

**Minutes of Heatherside Ward Residents Association Meeting  
(1st October 2019 - Heatherside Community Centre)**

Present

Committee members - Kirsty North, Larry Bain, Caroline Hibberd, Katherine Sargent

Heatherside Borough Councillors - Graham Tapper, John Skipper

Heatherside Pillar team - Len Williams

Approximately 20 local residents

Apologies received from Edward Hawkins - County Councillor, Kristian Wrenn - Borough Councillor, Mike Robbins- Chair of the Community Centre, Vince Wakeling - Police Community Support Officer

### **Agenda Items**

#### **1) Welcome and Introductions**

Kirsty welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming to the meeting. She introduced the committee and two of our borough councillors Graham Tapper and John Skipper. Kirsty explained that our other borough councillor Kristian Wrenn and our county councillor Edward Hawkins sent their apologies. Unfortunately they were both attending a Camberley Town Centre Working Group meeting which was organised prior to our meeting date being agreed. Kirsty also explained that the regular bookings in the Community Centre and the availability of the committee members meant that we are restricted as to which days we can hold our meetings and as a result there are sometimes unfortunate meeting clashes.

It is possible that future meetings may not always be held at the Community Centre as the Head Teacher of Heather Ridge School has offered us the school hall as a venue for one of our meetings and there is also the possibility of space being made available for us in The Wheatsheaf pub once the refurbishment has been carried out. Both of these options would mean a saving for HWRA as the rooms would be offered for free.

#### **2) Chair's Report 2018/2019**

Kirsty gave an update on events and issues which have been raised or discussed this year.

*It's been a great year for the HWRA. During our meetings we have covered topics including Pine Ridge development plans, the Heatherside pillar, and the ESSO pipeline. We've had many discussions about the local play parks and recreation grounds, the continued impact of Deepcut development on our local roads and resources, and of course, much-needed improvements to the arcade area.*

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*A key event in our calendar year was the Christmas tree which continues to be a popular and well-attended celebration on Heatherside.*

*Other highlights have included the ever-popular quiz nights held last October and again back in April. Another is planned for 15th November, here at the Community centre. More to follow.*

*In late spring we hosted the Hustings event pre-election, after which we saw a complete change of the borough councillor team across the ward, which is now represented by the Liberal Democrats.*

*At the start of the summer, we welcomed Michael Gove to our meeting where he hosted a Q&A session for the local community.*

*We saw a great turnout by the community to help with the improvements to the planters in the arcade during the early part of the summer, following us being awarded a grant to improve the local area.*

*Most recently, the tremendous efforts of Len Williams and his team have paid off in relation to the Heatherside pillar which hopefully everyone has seen, and will agree, looks fantastic. More to follow later on plans for an opening celebration with Michael Gove.*

*All in all, it's been a really great year for the organisation, which is getting stronger and more recognised as we continue to grow. Please do tell your friends and neighbours about us - not everyone is online, and it is increasingly difficult to access those offline when we have limited funds and time.*

If you would like to find out more about these issues you can read all our previous meeting minutes on our website at <https://heathersidewra.weebly.com/meeting-minutes>

### **3) Treasurer's Report 2018/2019**

Caroline Hibberd, the HWRA Treasurer, gave a brief report on the accounts for 2018/2019. The full details of these can be seen at **APPENDIX A** at the end of the minutes.

This year HWRA have received income from a number of sources including the two successful quiz nights we have held and from public donations made at the Christmas tree switch on event and at our meetings. A large chunk of money was awarded as the result of a successful grant application to the High Streets Community Clear Up Fund. Caroline explained that this money

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was awarded to be used for the repair and improvement of the planters in the Heather Ridge arcade which were in a dilapidated state. The money we have received has been spent on tools to do the work, materials and plants and bulbs which Caroline plans to plant soon. The work was carried out by Caroline, her family and volunteers from the local community over a number of weekends in the summer.

Other spending this year has included new decorations and lights for the Heatherside Christmas tree after the existing ones were trashed by vandals on Boxing Day 2017. We have also had to pay for public liability insurance to cover the light switch on and other HWRA events. Caroline highlighted that this insurance will soon need to be renewed as it is a yearly policy.

