

THE *Ashtead* RESIDENT



The Journal of the Ashtead Residents' Association

(incorporating ASHTEAD VILLAGE NEWS)

Working for Ashtead since 1945

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NOTICE OF MEETINGS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND SPRING MEETING

Wednesday 17th April 2024
Ashtead Peace Memorial Hall, Ashtead

7.30pm 2024 AGM PART 1

1. Approval of the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday 26th April 2023 published in *The Ashtead Resident*, Spring 2024
2. Matters Arising from the Minutes
3. Chairman's Report
4. Hon. Treasurer's Report
5. Modernisation of the Association

Interval (15 minutes)

SPRING MEETING

A presentation about the new Mole Valley Community Fund (MVCF), and the Community Fund Surrey (CFS)

2024 AGM PART 2

6. Proposed Amendments of Constitution (see Motions Submitted)
7. Appointment of President, Officers and Members of the Committee
8. Appointment of the Hon. Examiner
9. Any Other Business

Bar Open from 7.15pm and during the interval

Annual Membership Subscription is £2.50 per household

A.R.A. CONSTITUTION: NEXT STEPS

Last Spring the Ashtead Residents' Association committee presented proposals for a modernised constitution for our Association. We needed to know our members' views. At the heart of our proposals lay the principle that the ARA should have no affiliation to any political party. Whilst this was opposed by many who attended the meeting, there was near unanimous support for the idea of a ballot of our members.

We therefore organised a paper ballot, the results of which were announced at our Autumn meeting. Over 550 of our members voted, of whom 405 supported the proposal that the ARA should have no affiliation with any political party. Cllr Hawksworth asked that his motion that would disqualify any member of a political party from serving on the Association's committee should also be included in the ballot. His proposal was defeated by 353 votes to 200.

Whilst the turnout was lower than we might have hoped, the numbers who chose to vote far exceeded the numbers that could be accommodated in the Ashtead Peace Memorial Hall, and the result was described by our former President, Simon Ling, as decisive.

Changes to our constitution can only be made at our AGM and a majority of two thirds is required. Your committee now asks that at the 2024 AGM, to be held on 17th April, we give effect to the democratically expressed view of our members. We therefore ask you to attend and support the motions aimed at amending our constitution so that the ARA can have no affiliation with any political party.

Peter Ross

MINUTES OF THE FIRST PART OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ASHTEAD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION HELD ON WEDNESDAY 26TH APRIL 2023 IN THE ASHTEAD PEACE MEMORIAL HALL.

President Simon Ling (SL) welcomed and thanked everyone for their attendance.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Apologies had been received from Janet Marsh and Chris and Emma Harbot.

The Minutes of the AGM of Wednesday 20th April 2022 published in The Ashtead Resident 2023 (Number 225) were taken as read. Proposed: Natalie Wilkins, Seconded Chris Townsend. Passed nem con. There were two matters arising as follows:

- a) In AOB Cllr Chris Townsend, in his role as Road Steward, suggested an increase in the annual subscription to £3 or even £5 to reduce the amount of change needed to be carried by Road Stewards. This has been discussed by the Committee but given the current pressures on family budgets due to very high inflation it was decided not to increase the annual subscription from its current level of £2.50.
- b) The committee had also been asked to consider whether signs should be put up at the level crossing asking people to turn off their car engines whilst the crossing is closed. There are already a large number of signs at or close to the crossing and any more may become distracting to drivers. Also as the crossing is now closed for less time due to the reduced number of trains, and that many vehicles are now electric or have engines that automatically turn off when stationary for more than a few seconds it was considered signs would not be helpful.

ARA Chairman's Report

Currently there is no ARA Chairman so, as the Association's President, Simon Ling had agreed to present the Annual Report provided by the Committee. SL was pleased to say that nominations have been received for the roles of Chairman and Vice-Chairman and that will be covered later in the meeting. Nominations have also been received for new committee members.

Sadly, Janet Webber passed away earlier this year. Janet was a committee member and she was heavily involved in environmental issues, and in particular in reporting and removing graffiti. Janet had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and she had been having chemotherapy regularly ever since. She will be greatly missed by all that knew her. During the past year, the Committee set up a sub-committee to review the ARA Constitution and work began on this last September. Glynis Peterkin kindly agreed to chair the sub-committee and Peter Shrubsole acted as its secretary. The sub-committee met several times and I would like to thank them for all their hard work. The proposed amendments to

the constitution, and explanations for them, have been published on the website and in *The Ashtead Resident* and will be discussed further during this AGM.

In the absence of a Chairman, and for purposes of continuity, Glynis agreed to maintain our links with the other North Mole Valley RAs and to continue attending the bi-monthly meetings between Residents' Associations and Mole Valley Council Officers. She has also provided advice and guidance to the new committee members and has given a huge amount of her time over the past ten years to the Association. I thank her for work, which, as she steps down from the Committee, is being taken on by Peter Shrubsole until a new Chairman is appointed.

The Committee has also reviewed the Association's insurance cover with the aim of reducing costs and SL thanked Martin Cox for bringing the renegotiation of the policy to a satisfactory conclusion and also for monitoring the Association's finances in his role as Treasurer.

SL thanked David Knoyle who took over as the Committee's Secretary last year and who has been an invaluable support to everyone. In addition to editing *The Ashtead Resident*, his role has expanded to include those of minute-taker and events secretary, previously carried out by other Committee members, and he has been a huge asset to the Committee.

Thanks are also due to Roger Bennett (RB) who has been unfailing in his diligent review of all of Ashtead's Planning Applications. Although there have been very many straightforward applications, there have also been a number of applications that have required Roger to write a letter of representation to Mole Valley; the letters are all published on our website and referenced in the Spring and Autumn AVNs. Thanks are also due to Peter Shrubsole who now shadows Roger in his Planning role to provide extra resource in this critical area of our work, especially important as the Local Plan is a major issue for Ashtead and its residents.

The committee continues to closely monitor progress and issues relating to the Local Plan. Whilst the Inspectors had completed their examination of the plan, MVDC released a statement in December 2022 to advise "In light of recent announcements by the government, MVDC had taken the decision to pause before moving on to the next stage in its Future Mole Valley timetable. MVDC will await clarification on the government's plans for the planning system and Green Belt before deciding its next course of action." It is hoped that all proposed developments on Green Belt land will now be removed from the Local Plan. The Committee will continue to monitor the Local Plan and will provide information on developments via the ARA website.

David Baker continues to do a lot of work on behalf of Ashtead's residents, primarily on Highways & Rail but also in maintaining the Association's website. He also monitors the ARA's email account and has ensured that, even with the absence of a chairman, any correspondence or issue raised via the ARA chairman's email has been brought to the attention of the necessary people and dealt with accordingly. He has also continued his liaison roles with Surrey Highways, Govia Thameslink, Network Rail (NR) and the station car park operator APCOA Connect. In addition, he continues to monitor the situation with the Green Lane crossing as Network Rail has objected to Surrey County Councils proposed Order to confirm that there is a Public Right of Way (PROW) over the tracks at Green Lane and the issue has now been passed to the Secretary of State for resolution, although we understand that this will not be a speedy process.

Thanks also to Tony Mansell for his continued work as our Membership Secretary and for organising the Road Stewards Summer Meeting together with David Baker. It is the first year since 2019 that Road Stewards have not been impacted by COVID restrictions. Although we now have various options in place for paying membership subscriptions electronically, and their use is gradually increasing, most subscriptions still come in cash through our Road Stewards. It is very clear that they remain the life blood of the Association, and the Committee is very grateful for all that they do to support it.

On March 18th, Lynda Coburn ran her second successful event as Spring Clean Coordinator and we thank her and the volunteers who joined with us and collected the usual stack of black bin bags full of rubbish from our roads, verges and hedges. Clive Stirling warrants special thanks. He was an invaluable asset during our annual Spring Clean collecting as he did all the rubbish sacks and discarded items from all the meeting points around Ashtead and ferrying it all back to the APMH for collection by Mole Valley.

As usual, we published the 2022 Autumn and 2023 Spring issues of our newsletter AVN. These two publications were the first under the editorship of Andy Smith. Andy was a professional journalist with a huge amount of editing experience and our thanks go to him for taking on this role to continue the life of the very much valued *Ashtead Village News*.

The Committee responded to the Boundary Commission's consultation on where to draw the new ward boundaries. Mole Valley District Council's decision to reduce representation to thirteen wards of 3-Councillors each has resulted in the Boundary Commission reducing Ashtead to two wards and 6 councillors who will all be elected at the local elections on 4th May. The two Ashtead wards are named 'Ashtead Common & Lanes' and 'Ashtead Park'.

Referring to Ashtead Park, thanks are given to Peter Ross who is the ARA's lead representative on the ongoing Ashtead Park Restoration project. After many years of neglect and following requests from Ashtead Councillors, MVDC has arranged for working parties to undertake some long overdue maintenance and restoration works. The first working party

was at the end of November and there were around 35 volunteers in attendance. The working party met again on 25th January and further sessions will be arranged throughout 2023. Our thanks go to all the volunteers who are helping with this project.

As ever, the committee was grateful to our “Friends” who, while not on the committee, provided invaluable support to the Association, in particular Di Stirling who represents us on the Joint Residents’ Associations Bus Group.

Honorary Treasurer’s Report

The Honorary Treasurer’s report and the draft 2022 accounts have been published in The Ashtead Resident 2023. Martin Cox (MC) confirmed that the final, approved accounts for 2022 were the same as the draft 2022 accounts and the final signed accounts were available if anybody wanted a copy. MC advised that expenditure in 2022 was significantly less than in 2021 due to the non-recurrence of the website development costs incurred in 2021. The estimated costs for 2023 are £6,000.

