the discussion on the spatial strategy, Gosden Hill Farm and Garlick's Arch and MRA have also actively supported the GRA in their various submissions to the Inspector. Here are a few impressions of proceedings so far:

- Proceedings have been mixed from our point of view, rolling from good to worrying and back again;
- The Inspector who is very able and knowledgeable manages the complex meetings well; he has a good knowledge of the key areas and has some real concerns about many aspects of the Plan. For instance, early delivery, Green Belt erosion, the selection of sites and the town centre, which is not covered in the plan;
- There are many lawyers, experts and consultants in the room; Martin Grant Homes are represented by a QC, as is Guildford Borough Council (GBC). The Clandon Estate is also represented by a QC and was pushing for more houses and the release of more land from the Green Belt;
- The Inspector will not identify new development sites, his job is to examine the Plan as submitted for soundness. Some of the proposals for development are staggering, even suggesting that a housing target of 1200 new homes per year would be reasonable! The inspector has indicated that he is proposing a housing target of 671 new homes per year against the 654 in the plan although this may be reduced marginally over the next few weeks;
- The GBC officers are doing a pretty

good job in support of their plan. Their defense of the infrastructure, however, is problematical since Surrey County Council (SCC) and Highways England take the view that the proposed new infrastructure can cope with the extra traffic from 30000 or more additional cars and the additional traffic associated with a new Park and Ride, two new rail stations etc etc!. There is unfortunately no support from GBC, SCC or Highways England (HE) for a 4-way junction on the A3, which is what MRA and Guildford Residents' Association have been fighting for;

- There is a clear message that Martin Grant Homes (MGH) will be permitted to build 150 homes in the first 5 years of the Plan, even though there will be no infrastructure improvements in place by that time. An access to the site from Merrow Lane was mentioned by GBC. The discussion on Gosden Hill Farm took half a day and the infrastructure deficiencies including water and sewage provision were highlighted. Clearly MGH has already held detailed discussions with GBC on the site and a planning application will come forward very soon, together with a traffic assessment etc if their site is removed from The Green Belt. The Burpham Neighbourhood Forum did an excellent job putting over their views and defending Burpham.
- There is a real possibility of a relief road at Gosden Hill Farm along the south side of the A3 to the A247 at Garlick's Arch at some time in the future, which would take traffic away from Merrow.
- The Inspector asked GBC to identify additional sites to meet his demand for supplementing the 5-year housing supply and we were worried for a couple of days that Clandon Golf might be selected. In the end it was not the case. Hurrah!
- Gosden Hill Farm will remain in the plan and therefore we expect it to be removed from the Green Belt for development

- The Wisley site was also discussed, even though the earlier planning application for development of the site was turned down by the Secretary of State on appeal.
- There will be many changes to the submitted Local Plan and there will have to be one more consultation in the autumn on the changes once they are accepted by GBC.

Later this year, the Inspector must submit his conclusions on the Plan's soundness and his recommendations for change to GBC but there are now clear indications that he will find the plan to be sound after some quite important drafting changes have been made.

The Local Plan is key to the development of Guildford and is something we will continue to work closely on with our fellow Residents' Associations to try and ensure the best outcome for everyone living in the area. We will keep our members updated on major developments via email and will write more here in the December edition.

On a final note, we have our Autumn meeting on 22nd October 2018. Please put the date in your diary and keep an eye on our website for further information

www.merrowresidents.org.uk

Please do contact us on **publicity@merrowresidents.org.uk** if you have any comments or queries. If you wish to become a member of the Merrow Residents' Association just go to our web site and all will be explained.

We hope you all have a wonderful summer.

Sarah and The Committee

**email: publicity@merrowresidents.org.uk
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