



Thames Ditton & Weston Green Residents' Association (Founded 1934)

Minutes of a meeting of Thames Ditton (TD) & Weston Green (WG) Residents' Association (RA) Open Meeting held in Vera Fletcher Hall on 5th May 2020 at 8pm.

Present: Chairman Graham Cooke (GC)

Cllr Tricia Bland (TB), Cllr Caroline James (CJ), Cllr Karen Randolph (KR), Cllr Tannia Shipley (TS), WG/HW Cllr Nigel Haig-Brown (NhB), WG/HW Cllr Janet Turner, SCllr Nick Darby (ND), Alex Batchelor (AB), Peter Haynes (PHa), Ruth Lyon (RL), Libby MacIntyre (LMc), Debbie Mason (DM), Tony Nockles (TN), Rhodri Richards (RR), Christa Silverthorne (CS), Florian Traub (FT), Tracy Truelove (TT) and Martin Wilberforce (MW).

1. **Welcome and apologies for absence:** Graham welcomed everyone to the first open meeting the RA has ever held virtually through a video conference and provided a brief overview of the RA for those who may be joining for the first time. Apologies were received by highway officer Andrew Roberts.
2. **Minutes of the previous meeting:** The Minutes of the Open Meeting held on 28 January 2020 were approved as a true record thereof and signed by Chairman Graham Cooke.
3. **Matters Arising:** All matters are covered in the below reports from Officers and Councillors.
4. **Community Response to COVID-19** A big thank you was expressed for the RA / SCC Councillors for their unwavering dedication to helping residents during this time.
5. **Report from Association Officers**
 - 5.1. **Treasurer:** CS reported (1) The auditor has reviewed and approved the reported accounts which have subsequently been circulated to and signed-off by the Executive Committee. GC proposed the accounts to approved and KR seconded the motion.
 - 5.2. **Membership:** PHa reported (1) Subscriptions are slightly down, unsurprisingly, but overall subscription levels for the year are healthy. A reminder later in the year will hopefully help to increase the subscriptions.
 - 5.3. **Planning:** RR reported (1) An application for Bransby Lodge next to Lynton Care Home on St. Leonards has been submitted for a large development of flats with 9 proposed units in a block plus a block behind the site on a single dwelling. It has received objections and the RA will look into the proposal. (2) An application for a development on Embercourt Road encompassing one structure in the front and three behind was rejected and was also denied on appeal based on the fact it wasn't making effective use of the land. RA made objections based on access and other key factors. A new application has been submitted for flats which has received 45 objections so far. RA is looking at the proposal. (3) 16 High Street – change of use request submitted from restaurant to flats. The original plan was rejected but a new application has come back. The RA has objected under the grounds of trying to protect and retain the vibrant High Street. 16 objections were submitted and it is expected to go to committee shortly. (4) An application for a development near Mrs Patel's on Summer Road was submitted and received 24 objections. The RA made an objection based on the flood zone and it not being suitable for that area. The application has been withdrawn.
 - 5.4. **Vice Chair / Thames Ditton Today Editor:** LMc reported (1) Summer edition of TDT expected out which has been published quarterly for over 40 years. The decision has been made to continue with the publication because it is a key local community asset. (2) Distribution will be challenged and the plan is to engage a commercial supplier to help us with this for this

edition. (3) Focus of the publication will be the community spirit and residents are being asked to share photos and experiences of activities that may have been started during lockdown and plan to continue after lockdown.

5.5. Secretary: FT reported (1) GC recognised FT for his help in setting up the virtual meeting. (2) FT asked for any topics or issues to be sent to his secretary@residents-association.com email.

6. Reports from Association Councillors

6.1. ND reported (1) Thank you to staff at Surrey and Elmbridge, including the NHS staff, care homes and hospice, especially with the PPE challenges they are confronted with. (2) Community recycling centres will be open from the weekend with reduced hours. Dorking will be open from 9AM - 6PM accepting garden waste and black bag waste. (3) Headley Court rehabilitation centre will be reopening for recovery and rehabilitation patients in order to leave more space in the major hospitals for COVID patients in Epsom and St Helier hospitals. (4) PPE supply shortage seem to be improving. (5) Local pharmacies owned and operated independently have gotten together to pick up prescriptions and deliver to vulnerable. (6) 22k residents across Surrey have been identified as being on the vulnerable list. Elmbridge and others, including NF, have been working through the list to contact the residents to ask what kind of help they may need. (7) Recovery phase planning: government said early on that the NHS should – quite rightly – have anything they need. Surrey received a first round of funding totalling £25million and a second round of £24million which still leaves an estimated £20million deficit to cover the cost above and beyond typical services. They are discussing what could happen if central government doesn't help pay and how they will continue caring for the elderly / vulnerable. Elmbridge didn't receive anything at first and only a small portion of funding through the second round. (8) Roads have not improved because Surrey highways has had their own social distancing challenges and at this point the least safe roads have been dealt with first. Giggs Hill has more pothole than road but it is a wait and see for fixing. (9) Employees moving from County Hall into a new building in Woking has not gone ahead due to COVID.