Councillor Townsend asked how the insurance costs for 2022 were significantly reduced compared to 2021 (£335 less). MC advised that through his work contacts, he had been able to identify alternative suppliers of insurance at reduced cost.

Councillor Hunt asked for clarification of the subscription & donation income of £6,360 which suggested less than 2600 households pay the annual subscription. MC advised that some subscriptions were yet to be received.

The income from bank interest was queried as it was very low. MC confirmed that interest rates were generally very low for most of 2022 and banks did not pay much interests on the type of business accounts needed by the ARA, where funds are immediately available. A fixed term investment was not an option.

The Report and the Financial Statement were proposed by David Harper and Seconded by Chrissy Kerton. Passed nem con.

Proposed Amendments to the Constitution (Motions 1 to 13)

SL referred to the 13 motions that had been received and that they fell into four sections, these being motions from the Standing Committee, motions from Councillor Hawksworth, motions from Steven Kershaw and a motion from Quentin Armitage. Peter Ross will introduce the motions from the Standing Committee and explain why the Standing Committee is proposing amendments to the constitution. Following that the other people who have submitted motions will briefly explain their motions and why they are needed.

Peter Ross (PR) spoke on behalf of the ARA Committee to explain the proposed changes to the constitution and why they are considered necessary.

PR explained that a sub-committee had been set up to review the constitution to ensure it is up to date and covers governance issues. The sub-committee employed a step by step approach and sought the approval of the full committee after each step and before proceeding with the next one. The proposed new constitution, after approval by the full committee, was published in The Ashtead Resident (TAR) of Spring 2023. However, there is one change to what is stated in TAR. Referring to Table 1, clause 5 of the constitution was to be removed. It is now proposed that it remains as is in the constitution.

The proposed amendments that are significant are described in Table 1 of Appendix 2 of TAR whereas the changes in Table 2 are more administrative and an attempt to tidy-up the constitution. PR referred to the amendments in Table 1 which are labelled Political Neutrality Amendments. The current constitution requires us to support independent councillors. However, if non-independent councillors were elected for Ashtead, the ARA would want to work with them. Support is meant to cover all independent candidates. However, the ARA president has given support to the AI candidates in the forthcoming MVDC elections but there are two other Independent candidates.

Support implies knowledge, assessment and informed decision about candidates. Support implies to the electorate that ARA has knowledge of and approves of independent candidates. We are currently endorsing some but not all independent candidates. We should support because we know how and why someone will be a good councillor. Clause 4c of our constitution states we shall ‘support and encourage individuals who are prepared to stand as candidates for the District Council and the Surrey County Council, who agree to be independent of national political party ties’ but in the upcoming elections there are 5 independent candidates in Park Ward but only 3 seats. How can we provide support in such a situation? Also how can we provide support to a candidate we don’t know or someone who doesn’t attend ARA meetings?

Larry Unthank has done some work on the numbers of votes gained by AI candidates. The ARA has 2911 member households and assuming 1.75 adults per household, there are around 5000 Ashtead voters/adults who are ARA member. At the last district council meeting the AI candidate received 2946 votes and at the last county council election it was 2908 votes. So this suggests that not all ARA members vote for AI candidates but we should represent all ARA

members and the residents of Ashted as a whole. Endorsement of candidates misleads voters as it is not always based on informed decisions and this undermines the democratic process.

PR mentioned some anecdotes. He had been told by an Ashted resident that 'the ARA exists to keep good Tory candidates from being elected' and a past Chairman of the ARA had been told by another Ashted resident that 'I have voted for your party'. The ARA is seen as being part and parcel of the AI party. There are also another group of Ashted residents who are not aware that the ARA constitution requires them to support independent candidates. The ARA needs to have effective working relationships with all councillors and be able to foster relationships. It also needs to be seen to do work on behalf of the whole community. It should be seen to work with the local authority on planning, highways, railway and other issues.

PR then referred to the responses received following the issue of TAR containing the proposed changes to the constitution. Issues raised included support or not of independent candidates, the proposed deletion of clause 5, the short time available for review and debate of the changes and the voting system when only 210 people can be accommodated in the APMH. As a result, the Committee had put forward motions #1-3. Motion #1 is to adjourn part of the AGM to the October meeting. Motion #3 is to ensure any future major constitutional change be subject to a paper ballot. Motion #2 is to put in place further meetings to debate the proposed constitutional changes in motion #3-13 and to hold a paper ballot to determine the outcome of these motions. A paper ballot is recommended as not all members are online and some may be uncomfortable with voting electronically. The results of the paper ballot will be declared at the Autumn meeting. Motion #4 is to approve the constitution amendments in Table 1 of Appendix 2 of TAR and Motion #5 is to approve the Table 2 changes.

PR stated that the proposers of motions #6-13 will speak briefly later during this meeting. PR commented on the motions as follows:

Motions #6 and 7. It is considered that the committee would be acting unlawfully if they approve these motions. This is because they not in agreement with the Human Rights Act of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). The ECHR dates back to Churchill and the Tory government at the end of WWII. Articles 10 and 11 refer to the freedom of association to join a political party, trade union, etc. The motions seek to prevent ARA committee members from joining a political party and it is considered that such a prohibition would not be proportionate. It is considered that the ARA is covered by the HRA of 1998 as it is a quasi-public authority. Although the ARA is not a Parish Council, through its meetings with MVDC together with other North Mole Valley Residents' Associations and its interactions with MVDC on rail, highways and planning issues, the ARA acts in a quasi-public role. The ARA is proposing to introduce a Declaration of Interests register for all committee members so that any membership of a political party is declared and open. If the constitution prevents committee members being a member of a political party then damages could be sought by someone on the committee if they felt their rights are limited by these motions. Also insurers would not indemnify the ARA if we were knowingly in breach of the law.

Regarding motions #8-12 proposed by Steven Kershaw (SK), then they were received immediately after the committee had drawn up motions #1-5 and there is some overlap between Steven's motions and the motions put forward by the committee. PR had spoken briefly to SK before the meeting and there will be further discussions to identify if some of the motions can be withdrawn.

The final motion is #13 and is proposed by Quentin Armitage. A new constitution has been proposed but supporting documents, that would detail the proposed changes and the reasons for these changes, has not yet been received.

PR asked if there were any questions or clarifications required on the above.

Councillor Chris Townsend (CT) stated that he had been a councillor for 30 years, a member of the ARA and a Road Steward but asked why are the changes to the constitution being proposed now? He is happy for ARA committee members to also be members of a political party and thinks there may be some personal issues that are driving the proposed amendments. Mr Mullin said he was not aware that there was an Ashted Independent Party and CT responded that around 15 years ago the Ashted independent councillors had formed the Ashted Independent party so that the independent candidates could be linked together and have a logo for use in elections that would appear on ballot papers.

Councillor Pat Wiltshire disagreed that the ARA is a quasi local authority as it is not subject to the same rules and regulations of a Parish Council. PR replied that the ARA is not a quasi-public body as committee members are all volunteers. However, it does contribute to public decision-making on issues such as highways, rail and planning and so in his view the ARA is a quasi public authority, and as such is covered by the Human Rights Act. Dan Roach disagreed as the ARA is completely voluntary so it would not be covered by the HRA.

Eric Skyte asked what do other Residents' Association include in their constitutions. PR said that other local RAs do not support independent parties and some RAs are registered political parties in their own right.

SL initiated a debate for motions#1 and #2. Motion #1 needs a 50 % majority whilst Motion #2 requires a 67% majority.

Motion #1 stated that *'In light of representations, the ARA Committee proposes adjourning that part of the AGM dealing with the constitution, save for motion 2 below, to the ARA Autumn meeting, as permitted under clause 15 of the existing constitution'*. There were no comments on this motion and it was passed by more than 50%

Motion #2 stated that *'Irrespective of the possible future application of the amendment proposed in motion 3 below this meeting requires the Standing Committee of the Association to put in place arrangements for a) meetings of the Association for the purpose of debating all currently proposed constitutional amendments, such meetings to be held in the period between this meeting and the adjourned AGM; and b) a paper ballot of the members of the Association to determine all currently proposed amendments to the constitution, the results of which are to be binding and announced at the adjourned AGM'*.

CT raised a concern regarding members of the Association. Could people become members of the ARA over the next few months and so be eligible to vote or will the membership be closed from now so that people cannot join simply to have a vote on the constitution changes.

A road steward asked a question about how many ballot papers should be delivered to each address. The ARA committee will look into the voting method and when ballot papers will be issued and will advise members prior to the ballot.

Eric Skyte asked how these meetings will be managed, will they be via Zoom or similar and when they will be held. The meetings will be public meetings for all ARA members, similar to the AGM. All motions will be considered and discussed at the meetings. There will be no canvassing carried out to encourage people to join the ARA so they can vote and road stewards, if they are to distribute the ballot papers, will not be able to/allowed to canvas.

Alan Bradley noted that some of the motions were similar and could be drawn together so that finally there may be less than the current number of motions included on the ballot paper.

Councillor David Hawksworth (DH) asked that the meetings to discuss and debate the motions should be chaired by the ARA President or Vice-President, rather than the chair of the ARA constitution sub-committee.

Councillor Pat Wiltshire (PW) stated that the ARA only represent between a half and one third of Ashted Residents. There are around 6,000 households in Ashted and just over 2000 are members of the ARA so they lack authority to make the proposed changes. PR stated that the number of votes for AI candidates at local election was an even lower percentage but Councillor Garry Stansfield replied that the turnout at local elections was typically only 40%.

The motion #2 was voted upon and it achieved the required 2/3rds majority (it was not unanimous) and so was passed.