We have acted as a depository for donations made to the Community pillar fund and there have been some associated costs with the pillar project. There are still some further costs to be added on but these fall outside of the HWRA financial year which runs to the end of August 2019.

A resident present at the meeting queried why the expenditure on the Community Centre was so much higher this year than in the previous year? Caroline explained that this was because we have had to hire the hall for the hustings event and Michael Gove's visit and this is more expensive than the cost of the two smaller rooms we normally use.

The accounts were agreed by those present and signed off by Kirsty North and Caroline Hibberd.

#### **4) Election of a committee**

Kirsty explained that each year we are required to elect a committee. Despite requests for nominations, none had been received prior to the meeting. The existing committee members were all happy to stand again if no other nominees were forthcoming. Kirsty asked if anyone in the audience would like to volunteer for any of the committee posts but there were no nominations put forward.

The following were therefore elected for the next year.

Chair - Kirsty North (nominated by Graham Tapper and seconded by Andy Ward)

Vice Chair - Larry Bain (nominated by Kirsty North and seconded by Graham Tapper)

Treasurer - Caroline Hibberd (nominated by Kirsty North and seconded by Katherine Sargent)

Secretary - Katherine Sargent (nominated by Kirsty North and seconded by Caroline Hibberd)

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We would also like to recruit some additional help in the form of communication and publicity officers if anyone is interested in helping us with these roles. For the second year running we were unable to fill this position at the AGM. At the present time all the committee are all very busy with work or childcare and aren't able to spend as much time as we would like publicising the association and it's events. Please email us at [heathersidewra@gmail.com](mailto:heathersidewra@gmail.com) if you would like to help us with this.

### **5) Planned Events**

The next HWRA Quiz night is on Friday 15th November at the Community Centre. Tickets are £5 per person and teams of up to 6 are welcome. If you would like to purchase tickets please contact us at [heathersidewra@gmail.com](mailto:heathersidewra@gmail.com) This is a fundraiser to enable us to pay for meeting rooms, put on the Christmas tree event etc.

Once again we will be erecting a Christmas tree in the Arcade in conjunction with Heatherside Church. If anyone would like to be involved in setting up and or helping with the festivities then do please let us know at [heathersidewra@gmail.com](mailto:heathersidewra@gmail.com). The light switch on event will be on Sunday the 24th November (details to be confirmed).

### **6) Heatherside Community Pillar**

Len Williams gave an update on the latest progress of the pillar project. The full details of this can be seen at **APPENDIX B** at the end of the minutes. The pillar is now up and has had the finial attached. Efforts by vandals to damage it had been thwarted by the hardness of the wood used. To ward off further attempts some metal strips have been attached to the corners of the pillar to protect it.

An inauguration ceremony is to be held on the 11th October at 2.30pm where a plaque will be unveiled by our local MP Michael Gove. All residents are welcome to attend this. There was a brief discussion about why Mr Gove had been chosen. Len explained that his first choice had been the Earl and Countess of Wessex but that they had unfortunately had to decline. A copy of the letter they sent Len can be seen at **APPENDIX C**. Similarly Brian May who was also a popular local choice of VIP was not available as he is touring. Requests to local residents for suggestions had also failed to yield any suitable local celebrities.

Len explained that there was some money left over from the fundraising he had carried out. Some of this will be set aside as a maintenance fund and Len plans to use the rest for a local good cause or project yet to be decided.

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Len was thanked for all his hard work and given a round of applause by the meeting attendees.

## **7) Parks Update**

John Skipper gave an update on ongoing issues relating to the play equipment at Heatherside park. Over the summer a number of pieces of equipment in the park have been taken out of service due to health and safety issues. This included the basket swing, zip wire and swings for older children. Consequently most of the park wasn't available for use by children over most of the summer holidays. While the basket swing has been replaced the work to replace the zip wire and other swings is ongoing. John explained that the main structural work had been done but the equipment is awaiting a safety inspection before it can be opened.