6.2. TS reported (1) The seven community centres serving residents through meals and other services needed to determine how to continue to provide this support and started to do welfare checks. (2) Meals on wheels needed to scale up and train new volunteers with the additional challenge of social distancing provisions. (3) The four food banks in the area have had increased demand with the East Elmbridge Foodbank serving our local residents seen an increase from 25 clients to 63 when the crisis hit and has now reach 100. They are well organised and have been receiving local community donations and support. (4) The Coop had a fire and in quick action donated four carloads of food to the foodbank as well as £3k worth of food donated to Meals on Wheels. The Coop is now fully recovered from the fire and operating as normal. (5) Street collections for the food bank continue, including All Saints Church as a local donation point along with other local churches helping. TS thanked Elmbridge and Surrey Officers for everything they are doing, as well as the help and dedication of residents and Councillors

6.3. KR reported: (1) Local plan is behind due to social distancing measures. The draft local plan for Elmbridge - there is a challenge due to infrastructure providers (water, transport, etc) and other consultants will be behind due to employees being furloughed. The draft version will not be able to be drafted until the input from these providers can be conducted. It is further expected that other pressures and consequences from COVID will present after lockdown from transportation to green spaces and others. (2) East Area virtual planning committee session held yesterday. Site visits present problems under social distancing restrictions. (3) Pipeline of planning emphasis on character on the area. (4) Jolly Boatman has been held up because EA introduced new standards and the applicants needed to alter plans based on the

new rules. A revised model based on the flood modelling is being worked through and then will submit directly to the council. (5) Sandown applicants have appealed which will be viewed with a public inquiry. Early days but inspectorate will want to push this through. (6) Rough sleeper continues to remain on Giggs Hill Green and has declined emergency accommodations. Social services visit and he is reluctant to engage, they continue to check in on him. There is now another rough sleeper on the green. RentStart was going to visit him as well and offer emergency accommodations. GC commented on the Local Plan and the fact it doesn't make a lot of sense to continue using data pre crisis as the world and needs have been fundamentally changed. TB also commented and added on with the increased considerations needed to be made on the climate emergency plans as well. A note will be sent from the RA to the local MP and others regarding the Local Plan draft.

6.4. TB reported (1) Demand for food bank assistance has rocketed. The local food bank has 4x demand. The George & Dragon is a collection point in coordination with the Farmers' Market and RA. Available for donations to be dropped off 7 days a week. The food is transported and quarantined before being distributed to those in need. Food bank also accepts cash donations. (2) During the crisis many of the sewing bees and boomerang bag members are self-isolating but are busier than ever creating face masks provided to care workers and local shop owners. Thank you goes out to everyone donating food, money and time. Many street collections are continuing as well. It's helping health and well-being of residents by giving back. Helping to share information to high street retailers and businesses about government relieve through business interruption loan scheme. (3) High Street continuing to thrive and are busier than ever and as others start to reopen. All details of the shops are available on the retailers and RA. (4) TD in Bloom planting had to be postponed and all watering and gardening duties have been cancelled. GC thanks TB for all of her efforts with the food bank and High Street Retailers.

6.5. CJ reported (1) Cemeteries in the area have now reopened and some residents who have been distressed over their closure have been informed they are able to visit. (2) Car Parks remain closed across Surrey. JT gave an explanation that we have to be consistent with SCC and keep car parks closed otherwise it will create problems. (3) Secret Gardens of TD will need to be cancelled this year even though it is a huge fundraiser but potentially Weston Green and Thames Ditton can join together next year for one big community Secret Garden. (4) Continuing to support older residents who need additional support through. (5) Air conditioning units have been put into AC Court without planning permission. They will be submitting now but have put on timers in order to reduce the noise. (6) Summer Road 1-2 went to full planning committee and was a unanimous decision that it is the right are to be developed but it needs to be appropriate and consistent with the character of the community. The applicant does intend to appeal.

7. Any Other Business: None

Date of Next Open Meeting: Tuesday, 23rd June 2020 – All Saints Weston Green, but most likely a virtual meeting again.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 9:40 pm.

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Chairman