Motions #3, 4 & 5 had been discussed earlier by PR.

Motions #6 & 7 had been submitted by Councillor David Hawksworth and he explained why the proposed changes are required. He considered that the ARA committee members should be apolitical and should not therefore be a member of a political party. He disagrees with the statements made earlier that this would make a claim under the Human Rights Act against the ARA to be made in the future. He considered that the ongoing support for AI candidates by ARA would result in continued election success and allow AI councillors to sit on a number of key committees of MVDC and so influence council decisions to the benefit of Ashted residents.

Motions #8-12 had been submitted by Steven Kershaw (SK). SK had not seen the other motions when he submitted his motions and so there was some overlap between motions. SK agreed that motion #8 is covered elsewhere.

Motion #9 requests an application process is put in place for committee members and that the roles of committee members are explained more openly to members.

Motion #10 refers to Clause 5 of the current constitution that was to be removed but following a review by the ARA Constitution sub-committee it will now be retained as is.

Motion#11 is regarding how the Chairman can decide what is urgent in making important decisions. Whilst agreeing this is necessary, any decisions need to be confirmed by the Standing Committee and possibly redacted if not agreed by the Standing Committee.

Motion #12 refers to multi-strand mechanisms for members to vote. Consideration should be given to electronic voting as well as paper ballots.

Motion #13 had been submitted by Quentin Armitage (QA) and he has proposed an alternative third version of the constitution (the other two being the current constitution and the proposed new one from the ARA Standing Committee) for consideration by members. QA was aware of the proposal to adjourn parts of the AGM until the Autumn meeting and so had not provided a detailed explanation of his changes. He explained his concerns with the proposed constitution put forward by the Standing Committee and the main concern was about the political neutrality and whether the members support that change. He also had concerns about some of the proposed management and administration changes and

considered that ARA should still support events and that members cannot be addresses. He also disagrees with the proposal that members are to support the committee.

Appointment of President, Officers and Members of the Committee

There were no nominations due this year for the President or the Vice-President roles. There were three nominations for committee members as follows:

- a) Timothy Robertson, who had been co-opted onto the committee in 2022 (Proposed by John Kester. Seconded by Jim Ratliff)
- b) Committee Member – Steven Lee (Proposed by Professor David K Hawksworth CBE. Seconded by: Professor Patricia Wiltshire)
- c) Committee Member – Steven Kershaw (Proposed by Professor David K Hawksworth CBE. Seconded by: Professor Patricia Wiltshire)

All three were elected onto the Committee unanimously. SL advised that there are still vacancies on the Committee. If anyone is interested in joining the committee then please contact SL or any of the Committee members. Eric Skyte noted that there were now very few female members of the Committee.

There were also nominations for the roles of Officers of the Association as follows:

- a) Chairman – Timothy Robertson (Proposed by Maria Magdalena Jones. Seconded by Carol Kester)
- b) Vice-Chairman – Peter Shrubsole (Proposed by Janet Watson. Seconded by Douglas Watson)
- c) Hon. Treasurer – Martin Cox (Proposed by Sue Dancer. Seconded by Betty Dancer)
- d) Hon. Secretary – David Knoyle (Proposed by Chris Haywood. Seconded by Sue Grant)

All four were elected unanimously.

Appointment of the Examiner

Martin Cox proposed Tim Tennant and he was seconded by David Knoyle. Passed nem con.

Any Other Business

Eric Skyte asked what is happening about the state of the roads in Ashtead which currently are in a disgraceful condition. David Baker reported that the current approach is to patch up the roads and to complete full repairs later. There are so many potholes and repairs needed that there is a big backlog of work. CT agreed that roads are generally in a very poor state at the moment. Surrey County Council had recently changed their contractor for road repairs and there had been some problems identified with the new contractor. They are only repairing potholes that are reported and ignoring the repair to other nearby potholes. Councillor David Harper suggested that people take photographs of potholes and upload them onto the highways website.

A question was asked about the small piece of land at the entrance to Moat Court from Woodfield Lane. Councillor Chris Hunt explained that the land was owned by the local NHS Trust but the land (a narrow verge in effect) had been sold in April 2023 for £4,550. It is understood that plans have been produced for a small, narrow dwelling on the land but no planning application has been made. There are trees on the land but they are unlikely to warrant a TPO.

Presentation of Election Candidates

SL mentioned that there are MVDC elections to be held on 4th May and that there were now only two wards in Ashtead – Lanes and Common, and Park – each with three councillors. There are three Ashtead Independent candidates in Ashtead Lanes and Common Ward. They are David Hawksworth, Patricia Wiltshire and Chris Hunt and they all made themselves known. There are three Ashtead Independent candidates and two further Independent candidates in Ashtead Park. Mary Cooper and Garry Stansfield are two of the three Ashtead Independent candidates and they made themselves known to the meeting. The third candidate was Gerry Sevenoaks but he was not present. The two Independent candidates were David Harper and Raj Patel and they made themselves known. There was also one Liberal Democrat candidate present, Ross Moncur for Lanes and Common Ward, and he made himself known to the meeting.

Glynis Peterkin

SL thanked Glynis Peterkin for all her hard work and dedication to the ARA over the past 10 years. Glynis was leaving the Standing Committee at the AGM having been a member since 2012 and Chairman of the Committee from 2014 until she stood down from that role in 2022. She was presented with a bouquet of flowers by David Baker on behalf of the Standing Committee.

MEETING CLOSED

SPRING MEETING

David Baker introduced Nigel Bond who is the Chairman of Friends of Ashtead Rye Meadows Wetlands. Nigel gave a very interesting presentation entitled Rye Meadows. He explained the status of Rye Meadows as being Fields in Trust having been designated as an environmental space in perpetuity by the land owners Daphne and George Burnett. Rye Meadows are located to the north of the Rye Brook in the Links Road area. Nigel gave details of the geology and history of the area and explained that the source of Rye Brook is a spring at the top of Farm Lane. There are many footpaths and bridges that serve the wetlands and these are maintained by volunteers. Work also involves restoring and maintaining the Rye Brook. One field of Rye Meadows is now part of the Centenary Fields scheme in honour and remembrance of those residents of Ashtead who perished in WW1.

Nigel advised that bio-diversity had been increasing but was now, sadly, in reverse due to sustained pollution of Rye Brook. He finished the presentation by responding to questions from the audience. David Baker thanked Nigel for his presentation.

MINUTES OF THE DEFERRED ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ASHTEAD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION HELD IN THE APMH ON 25TH OCTOBER 2023

Simon Ling, the President of the ARA, introduced the second part of the meeting and re-opened the Annual General Meeting, part of which it had been agreed at the AGM of 26th April 2023, to defer until the Autumn meeting. At the AGM in April, it had been agreed to hold a ballot to decide upon the motions that had been submitted regarding the constitution of the ARA. Following the public meetings held in the summer and discussions with the people who had submitted motions, only one motion remained on the ballot paper together with a question from the ARA standing committee to gauge the opinion of residents on how to proceed.

The counting of votes by members of the ARA standing committee had taken place on 24th October and had been overseen by Simon Ling, Vice-President Larry Unthank and David Hawksworth, who had submitted the motion on the ballot paper. Simon announced the result of the ballot as follows:

The Question asked by the ARA Standing Committee

Yes Votes	405
No Votes	152

The motion proposed by David Hawksworth

Yes Votes	200
No Votes	353

Therefore the motion put forward by David Hawksworth was not carried.

There were a number of questions from the floor regarding the ballot as follows:

- Q.** Councillor Chris Townsend asked as a point of order whether it could be confirmed that votes were cast correctly as extra ballot papers may have been completed by people.
- A.** Ballot papers were delivered by Road Stewards and committee members and the number delivered was based on the ARA records of how many people over the age of 18 lived at each residence. If someone wanted additional ballot papers because there were more eligible voters at the address then they contacted the membership secretary to request additional ballot papers and explain why they were needed. If someone photocopied the ballot paper to provide an extra copy, they were told to initial the back of the ballot paper. The ballot paper was printed on quite thick paper and so photocopies were easy to identify and very few ballots were photocopies and these were initialled. Tim Robertson explained that we are a residents association and not a government body and it was decided it was not a good use of ARA funds to make the ballot process 100% foolproof.
- Q.** Audrey Unthank stated that the turnout was very low. Why was this and was it because the ballot was not well advertised nor well explained? She also asked how secure were the ballot boxes as it appeared that could have been tampered with during the 6 week voting period.
- A.** Peter Shrubsole, the chairman of the Governance and Constitution Sub-Committee, agreed that the turnout was low at around 12%. The original motions were all covered in The Ashtead Resident of Spring 2023 and subsequent information was provided via the ARA website and on the ARA notice boards. The committee had

made good efforts to explain the purpose of the ballot and to make members aware of it. The ballot boxes all had double seals and all were intact when the ballot closed on 23rd October. It is not considered feasible for any ballot papers to have been removed from the boxes as none of the boxes were anywhere near full of ballot papers.

