



Cobham and Downside Residents' Association

Newsletter, Autumn 2022

Residents' Open Meeting

Wednesday 19th October, Cobham Village Hall, Lushington Drive, doors open 7.30pm, 7.45pm start,

We will have two speakers: Mike Boddington, CEO Enlighten Learning Trust, will be speaking on the challenges and opportunities facing schools in the public sector; Councillor Lawrence Wells will be talking about the role of a councillor on matters impacting the environment, climate and countryside, and how a resident can be a positive voice and can have a positive effect, too.

CDRA'S GRANT APPLICATION FOR NEW SKATEBOARD PARK

Having gathered the views of a representative group of local skate park users, we have agreed the key features for the design for the new replacement skate park which will cater for a wide range of users and abilities.

During the consultation process we shared our ideas with potential skate park contractors to ensure that our ideas would be feasible. The Green Spaces Team at Elmbridge Borough Council have also now confirmed the exact area which can be used for the new skate park, which is essentially the same footprint as that already used by the current park. We are now addressing the formal tender process to receive quotes from at least three different contractors. This process is likely to run for several months.

Our partners in our Your Fund Cobham Village Partnership, which is applying for the grant, are Cobham Football Club. They are working on potential designs for a new club house and changing rooms in preparation for a formal planning application submission. They are also in the process of managing the installation of a new all-weather pitch, for which they secured a substantial Community Infrastructure Levy grant. **Martin Elbourne**

HELP FOR ST ANDREW'S SCHOOL

We were delighted to be able to help St Andrew's School with their Forest School project by providing and placing a log circle. The Forest School project is a specialised approach to outdoor learning that aims to develop confidence and self esteem in the children through hands-on learning in woodland environments. The school had a shed to store their outdoor equipment, but needed help putting it up. We were able to partner with Levanter Developments to get the job done. We hope to be able to assist the school again. **Brian Teale**

- I CDRA secures £100k for improvements to the junction of Sandy Lane and the A244
- N Update on our project to rebuild the Skate Park
- S A new bus stop in Cobham High St.
- I News about our environmental projects
- D Find out about how we helped
- E St Andrew's School

With thanks to Curchods Estate Agents for posting out these newsletters.

From the Chairman...

We are delighted to report that all our projects have made real progress this year, for which the Committee and volunteer members deserve our thanks. You will find more details of our projects in this newsletter but I would just like to highlight a few.

We were excited to be able to help St Andrew's School by providing a log circle and arranging for the erection of a storage shed and we hope to be able to do more for them in the future.

A big thanks to our committee members responsible for the environment for putting together a Tree Strategy while working with the Tree Officer at Elmbridge and local councillors.

In a first for CDRA, we have secured a £100,000 grant from Elmbridge's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for improvements to Sandy Lane. We intend to make this a springboard for further CIL bids for our future projects.

Work on our bid for a grant to replace Cobham's Skate park is taking shape as part of Surrey Council's Your Fund programme. Designs have been drawn up and the next step is to obtain quotes.

Our Town Planning work continues unabated at a local application level, but increasingly at wider strategic levels with the Elmbridge Local Plan, the Wisley Airfield development, Electoral Boundary changes, M25 Junction 10 works and HGV bans under consideration for the A244 through Oxshott. We have an excellent working relationship with FEDORA in Oxshott to coordinate and increase the weight of our responses on these and Sandy Lane matters.

I would like to express your committee's appreciation of the support we receive from you, our membership. Once again we are recruiting new committee members to help deliver an increasingly exciting community programme. Steve Wood, Chairman

ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS

For some time the CDRA has been concerned about the loss of the green living landscape in Elmbridge, and of Cobham and Downside in particular, which provides many benefits to the health and well being of humans and wildlife alike.

Therefore the CDRA has been working with the tree officers and councillors to promote better consideration and protection of trees and the living landscape within development.

We regularly comment on applications with regard to trees and landscape, and now feel that this is starting to filter through, in the decisions made in the planning process of applications for development and for works to trees.

We have also been working with the tree officers and councillors on a formal tree strategy in order that protection and consideration is a stronger, automatic component of the

development and planning process and not dependent on individual comments each time. This has also been promoted in our work on the Local Plan, in which we hope that points made in the tree strategy can become more formalised, in order that trees and the living landscape will continue to be an important feature of where we call home.

Hedgerows are also identified as an important component of the semi - rural aspect of our district. They form the UK's largest wildlife habitat and are also crucial in biodiversity and climate change. An inaugural National Hedgerow Week was launched last year to highlight their contribution and to raise awareness of their loss to our landscape.

You will remember that in 2021, as part of Woodland Trust's Schools and Communities programme, we received over 200 hedge saplings which were planted on the Leg O'Mutton field. They had been doing very well but sadly, despite great efforts to keep them well watered during the very hot weather, some have suffered badly. We

will seek replacement from The Woodland Trust for those that do not show signs of new growth.