- Q.** Councillor Garry Stansfield asked why did the ballot paper contain recommendations on how to vote? This is not normal and gave the impression we were telling people how to vote.
- A.** Peter Shrubsole explained that the ballot paper stated the opinion of the committee on the motion and question on the ballot paper. This is normal for businesses when they are seeking approval of changes from their shareholders or membership. The result of the ballot means that there is no change to the current constitution at this time.
- Q.** Councillor Chris Townsend stated that he thought the results of the ballot were in conflict. The question from the committee wanted the ARA not to support any political party but the result of the vote on the motion allows committee members to be a member of a political party.
- Q.** Councillor David Hawksworth referred to the low turnout and asked that a vote via a show of hands be held at this meeting, as that is what the current constitution states.
- A.** There had been two motions discussed and agreed at the AGM on 26th April. One of these motions was to allow a paper ballot to be held to decide upon the other motions submitted regarding changes to the constitution. Therefore the ballot results were binding and a show of hands was not needed. The reason for a paper ballot was to allow as many people to vote as possible and even though turnout was low, it was well in excess of the numbers that attended the AGM and the capacity of the venue.
- Q.** Councillor Chris Hunt thanked the committee and Mr Quentin Armitage for all their work on reviewing the constitution and holding public meetings. He had received three ballot papers and he assumed one was for his son who is now at university and so does not live in Ashted. Given that the committee want the ARA to be independent of any political party, would they continue to invite speakers to their meetings, such as the Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey, who are representatives of the Conservative or other political parties?
- A.** Peter Shrubsole also thanked Mr. Quentin Armitage for his work and for agreeing to withdraw his motion. Regarding the receipt of three ballot papers then that is a result of the ARA records being slightly out of date. The committee relied upon the honesty of Ashted residents to only return ballot papers of those entitled to receive them. The committee agreed that it would be useful to have a talk from the Surrey PCC as it gave the residents a chance to better understand the role, ask questions and to hold her to account, irrespective of her political allegiances. Similar invitations will probably be made in future.
- Q.** The quality of the ballot was questioned as ballot papers were not numbered and the methodology is considered flawed. Why was a show of hands at the AGM not considered adequate? Is the constitution now amended to refer to a paper ballot?
- A.** Peter Shrubsole replied that the ARA committee had arranged a ballot that was considered appropriate for a residents association and that was affordable. The constitution does not refer to paper ballots but the motion that was discussed and agreed at the AGM on 26th April enabled the ballot to take place and to legitimise the result on this occasion, as was previously mentioned.
- Q.** Larry Unthank said that it was disappointing that only just over 500 ballots were returned – around 1 in 8 of those issued. When he had been chairman of the ARA there were around 6500 members but currently there were far less. He had offered assistance to the new Membership Secretary when he took on the role a few years ago but his offer had been refused.
- A.** The current Membership Secretary, Tony Mansell, replied that the reasons for reducing membership should not be personalised and that we should be looking at the way forward. Some of the comments made about the ballot and its organisation and management were incorrect. It is important that the committee and the Larry all want to work to the same end.
- Q.** Councillor Chris Townsend said that we are where we are but he was disappointed that the ARA would be non-party political if changes are made to the constitution in line with Peter Ross's motion. The ARA had supported independent candidates since it was formed nearly 80 years ago and he wanted that to continue.
- A.** Peter Ross responded that it was the ARA Committee who had agreed the proposed changes to the constitution and the wording on the ballot paper. It was not his motion nor question and he was concerned about the degree of personalisation that was being applied to these matters.

The Chairman, Tim Robertson, brought the meeting to a close by stating that there will now be a period of reflection based upon the ballot results and the committee will advise how it intends to proceed in due course. He thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting closed at 9.30pm.

NOTES OF THE AUTUMN MEETING OF THE ASHTEAD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION HELD IN THE APMH ON 25TH OCTOBER 2023

Simon Ling welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained there was a change of order to that publicised. The meeting would commence with a talk by Lisa Townsend, the Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), and this would be followed after a short interval by the completion of the deferred AGM from the meeting held on 26th April 2023.

The Chairman of the ARA, Tim Robertson, introduced Lisa Townsend and welcomed her to the meeting. Lisa is the elected Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner.

Lisa explained that she was elected to the role in May 2021 and is due for re-election in May 2024. Her role is to hold the Chief Constable of Surrey to account on behalf of the residents of Surrey. She has a background in the law. Her role involves her in setting that part of the council tax that covers policing. She was accompanied tonight by Hannah Whatham of Surrey Police (Mole Valley Safer Neighbourhood Sergeant) as Lisa has no police operational responsibilities. There are a series of public meetings being held across Surrey over the coming weeks where the public have a chance to put questions to Lisa, the Chief Constable and the Surrey Police Borough Commander. There is a meeting tomorrow, 26th October, in Beare Green and another on 6th November in Bourne Hall, Ewell. Lisa then agreed to respond to questions from the audience.

- Q.** Are there any plans to increase the numbers in neighbourhood teams and re-introduce dedicated constables to areas including Ashtead?
 - A.** Surrey, including Mole Valley, has more police than ever and there are no plans to change current arrangements. Hannah Watham explained the organisation of the Mole Valley Neighbourhood team. There are 6 PCSOs in the team and they engage a lot with local communities. Lisa Townsend added that many PCSOs go on to become full PCs.
- Q.** The nearest police offices for residents in Ashtead are Epsom or Elmbridge (or go to a Met station in Sutton or Kingston) both only open 9-5pm Monday to Friday. Are there any plans to open offices 24/7?
 - A.** There are no plans for local police stations to be open 24 hours per day. In the past such stations have not been busy and they are not good value for money.
- Q.** We have recently learned of the dangerous crumbly concrete inside Reigate police station potentially affecting the monitoring of CCTV, are CCTV cameras being monitored, if not when will this be re-introduced?
 - A.** Lisa replied that CCTV cameras are being monitored. Local CCTV cameras are the responsibility of MVDC and engagement with MVDC is sometimes a struggle. Hannah reported that of 12 recently reported incidents in Mole Valley via CCTV, none had led to a prosecution. Currently, video footage from doorbell cameras or similar is more useful to the police. Lisa stated that the current trend is away from CCTV and currently Redhill has no council operated CCTV cameras.
- Q.** What are the current crime and anti-social behaviour priorities for Ashtead?
 - A.** Hannah advised that the top 6 priorities are confronting anti-social behaviour, reducing serious violence, tackling rural crime, cutting business crime, catching burglars and protecting the vulnerable.
- Q.** Do Surrey, investigate minor crime? Ashtead, appears, to have seen an increase in vehicle crime in particular car theft what action is being taken?
 - A.** Yes, minor crime is investigated. Hannah said that the police consider proportionality but every crime is investigated and custody centres are busy! Lisa advised that recently every police cell across Surrey was occupied and she considers this to be good and a sign that the police are effective.
- Q.** Street lighting goes off in Ashtead at circa 1am and back on at 5am. It has been said that Ashtead have experienced a spike in low level – high volume crime like thefts from vehicles; spreading into potential organised crime when one considers the thefts of high valued vehicles. How is the PCC working with SCC and MVDC to prevent crime through improved lighting and crime prevention drives?
 - A.** The focus of the police is on preventing crime and providing services to victims. Hannah said that the police do not know if there is a link with the lack of street lighting and increased crime. Motor vehicle theft is rising and a recent upsurge in the Ashtead area now appears to have moved to Epsom. Lisa confirmed that there are cross county discussions on subjects such as vehicle thefts.
- Q.** Recruitment and retention of staff. A) How do Surrey stand on staffing levels and B) Are there any issues in staff retention through i) officers being poached by the MET, ii) Officers choosing to retire early, and iii) officers resigning to take up alternative careers?
 - A.** Current staffing levels are good. Some staff have transferred to Surrey from other forces. The Met Police had caused some issues as it had offered a £5k welcome payment and recruitment is a problem as Surrey is

expensive. Turnover of staff is low compared to other sectors. Hannah stated that early retirement had been a problem in the past. Regarding alternative careers then there were more people moving into the police from other careers than the other way around.

- Q.** There has been much talk about businesses in the retail industry facing a dramatic rise in theft-shoplifting and often violence in furtherance of such crimes. What is the current policy about investigating shoplifting offences in Surrey – do you feel that our local traders are receiving an adequate service from Surrey Police.
- A.** Shoplifting is a serious crime against shop owners and workers and it impacts everyone through higher prices in shops. Hannah added that it was not a major problem in Ashtead. Across Mole Valley there has been a spike in cases and this is being addressed through CCTV and building partnerships. WhatsApp groups for businesses are being set up and information sharing tools are being investigated. There are often underlying issues about the reason for crime (drug use, etc).
- Q.** In using information technology to assist in modern policing, how is Surrey Police making best use of the Police National Database (PND) in respect of information sharing with other police areas, particularly around understanding complex safeguarding of young people and the protection of victims in the domestic abuse setting and or repeat offenders in respect of criminal activities and anti social behaviour?
- A.** Hannah responded that the PND and other systems were absolutely essential in fighting crime. Information is often requested under Clare's Law and care is taken in disclosure of sensitive information. Safeguarding units share information with other bodies.
- Q.** Staying on the use of the PND by Surrey Police, how are they using the 'Watch lists' and 'Facial Searching' to quickly 'join the dots' on cases which in isolation seem low level; but when looked at in a broader manner via PND, shines a light of potential higher risk of harm by offenders?
- A.** This is a hot topic for the police, as is Artificial Intelligence (AI). Criminals use it and so the police must up their game in this area. Facial recognition is useful in shopping centres or other areas where large members of the public gather. It is not appropriate for use in private roads.
- Q.** Does Surrey Police have an active program of recruiting volunteers in and around Ashtead – Special Constables?
- A.** There are a many police support volunteers and the Surrey Police website contains details about the many roles that are available.
- Q.** SCC Councillor Chris Townsend asked how is the performance of Surrey Police assessed and what is your greatest concern?
- A.** There was a consultation with the public held 2 years ago and that input to the plan. Major items in the plan include road safety, communities are safe, people feel safe and engaging with the public. To monitor progress against the plan I meet with the Chief Constable regularly, the last time being yesterday, and we go through the priorities. One of the top priorities is road safety and speeding. The priorities are still valid and the plan strikes the right balance between detail and maintaining flexibility. The safety of women and children is one of the top priorities.
- Q.** MVDC Councillor Pat Wiltshire asked if Surrey Police has a Wildlife Officer. She, as chairman of MVDC, has a concern about the comment made regarding engagement with MVDC but will discuss that outside this meeting.
- A.** Surrey Police do not have a Wildlife Officer.
- Q.** MVDC Councillor Gerry Sevenoaks said it was good to know we had more police than ever but where are they? Also the Commissioner's office employs 20 people and has a budget of £3M pa which is a lot more than the neighbouring county, Sussex – why is this?
- A.** Local officers can't deal with all crimes. The extra officers are dealing with online fraud, which is the most common crime in Surrey which particularly is targeted at old people living alone and the young. Sussex is not considered a good comparison. Surrey PCC has a budget of around 0.5% of the total Surrey budget and this compares favourably with most other counties whose budgets are typically around or just below 1%. Surrey PCC department had managed to obtain an additional £9M from central government to spend on video surveillance and Lisa is proud of her team and the work they do.
- Q.** MVDC Councillor Chris Hunt asked if Surrey Police support Community Speedwatch.
- A.** Hannah replied that she is not directly involved with this topic. Lisa said one of the difficulties of the scheme is how to get people to do it. She will find out more about it and will advise Chris Hunt.
- Q.** Pauline Davey is the Ashtead PCSO but how often is she in Ashtead?
- A.** Hannah responded that Pauline is probably in Ashtead a couple of times each week.
- Q.** What can be done about building contractors' lorries blocking access to main roads as this is a major issue at present on Barnett Wood Lane?

- A.** Unfortunately the police have no legal powers to prevent this happening. Problems should be reported to Trading Standards as they deal with builders lorries and can exert some influence.
- Q.** Lynda Coburn asked where can one find help about online crime?
- A.** Advice is available online or contact any agency or Neighbourhood Watch. Helpful information is also available through Crimestoppers and Action Fraud.
- Q.** Steve Kershaw asked about Action Fraud as he thinks it does not investigate fraud. Is there a monetary threshold that must be crossed before fraud is investigated?
- A.** There is a national approved standard for dealing with fraud and SCC is recognised as a leader in dealing with fraud crime. Resources are stretched in this area and other appropriate agencies are also used.
- Q.** MVDC Councillor Garry Stansfield asked if currently judges do enough to support the police and does money raised by Surrey get spent elsewhere?
- A.** Surrey is a relatively safe and rich place so it pays more though the government for policing. Regarding judges their role is not to support the police, but it is to see that justice is done. It is important that everyone in the justice process does their role to the best of their ability.
- Q.** Tony Mansell said that in 1971 he joined a police force and in the 1990s he left a police service. How should Surrey Police be categorised now?
- A.** Surrey is a police service and the people in Surrey Police, from top to bottom, want to serve!
- Q.** What would Surrey residents miss if the PCC role was removed?
- A.** The Commissioner is the person the public hold responsible for police spending and holding the Chief Constable to account. The public also hold the PCC to account. If removed then there would probably be a group of councillors who would fill the role but their focus will not be on policing. It is up to the public to decide which one they want!
- Q.** SCC Councillor Chris Townsend asked how Surrey Police will attempt to reduce spending by £17m and how that will impact policing?
- A.** The annual budget for Surrey Police is approaching £300M and the £17M is to be saved over the next 4-5 years. Austerity measures over the past 10 years have impacted the police very hard. So a lot of work the police shouldn't be doing has already gone to others to do. Its core mission is to prevent crime, detect crime and keep people safe. It will look to share some services with Sussex in addition to those it already does (e.g. HR). Collaboration with other means doing things as good or better than at present but for less money. It is a challenge. Council Tax increases make a difference but pay increases have to be paid and are worth paying and good progress is being made in making savings.

Tim Robertson thanked Lisa Townsend and Hannah Watham for their time and the useful information they had provided during the talk and the question and answer session.

ASHTEAD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 17th APRIL 2024 MOTIONS SUBMITTED

Motion 1 submitted by the ARA Standing Committee (unanimously supported by the Committee).

Following the outcome of the paper ballot of members held in 2023, this meeting approves the following amendments to the constitution of the ARA:

- Clause 2e to state *'to have no affiliation with any candidate or any registered political party and remain independent of any party ties'*.
- Clause 4c to state *'In all matters, and always, act solely in accordance with the objects of the Association'*.
- Clause 4d to state *'continue to support by considered suggestion and constructive criticism the efforts of elected Ashtead councillors without prejudice to their independence of the Association'*.
- Clause 17 to be removed in its entirety.

HON TREASURER'S REPORT (2023 ACCOUNTS)

The Association incurred a substantial increase in costs during 2023, whilst income from all sources remained unchanged. The net result was a deficit for the year of £3,060, further details are provided below.

Income

Members subscriptions fell to £6,127, down by 3.8% on 2022. Use of the payment portal on the ARA website, fell from £715 in 2022 to £500 this year. All other subscription payment methods were used in approximately the same proportions as last year.

Given the relatively stable bank account positions, during the year and after careful consideration, the committee decided to place some funds into higher-yield bank deposit accounts – all with Lloyds Bank and under the existing bank mandate. One of the new deposit accounts is on 32 days-notice and the other account on a 6-month fixed term deposit.

Expenditure

Total expenditure for the year was £9,410, up £3,808 on 2022. Notable expenditure items include:-

- Costs related to the Proposed Constitutional Changes £1,934
- Purchase of equipment for work on Ashtead Park and other 'green' items £473
- Additional equipment for the Village Spring Clean £298
- Hire of APMH for Defibrillator Training £113

Balance Sheet & Reserves

The Association remains in a very robust financial position, with just under £28,000 in accounts at Lloyds Bank; making us well placed to meet any potential expenditure that may be necessary in the future, in the execution of our responsibilities to the Village.

Not included with our 2022 accounts is a bank account balance of £735 for the maintenance and upkeep of the Ashtead War Memorial outside St. Georges Church in Barnett Wood Lane.

From myself and on behalf of my fellow Committee Members, our grateful thanks to the Road Stewards for their invaluable work distributing our various publications and collecting the annual subs plus promoting the Association generally.

Finally, I wish to thank our Membership Secretary, Tony Mansell for his help and valued input in maintaining our membership records and assisting in the compilation of this year's Financial Statement and thank you to Tim Tennent for his time as Examiner of the Accounts.

Martin Cox
February 2024

ASHTEAD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Financial Statement for the year ended 31st December 2023

	<u>£</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>£</u>
<u>INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT</u>					
<u>Income</u>					
Subscription & Donations	6,369			6,127	
Interest	12			223	
Miscellaneous Receipts	69	6,450		-	6,349
<u>Expenditure</u>					
Communications					
<i>"Ashtead Village News" &</i>					
<i>"The Ashtead Resident"</i>	3,157			5,103	
Website,PC,IT	275			562	
Meeting Expenses	656			976	
Insurance	731			754	
Membership Administration	386			565	
General Administration	102			167	
Gifts & Donations	295			986	
Other Items	-	5,602		298	9,410
Profit / (Loss) for the Year		<u>848</u>		<u>(3,060)</u>	

BALANCE SHEET

General Fund

Balance brought forward	30,190	31,038
Surplus (Loss) for the Year	848	(3,060)
Total Net Funds at Year End	<u>31,038</u>	<u>27,978</u>

Represented by

Bank Balances	31,038	27,978
Sundry Debtors/Creditors	-	-
Totals	<u>31,038</u>	<u>27,978</u>

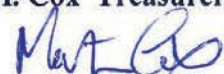
As at 31st December 2023, the Hon Treasurer holds a stock of 2nd class postage stamps.

Not included above is a bank account in the name of Ashtead War Memorial Fund,

A deposit account held by ARA accrued £129 of interest income on 31-12-23, which is not reflected above.

Signed by Peter Shrubsole on behalf of the Committee

M. Cox Treasurer

I confirm that I have examined the above accounts, and that they accord with the vouchers, documents and information supplied to me.

Signed by T Tennent on the 22nd February 2024



FROM THE CHAIR

It has been a very busy year for Ashtead Residents' Association, and the year ahead will be equally busy, as discussed in more detail below. Several long-term valuable members of the ARA have stepped down during the year, namely our former President Simon Ling, Vice President Janet Marsh and Committee Member Peter Stanyard. On behalf of the ARA, I thank them for their years of service to the Association and to Ashtead.

Last December, the ARA Committee held an extraordinary meeting to discuss initiatives to modernise the ARA. This work will continue over the medium term, however in the short term the Committee will be addressing the following identified priorities:

Membership: The number of members has been declining over the years. The Committee are exploring with all members, particularly Road Stewards, a number of options. These include the possibility of making all residents/businesses members of the ARA; migrating to voluntary subscriptions with advertising revenue funding the ARA activity; stimulating and enhancing the role of the Road Stewards, acknowledging their valuable link between the Committee and members; seeking new Committee members, particularly younger and diverse residents.

Publications: Previously the ARA had two publications, *Ashtead Village News* and *The Ashtead Resident*. These will now merge to form one publication, *The Ashtead Resident*, in the longer term migrating to a predominantly electronic document available through the ARA website and associated social media outlets. Hard copies will still be available for those unable to access the electronic version.

Effective: The ARA, on behalf of members, presents a recognised and influential voice on planning and local issues, recent examples being The Murreys development and the railway foot crossings. The ARA have also been working with partners to improve Ashtead Park and continue to coordinate the annual Spring Clean. The Committee aim to work closer and, where possible, support local voluntary organisations and charities to the betterment of Ashtead and its residents, and aim to improve engagement with a wider range of people.