Martin Elbourne, Denise Stanczyk

SUCCESS FOR SANDY LANE IMPROVEMENTS

We are delighted to report that CDRA was successful in securing £100,000 from Elmbridge CIL Board (Community Infrastructure Levy) towards improvements to the junction of Sandy Lane and the A244. We are currently in discussion with Elmbridge on how the work will proceed.

As well as working for improvements to the junction with A244, we were also trying to get the speed limit on Sandy Lane reduced from 40mph to 30mph. The results of a speed survey has found that the current average speed on most sections of Sandy Lane is below 35mph. This means that the speed limit can be reduced to 30mph without major infrastructure changes to the road. This work will be paid for using Councillor David Lewis' member's allocation.

These initiatives are part of our overall project to improve Sandy Lane, the other priorities are to improve the road surface and improve pedestrian access.

Following lobbying by CDRA, Surrey County Council has cut back vegetation north of Sandringham Park to allow pedestrian access and this is now extensively being used. Road drainage improvements have also been made to stop flooding near the entrance to Reeds School and new white lines have been painted

We would like to thank Councillor Lewis and FEDORA for working with us in this project.

Dilip Mathew and Brian Teale

ELMBRIDGE LOCAL PLAN

In July the membership entrusted CDRA to comment on their behalf on the final draft of the Elmbridge Local Plan before it is to be submitted to the Government for examination. A reminder that the Local Plan is produced by Elmbridge Borough Council and is a key component of the planning system. It will shape

how land use and places will change and develop in the future. Planning applications need to be in line with Local Plans, otherwise they are unlikely to receive planning permission. Elmbridge's draft Plan was far from perfect but CDRA supported these basic principles:-

- No release of Green Belt for development
- A reduced housing target of 6785 homes across the Borough, not the 9700 proposed by central government; 870 are in Cobham, Oxshott, Stoke D'Abernon. None for Downside.
- Infrastructure to support this development.
- A 'Vision for Elmbridge 2037' in which the Council accepts its responsibility:-
 - > To make a resilient environment, reduce carbon emissions and deliver positive outcomes for future generations.
 - > Prepare Design Codes for excellent new housing in consultation with residents.
 - > High quality digital connectivity.
 - > Support local businesses and communities to make local centres social, arts, and commercial hubs.

These are hard fought gains over a six-year period of negotiation between local groups, councillors and officers, which will soon be tested at public examination. Developers and landowners will vigorously contest the housing numbers and Green Belt preservation in particular.



Erecting the new shed for St Andrew's School

We requested detailed changes to the draft Plan and we await the outcome of the Council's assessment of all consultation responses. A date for public examination will be set for later this year. We were very concerned that no mention had been made of the Wisley Airfield development for 2100 homes, for which a planning application has now been made. While this is in Guildford Council's control, it is on our doorstep and its impact on our community infrastructure should be assessed and planned for by Elmbridge.

We are disappointed that no progress has been made on Design Codes. They will go some way to ensure that residents will know in advance what development actually looks like in their area and are an important part of the planning process.

At a local level we continue to have successes in resisting inappropriate development, while accepting that well planned new homes are needed for young families in particular.

Steve Wood

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

We have been lobbying for a bus stop with a real time bus information display at Cobham and Stoke D'Abernon railway station, together with, if feasible, a bus shelter. We are pleased to report that Surrey County Council is now working to achieve this.

Our main local bus service, the 715, has had a poor time this year. Driver shortages have meant that there have been numerous last-minute cancellations, advertised only on the day through Twitter. We have complained to Stagecoach, the company involved, about this. We are encouraged to say that the service is now improving at last, with more drivers having been recruited (and still being recruited and trained), and Stagecoach shedding some peripheral services to other operators.

We're pleased to report that, with help of Councillor David Lewis, the temporary bus stop outside The Ivy on River Hill, Cobham, will be made permanent.

In September last year, CDRA submitted a response to South Western Railway's consultation paper Timetable Consultation: December 2022. SWR, Network Rail and The Department for Transport have now decided to

defer these changes, and SWR will continue in December this year with its current timetable service levels.

It's been a difficult time recently on the trains. Industrial action, when it has affected South Western Railway, has meant that there have been no services at all on strike days on the Waterloo/Guildford (via Cobham and Stoke D'Abernon) line. SWR now has a dedicated industrial action website page:

www.southwesternrailway.com/plan-my-journey/industrial-action. **Mike Dawes**

SPEAKERS AT OUR OPEN MEETING

We are delighted to have Mike Boddington and Councillor Laurence Wells to speak to us at our Autumn Open Meeting.

Mike Boddington will speak on the challenges and opportunities facing schools in the public sector. He will focus on local and national issues, including educational, organisational and demographic aspects, as well as inspection and government policy. He is the CEO Enlighten Learning Trust, which currently comprises Esher C of E High School, St Andrew's C of E Primary School and St Martin's C of E Schools, Epsom. He is an experienced school leader, having worked for over 25 years in a range of state secondary school settings.

Laurence Wells will speak on the role of a councillor on matters impacting the environment, climate and countryside and how a resident can be a positive voice and can have a positive effect, too.



Watering the saplings on the Leg O'Mutton Field