The ARA will have a stall at this year's Ashtead Village Day and at the Ashtead Peace Memorial Hall centenary celebrations. Please do come along and let us have your views on how to modernise the ARA to better serve the residents of Ashtead. Alternatively send an email to: ashteadra@tiscali.co.uk.

Peter Shrubsole, Acting Chair of Ashtead Residents' Association

PLANNING REPORT

In the Autumn 2023 issue of *Ashtead Village News*, we reported on two major planning applications, namely Marsden Nursery **MO/2022/0474** and Murreys Court, that were in various stages of submission.

The application for 23 dwellings on the site of Marsden Nursery (Ashtead Garden Centre) was presented to Mole Valley District Council (MVDC) Planning Committee with a recommendation for refusal solely due to its failure to provide a satisfactory level of affordable housing on site. We had objected to the application in the strongest possible terms recommending refusal because of inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Also we were of the opinion that the design and bulk of the dwellings failed to respect the character of the area. We are delighted to report that these further reasons for refusal were agreed with a motion put forward by Ashtead Councillors sitting on the MVDC Planning Committee.

Following the public consultation in December 2022 by Levanter on behalf of Beechcroft Developments Ltd for the redevelopment of Murreys Court we have been able to respond to their planning applications **MO2023/1538 & 1539**. The development consists of 60 Assisted Living Units and a 66-bed Care Home. Additionally the Grade II listed Barn would be retained and refurbished along with parts

of other buildings on the site. Since the draft Local Plan indicated approximately 23 dwellings we have objected on grounds of overdevelopment, and additional traffic movements 24/7 to service the Care Home through The Murreys, which is the primary entrance.

Furthermore, the immediate area is subject to flooding, and we have expressed our belief that the proposed scheme to manage the additional run-off of rainwater, etc, is inadequate and unproven. We have endorsed these comments following the submission of additional and amended plans and information.

In addition we have submitted letters of representation to MVDC on the following planning applications:-

2023/1441 – 1A Craddocks Parade: Conversion of existing upper floor accommodation into three self-contained flats – REFUSED

2023/1635 – 19 Taleworth Road: Part single, part two storey rear and side extensions – REFUSED

2024/0049 – 106 Barnett Wood Lane: Erection of a single storey detached double garage – decision pending

2024/0092 – 220 China Express, Barnett Wood Lane: Erection of a first floor conservatory – decision pending

If you wish to discuss a planning matter, please email plans@ashteadresidents.org.uk or call **01372 274925**.

Roger Bennett

ROAD STEWARDS

Volunteering as a Road Steward remains a vital role for Ashtead Residents' Association; even in this "digital age" more than 50% of subscriptions are paid by cash, and we are extremely grateful to those who perform this function, both now and in the past. **Paul Rutterford** is now the Road Steward for Aston Close, **Lynda Patterson** will cover the vacant role in part of Stag Leys, and **Karen McGuigan** is now responsible for the whole of Petters Road.

Many of our Road Stewards are approaching the twilight of their years, and having no Steward in an area damages our ability to grow our membership, and our income! By the time you read this, the ARA Committee will have met with its Road Stewards to explore new ways of working; watch this space!

The table below is of roads where a Road Steward is needed, so if you know anyone in them who might be able and willing to help, please point them in our direction!

Alexander Godley Close	Crofton and Woodfield Lane	Grange Close	Mulberry Way	Stonycroft and Old Stede Close
Aquila Close	Cunliffe and Dawson Courts	Green Lane (Ermyrn Way)	Oakhill Close	The Cedars (Ermyrn Way)
Barnett Wood Lane 101-213, 102-196b, Mulberry Court	Darcy Place	Greville Close and Court	Oakhill Road	The Hilders
Beauclaire Close	Darcy Road	Greville Park Road	Ottways Lane	The Ridings
Berry Meade and Close	Delderfield	Griffin Court	Ottways Lane East	The Street
Birch Court	Dene Road	Hatherwood	Park Lane North	The Warren
Blacksmith Close	Devitt Close	Headley Lodge	Park Lane South	Timberhill
Bramley Grove	Duckworth Drive	Heathfields Close	Park Walk	Warren Court
Bramley Way 20-135	Elliston Way	Hillside Road (lower)	Pound Court	Westfield
Brancaster Grove	Ermyrn Close	Howard Close	Purcell's Close	Whitefriars Close
Brookers Close	Ermyrn Way	Kingfisher Close	Quarry Close	Wishford Court
Chaffers Mead 1-36	Floral Court	Laurette, Marguerite and Westmead Courts	Quarry Gardens	Woodfield Close
Craddocks Ave 2-48 1-51; 97-191	Forest Way	Links Road 43-93 and Links Place	Read Road	Woodfield Lane and Grenville Place
	Gate Cottages	Marble Hill	Rectory Close	Woodfield Lane
	Gaywood Road		Rectory Lane	Woodlands
	Gollin Court		Rosedale	
			Rutland Close	
			South View Road	*= approx.

If you are able to help, please contact our Membership Secretary, **Tony Mansell**, on 01372 877438, or by using the form on our website.

COUNCILLORS' REPORT

2024 marks the Centenary of the Ashtead Peace Memorial Hall, and on behalf of all of Ashtead's Councillors I would like to thank the APMH committee and volunteers who have worked hard over this time to maintain and improve this facility for the benefit of all in Ashtead. Do please support their activities, especially in this special year for the Hall.

As a group we have been pressing for the toilets in the APMH car park to be upgraded by the District Council and are pleased to know that council officers are looking at how this can be progressed. Sadly the impact of national politics and group whips was seen when the ruling party at the District Council voted for the inclusion of building on the Green Belt in Ermyrn Way when the draft Local Plan was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate as part of the formal plan-making process. At the time we knew the Government was considering views on changing/clarifying Green Belt advice, and so we spoke and voted against including the land. More recently, the Government has now said that the draft Mole Valley Plan had been progressed too far for these sites to be excluded at this stage, but plans that have not been progressed so far can have Green Belt land removed! Thanks to such decisions and subject to the final parts of the process being completed, it now looks like this land will be allocated for housing and Ashtead will grow bigger. Key issues like the Ermyrn Way / Leatherhead Road junction will have to be sorted at any planning application stage.

Being Independent we have no party political line to follow when speaking up for Ashtead's residents, and we are likewise free to work with all, regardless of their own politics. From housing issues to the state of local leisure centres, we are here to help. We have met several residents at our regular drop-in advice surgeries already this year where these and other issues have been raised. Our surgeries are held 2-4pm on the first Saturday of each month at Ashtead Library, so please do come along to raise issues directly with us if you want. Alternatively please visit our website at www.ashteadindependents.org and use the Contact Us page. Thank you.

Chris Hunt, Leader of Ashtead Independents



Ashtead Horticultural Society

ASHTEAD HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

With the first signs of Spring all around us, Ashtead Horticultural Society is looking forward to an active year in 2024. We have a great selection of evening talks, a coach trip to the home of Anne Boleyn, and two horticultural shows where members can demonstrate their gardening expertise.



The Rose Garden, Hever Castle (© Hever Castle)

Our first evening talk was in February. The next one, on 13th March, will be about Langley Vale Centenary Wood, 641 acres managed by the Woodland Trust and just a short walk from Ashtead. The wood commemorates the centenary of the First World War and about 180,000 trees have been planted since the site was acquired in 2014. After that, on 10th April, we will hear “Tales from the Potting Shed” by Jean Griffin, who often talks about gardening on BBC Radio. Our Autumn talks will be on 9th October (“Plight of the Bumble Bee”) and 13th November (demonstration of Christmas decorations). Entry to the talks is free for members and £3.00 for non-members.

Our 139th Summer Show will be on 20th July and the 71st Autumn Show will be on 7th September, both in Ashtead Peace Memorial Hall. Other events during the year include our Coffee & Cake Morning on 18th May, which includes a plant sale, and will be in a private garden in Grays Lane. On 19th June we have a coach outing to Hever Castle Gardens, the home of Anne Boleyn and subsequently, in the 1900s, of William Waldorf Astor who commissioned extensive work on the gardens including the manual excavation of the 38-acre lake. On 24th July there will be a Garden Walk to 3 private gardens in the area of Church Road, Oakfield Road and Greville Park Avenue.



A beautiful basket of flowers, fruit and vegetables in our 2023 Autumn Show

Our 2024 Show Programme was recently published and distributed to members. We are very grateful to all our advertisers and sponsors, many of whom offer discounts to our members; some also offer prizes at our Summer and Autumn Shows. Their support is invaluable. Membership of Ashtead Horticultural Society costs only £5.00. If you are interested in joining, or just to learn more about us, go to our website www.ashteadhorticulturalsociety.uk or email membership@ashteadhorticulturalsociety.uk.

Alec Robinson

PLEASE HELP OUR ROAD STEWARDS!

Since Covid, people seem reluctant to speak to callers at their door, which means our Road Stewards often have to make 2 or even 3 visits; this gets harder with age!

If you can pay online, it will be a great help, and it has never been easier to pay your £2.50 subscription. You can do it via the Association’s website (plus a 20p handling fee) at www.ashteadresidents.org.uk, **OR** by bank transfer to the ARA membership account; **OR** by Standing Order (via the website or your bank).

The bank details are as follows: Ashtead Residents’ Association, Sort Code 30-80-33, Account No. 19412868. The payment reference is vital – **your name won’t suffice** – please use your home’s number or name, and the **second** part of your postcode, for example ‘Dunmovin 2ES’ or ‘6A 1AR’ (we don’t need the KT21 part). Cheques (if you have any) will be fine. Cash is, of course, acceptable.

Tony Mansell

The Ashtead Resident (incorporating Ashtead Village News) is published twice a year – in Spring and Autumn. Our newsletter reports on local issues and the work of the Ashtead Residents’ Association as well as promoting local voluntary organisations including sports clubs, special interest and community groups and charities. Space is limited but if you would like to be included in our list of contributors please email our Editor, Andy Smith, editor@ashteadresidents.org.uk who will let you know deadlines. If you have experience editing or writing for newsletters and magazines of this type, and would like to help the ARA put this publication together in future, please let Andy know.

ASSTEAD ART GROUP

Ashtead Art Group kicks off the new season with a full programme of demonstrations and painting evenings to both interest and challenge its members in the coming months. Established in 1967 and very much part of the village scene in Ashtead, the AAG will also be joining in the celebrations for the Ashtead Peace Memorial Hall's centenary, along with other regular hall users, this summer.

For those with access to the zoom demonstration by Laura Reiter at the beginning of February the first painting evening was a challenge to "Paint like Laura" – an interesting introduction into the world of abstract painting – while the live 4th March and 8th April demonstrations will focus on still life in oil and on urban scenes respectively.

Guests are welcome to these demonstrations at the Ralli Room in the APMH at 7.15pm for a 7.30 start. If you're interested in exploring oil or mixed media, a visitor's fee of £5 will ensure you a seat. Better still, why not join this friendly club as a full member and enjoy regular Monday night painting sessions in the company of like-minded people. Details of how to join on our website www.ashteadartgroup.co.uk or check us out on our Facebook page.



Finally, a date for the diary – The AAG Spring Exhibition will be held at Denbies Vineyard Gallery, Dorking, from 22nd April until 5th May. Lots of stunning artworks to browse or buy. Free entry.

Audrey Mitchell



"Autumn Contemplation" by Elaine Baigrie

THIS IS ELECTRIFYING!

If you have looked up around the village in the last year, you will see that there has been a significant increase in the number of photovoltaic (solar power) panels on roofs – St George's Church being one of the larger installations, with over 130 panels and 50kW of potential output! Plus, possibly in the coming year, some will appear on the roof of the Ashtead Peace Memorial Hall. Farther afield, solar panels are very visible on the Playhouse as you go into Epsom.

The increased cost of electricity and reduced cost of solar installations, plus a desire to cut carbon emissions, has probably led to this change. At the same time, Mole Valley District Council has installed charging stations for Electric Vehicles and the government has increased the subsidy for Heat Pumps to £7,500 – it's all about going electric. The UK Government is committed to moving to 'Net Zero' by 2050 and this means a massive shift away from fossil fuels and towards more use of electric power from renewable sources and improved energy efficiency.

Investments in solar power, off-shore wind, battery storage plus significant new nuclear power generation are seen to be the way forward nationally, but what we do locally is also important. Solar panels on the roof, plus some use of batteries, electric cars, installation of Air Source Heat pumps to replace gas boilers, and insulating lofts and walls are all things to consider, finances allowing.

Transition Ashtead's focus is about encouraging local sustainability and we believe that we all should be thinking about how we can 'go electric' over the next few years. Hopefully, the electricity tariffs will start to fall again but, in the meantime, reducing the amount we use from the grid makes a lot of sense – so installing our own rooftop solar panels and going for extra loft insulation to reduce gas usage are good ways of moving towards your own household's Net Zero. For information about **Transition Ashtead**, go to <https://www.facebook.com/transitionashtead>.

Barrie Mould



LATE NIGHT SHOPPING

Tuesday 5th December saw Ashtead village come alive for its annual Late Night Shopping event. Wonderfully supported by Ashtead Village Traders and Ashtead Rotary, a fun time was had by all, with Father Christmas, Morris Dancers, various stalls selling their wares and the Traders giving mulled wine and mince pies to all the lovely people who came along to support the evening. A big thank-you to everyone involved!



LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT ANGLING SOCIETY

We at Leatherhead & District Angling Society (LDAS) have a programme of works at the wildlife pond in Ashted Park, to stabilise the banks, clear the banks of unwanted trees and shrubs, de-silt the pond and help with safe access around the pond for everyone.

These works are being carried out over a 4 to 5 year period in conjunction with funding and consultation from Mole Valley District Council under the supervision of Alex Bagnell, Tree & Countryside Manager. We have already carried out some of the bank works in order to try and bring them back to what they were back in the 1900s, and have installed a new land drain inspection chamber, with a new pipe into the pond which will eventually be covered and concealed when we clear some of the silt from the pond.

There are other voluntary groups carrying out tree and brush clearing around the park to try and create more open spaces. The Environment Agency and the Angling Trust help in various ways with fish and water management and stocks. We would welcome feedback and comments from local people as to the works that are being carried out. Go to www.leatherheadangling.co.uk or email info@leatherheadangling.co.uk.

David Crabb



ASHTEAD PEACE MEMORIAL HALL CENTENARY

For 100 years, since its opening in November 1924, Ashted Peace Memorial Hall has played a central role in Ashted Village life, so it is fitting that our Centenary celebrations this year will mark this special occasion with many shows, exhibitions and displays involving local schools and all the clubs and organisations who hire the hall.

On **Friday 21st June** there will be a show by children from local Ashted schools and in the evening a special Centenary dinner run by the Friends of the Village Hall. Then on **Saturday 22nd June** at 10.30am local VIPs will formally open the celebrations to a fanfare, and a choir from City of London Freeman's School will perform a new composition by their Director of Music. Regular users of the hall will put on a series of displays and running alongside this exhibition will be an archive display showing how the hall has changed over the years. There will also be café refreshments. The morning's events will be followed in the afternoon by a free drama and music show.

A second weekend of events, **21st-22nd September**, will conclude our Centenary celebrations. Further details of both weekends will be widely publicised nearer the time and advertised on our website. So, do please come along to celebrate the Hall's 100th birthday with us, and enjoy any or all of these exciting events hosted by the Chairman and Trustees of APMH. We value your support and very much look forward to welcoming you.

Di Stirling



Ashted Peace Memorial Hall has been the hub of the community since 1924

The choir held another well-attended Carols for Charity event in December, raising a fantastic total of £1,686, which has been divided equally between the two charities, Joe's Buddy Line and Dyscover. Our Spring concert, on Saturday 16th March, "From Rameau to Rutter via Rossini", features the solemn beauty of Rutter's *Requiem* combined with elegant compositions by Rameau, Rossini, Gorecki and Fauré. This music will be taken on tour to Umbria at the end of May when around 60 singers depart for 4 nights of sight-seeing and concerts.

On Saturday 18th May we will be performing Brahms' *Requiem*, sung in German, in St Martin's Church, Epsom, accompanied by Kent Sinfonia, who will also play Brahms' *Tragic Overture*. In June we have been invited to join the Old Bailey Choir in St Lawrence Jewry for another performance of Rutter's *Requiem*.

We have welcomed several new members into our choir recently, but always have room for more singers in all voice parts especially tenor and bass. If you are thinking of joining a choir, come and be uplifted in the beautiful varied richness of the choral repertoire we rehearse each season under the direction of our inspiring conductor Andrew Storey. Experience the thrill of performing in concert with professional musicians and soloists, or come along to hear us at one of our concerts. For more information visit our website at www.ashteadchoralsociety.org.uk.

Cheryl Greenwood



Ashtead Choral Society – "Carols for Charity", December 2023

SOUNDBYTES, ASHTEAD'S COMMUNITY CHOIR

"If I cannot fly, let me sing!" Stephen Sondheim said it, and 2.8M Britons who sing in 40,000 choirs up and down the country probably agree! Singing lifts the spirits and allows the soul to soar. Singing in a choir enables us to connect with people, being part of a community, having fun, improved mental and physical health, accomplishing new challenges, singing fantastic songs!

Ashtead's community choir, Soundbytes, will be performing at the Ashtead Peace Memorial Hall on 22nd March, at 8pm, singing songs by The Beatles, Bill Withers, Kate Bush, Stevie Wonder, David Guetta, Elton John and more in 3- and 4-part harmony, so come and see for yourself what all the fuss is about! Tickets are **FREE** via www.TicketSource.co.uk/Soundbytes.

We are welcoming new members for a free 'taster' on 23rd April, so you can join the fun and be part of something special. But if you'd just like to sing and *not* work towards a concert then SongWorks is for you...Thursdays in Ashtead. Join this friendly, informal group and improve your vocal technique and learn to sing in harmony with others, starts 18th April.

There's lots more information on our website: www.hazelhannam.co.uk so book your **FREE** taster session **NOW!**

Hazel Hannam



“A NIGHT AT THE WEST END”

Pupils from two Ashtead schools – West Ashtead Primary School and St Peter’s Catholic Primary School – came together with children from Leatherhead Trinity and several other Surrey schools for a first-of-its kind event at G Live in Guildford, in which the children performed popular West End hits alongside the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (RPO) and other professional musicians. Jointly organised by ACS International Schools and the RPO, “A Night at the West End” gave local schoolchildren the opportunity to play, sing and perform West End classics, including *Food Glorious Food* from the Lionel Bart musical *Oliver!* and *Just Can’t Wait to be King* from Disney’s *The Lion King*.

It is planned that “A Night at the West End” will be the first of many events to come out of ACS International Schools’ unique year-long partnership with the RPO, which aims to enhance both the international school group and local state schools’ arts education provision by giving students exclusive access to world-class musical and production experiences with the UK’s most prestigious professional musicians.

THE ARTS SOCIETY ASHTEAD

While continuing with our stimulating programme of monthly talks on a wide range of Arts-related topics, 2023 was rounded off with two stand-out events. Firstly, in September, forty-seven ASA members enjoyed a cultural holiday to the Belfast area, visiting numerous iconic and historic locations.

Secondly, our ever-popular Christmas Dinner was well-received by over a hundred members and guests, who also enjoyed a hilarious talk about the cartoonist Giles. 2024 has kicked off with more fascinating lectures on subjects such as Dame Laura Knight, Sporting Architecture, and Caravaggio. For the Autumn we are planning another five-day cultural holiday, to Devon and Cornwall, based in Plymouth.



ASA members queue for the Titanic museum in Belfast

So much to enjoy, we are looking forward to meeting our members at our friendly and stimulating monthly meetings and events and giving a warm welcome to visitors and new members. Exciting news – our webmaster, Roger Steel, has developed a completely new-look website. It is brilliant – take a look to find out more about our Society at www.tas-ashtead.org.uk.

Keith Allardyce



RETHINK WASTE

Rethink Waste is a free scheme from Surrey Environment Partnership that offers a range of rewards for reducing waste. Local residents can sign up online to receive weekly emails, which include engaging activities designed to help residents reduce the amount of waste they produce.

By getting involved, you can receive points which can be used to donate to schools, charities or to enter prize draws. In addition, any local schools participating in the scheme can win a share of £6,000 to run an environmental project benefiting the school and its pupils. So, not only will you be helping the planet, you’ll be helping good causes too. You can sign up to Rethink Waste online at www.rethinkwaste.co.uk.



Surrey
Environment
Partnership

POPPY APPEAL

Richard & Pat Garrard and Chris Cumming, the Royal British Legion organisers for Ashtead, are pleased to report that the village raised over £15,000 in November for the RBL Poppy Appeal. This is over £2,000 up on the previous collection. Surrey as a County raised over £1m. Both were superb results with all the money raised going to support ex-servicemen and their families.

Well done and thanks to all the local traders, the many volunteers, pubs, clubs, etc, that contributed to this excellent effort. The local RBL branch are especially indebted to all the schools in Ashtead who raised over £4,000 between them, but particularly to St Peter’s RC Primary School and The Greville Primary School, both raising just short of £1,000 each – a magnificent effort.

ASHTEAD FLOWER ARRANGEMENT GROUP

On Wednesday 20th March in the evening please join us at Ashtead Peace Memorial Hall for an exciting flower demonstration, "Absolutely Fabulous", by Stephen McDonnell, in aid of Alzheimer's Society. Stephen has been successful at many shows including the Chelsea Flower Show, winning Gold Medals and twice 'Best in Show'. He has also represented the Sussex area at The Designer Show of The Year Competition. All flower arrangements will be entered into the raffle. Doors open at 7.00 for 7.30pm. Tickets are available from Di Stirling and cost £20 (including refreshments).

Then on the afternoon of Wednesday 1st May we have our competitive flower show, "Floral Symphony", also at the APMH, starting at 2pm, with the prize-giving at 4.30pm. Admission is free for members, or £5 for non-members. There will be refreshments, a raffle, and sales tables.

Why not join our Group, to see talented National Association of Flower Arrangement Societies demonstrators create stunning floral designs. Come and learn how to create arrangements of your own at one of our workshops. We host friendly floral design competitions and offer a great opportunity to meet local like-minded flower arrangers. We meet monthly on the first Wednesday of the month in Ashtead Peace Memorial Hall, Woodfield Lane, Ashtead, KT21 2BE. For further details on any of the above please contact Di Stirling on 01372 279501.

Celia Rose



Stephen McDonnell



ASHTEAD TENNIS PLAYERS' CLUB

Famously our club is open to everyone and with four floodlit all-weather courts we play all the time (well, nearly all – see photo!). The only things that stop us are ice, storms that have been christened by The Met Office, and planning permission (lights out at 9:30pm!).

Our schedule includes 10 junior and youth classes per week, a veterans' team, beginners and cardio classes, ladies', men's and mixed teams, club sessions, Saturday lunches, and two courts open to non-members which can be booked online.

Now that Spring is upon us, we will be holding a pickle ball open day – for details of this and all our other activities, keep an eye on our website www.ashteadtennisplayersclub.org.uk. Or why not drop in? You'll find us in the recreation ground by the Woodfield Lane entrance. If you fancy having a go, we'll even lend you a racket!

James Hadley



ARG runners at a local race



... and on a caroling run before Christmas!

ARG is an informal group of local runners that goes out in all weathers, throughout the year, to explore the paths and bridleways surrounding our excellent village.

We typically run around 5-6 miles (around 10km) and take 50-60 minutes, so around 10 minutes per mile pace. We meet at the front gates of the Woodman Pub every Tuesday night, ready to start the run at 7.30pm. New runners are always very welcome – and we go for a drink after the first run of each month. It's a great way to get fit, meet new friends and to explore the North Downs.

In September each year the group organises the Ashtead 10k and 2k fun-run around Ashtead Common, which has raised more than £15,000 for charity. We celebrate ARG's 20th anniversary in October this year. For more details, please visit <https://www.trionium.com/arg>.

Rob McCaffrey



ASHTEAD GOOD NEIGHBOURS

Ashtead Good Neighbours, a voluntary organisation helping residents who struggle with transport to health appointments, is now operating at full strength following the effects of the Covid pandemic.

We currently have 364 clients and, last year, our 107 voluntary drivers completed 1132 "jobs" between them. This tells us how much our service is needed and we are always looking for new drivers.

Can you help? There are no set days or hours just times to suit you; expenses are reimbursed and meeting local residents will show how much your kindness is appreciated. If you live in, or near Ashtead and have a current driving licence and own a car with a spare couple of hours per month, please call us on **07752 66 50 66** or email: ashteadgn@gmail.com or see our website www.ashteadgoodneighbours.net.

Lynda Feeney

ASHTEAD BOWLS CLUB

Outdoor (Lawn Green) and Indoor Bowls have received a great deal of attention in the last few years, with the Commonwealth Games and the recent World Indoor Bowls Championships televised on the BBC in January. A particularly impressive shot from last year's World Championships actually went viral!

Bowls is a great game for all ages and Ashtead benefits from a thriving outdoor club just off Woodfield Lane (behind the Cricket Club).

Ashtead Bowls Club is over 100 years old and is recognised as having one of the best outdoor greens in the area.

Members enjoy excellent facilities including a bar, an indoor "short mat" and social events throughout the year.

New members are always welcome and free introductory sessions, with equipment provided, are available from April onwards. Please email richarde@ashteadfc.co.uk for details and dates.

Richard Elphick



ROAD AND RAIL

Advance Notice of Level Crossing restrictions and closures in August 2024

Ashtead Residents' Association has been given early notice of three sets of work on the rails and the Level Crossing that will unfortunately involve part closure or full closure of the Crossing. As the August restrictions or closures will be over a potentially busy weekend for travel, residents should please plan ahead if their vehicles will be required for travel at times when the Crossing will potentially be closed.

The relevant dates are as follows:-

Tuesday 11th June 2024

From 00.30 until 05.00 – Full closure.

Friday 9th August 2024 > Monday 12th August 2024

2200 Friday to 1600 Saturday (Remove crossing, replace track, part-re-install crossing for single file traffic)

2200 Saturday to 0800 Sunday (Remove crossing, use tamping machine to bring track to final design position, fully re-install crossing)

2200 Sunday to 0500 Monday (Complete any snagging works and to off track, collect engineering plant on lorries, hand back level crossing)

Friday 16th August 2024 > Monday 19th August 2024

2200 Friday to 1600 Saturday (Remove crossing, replace track, part-re-install crossing for single file traffic)

2200 Saturday to 0800 Sunday (Remove crossing, use tamping machine to bring track to final design position, fully re-install crossing)

2200 Sunday to 0500 Monday (Complete any snagging works and to off track, collect engineering plant on lorries, hand back level crossing)

The Residents' Association has questioned the need for closure on busy Saturdays in the middle of holiday season in August when many will be travelling, shopping or seeing friends. The response from Network Rail was as follows:-

Unfortunately the extended closure is vital for the works required but we will be attempting to limit the inconvenience caused to the local residents.

When we did this previously, as you have also stated below, we had a minibus shuttle service on the residents side of the crossing and the parking arrangement with the station car park which will be replicated this time. The residents will have free access to the allotted car parking spaces and any penalty fines received during our works will be refunded/cancelled. Network Rail will work with GTR/Southern/APCOA to see if there is a work around, but last time we were unable to get the ANPR switched off.

We will be installing a temporary single lane bridge to allow access during the stated times with the required traffic management implemented, we will also be working with the emergency services to ensure access is available for them.

Nearer the time it would be very useful to understand a rough number of car parking spaces required within the station car park. If residents or visitors are planning on taking advantage of the car park please advise the Residents' Association (roads@ashteadresidents.org.uk) of their vehicle make and Registration Number. This information will be passed to APCOA to prevent unnecessary penalty notices being issued.

David Baker

ASHTEAD AND LEATHERHEAD PROBUS

Ashtead and Leatherhead Probus is the club for anyone with a professional or business background who wants to meet friends over a superb lunch, followed by an entertaining talk.

We meet monthly at 12.30 on the third Monday at Tyrrells Wood Golf Club, Leatherhead. We also enjoy informal pub lunches, a countryside walking group, and occasional visits to places of interest. Over the Autumn and Winter we heard talks on subjects such as "Father Thames, Tides of Change", "The Rise of Modern Turkey", "The West Indies" and a high-profile talk by Sir Anthony Seldon entitled "The Impossible Office, what it's like to be Prime Minister". In December we enjoyed with guests a Christmas Carvery. We have a full programme of talks planned for 2024. Visit our website for further information: www.ashteadleatherheadprobus.org.

Keith Allardyce