John explained that he is holding regular meetings with officers at SHBC to discuss the parks and has already asked whether health and safety inspections can be carried out earlier in the year to ensure the parks are available for use in the summer holidays. He has questioned why replacement items such as swings cannot be held in stock by SHBC to reduce the time it takes to get equipment repaired however, he has been told that the variety of equipment and suppliers used across the borough would make this impractical. John mentioned that SHBC are intending to replace high usage areas of the play area with rubberised bark flooring. A discussion about the various problems with the park then ensued.

Graham Tapper updated the attendees on the plans to replace the park on Maguire Drive. The park is currently in a very poor state with missing gates and equipment. Despite previous indications from SHBC that the work to replace this park would begin in 2019, Graham explained that it will now be carried out in Feb 2020. There will be no public consultation on the equipment to be included. The park is intended to serve residents in Maguire Drive and Theobalds Way and also the new houses on the Heathlands development.

## **8) Japanese Knotweed**

An infestation of Japanese Knotweed has been discovered on land at the junction of Yockley Close and The Maultway. This has been identified as highway land belonging to Surrey County Council and has been reported to them. Edward Hawkins was unable to attend the meeting but sent the following update on the situation.

*This is an item that, unfortunately, shows that all the services at county have not been improved as we would have wished. Both Graham Tapper and I have been pushing for action on the incident of Japanese Knotweed at the junction of Yockley Close and Maultway. This has been going on for some time. The most recent communication I have received says that the location is already on the treatment programme and the responsible officer has chased the contractor to*

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*ensure that he can treat the plant in the next 2-3 weeks, before the treatment window closes for this year. If he is unable to treat the location this year, then it will be treated in late spring - just as the plant starts to regrow and when treatment is most effective. I do not consider this to be acceptable.*

There was a discussion amongst audience members over the most effective ways to remove the weed with the suggestion that maybe it could be dealt with by local residents. However Kirsty cautioned against this as the removal and disposal of Japanese Knotweed is now carefully controlled by new legislation.

## **9) Heathrow Airport Expansion Consultation**

Caroline Hibberd gave a comprehensive report into a consultation event she had attended on the planned expansion of Heathrow Airport. The consultation has now closed but the consultation documents may be viewed at [aec.heathrowconsultation.com](http://aec.heathrowconsultation.com).

The full details of Caroline's report can be seen at **APPENDIX D** at the end of the minutes.

In summary the preferred masterplan for the airport in the future would include a new runway north of the existing airport which would require the M25 to be rerouted and include the addition of a new junction. There would be changes to a number of the terminals and the building of additional terminals. The new runway would be expected to become operational in 2026 but the programme of construction work for the whole project would run from 2020 to 2035.

The proposals also include changing the times that flights are permitted to land to the earlier time of 5.15am and also potentially changes to the directional preference for landing and take off. This could result in more low flying approaches over the Heatherside area in the early mornings.

The number of flights is expected to grow in the future, especially with the addition of a third runway. This would result in Heathrow using up all the currently spare air traffic movements for the whole of the UK and mean other airports would not be expanded.

Plans include the creation of a Heathrow ultra-low emissions zone and a vehicle access charge which would include charges to those just dropping off or collecting passengers.

Once the Development Consent Order for the airport expansion has been granted there is likely to be a further flight paths options consultation held in 2022.

## **10) Heather Ridge Arcade Planters**

Caroline had already covered most of the issues relating to the planters in her Treasurer's report. She reiterated the plan to plant bulbs in the next few weeks and it was suggested that she might ask for volunteers to assist with this.

## **11) Policing/Anti social behaviour and Neighbourhood Watch**

The increase in anti social behaviour across Heatherside was discussed. There seem to have been a number of burglaries, reports of suspicious vehicles and drug dealing being carried out in recent months. Unfortunately Vince Wakeling one of the Heatherside PCSO's was unable to attend the meeting. It was suggested that it might be useful to have one of the Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators come and talk at one of our meetings. Residents are encouraged to report any incidents of anti social or suspicious behaviour via the police non emergency number 101.

## **12) Councillor Updates**

### **County Councillor Update**

As mentioned earlier in the minutes, Edward Hawkins the Heatherside County Councillor was unfortunately unable to attend the meeting due to a clash with a meeting at SHBC about the Camberley Town Centre regeneration project. He provided an update which Kirsty read out to the attendees. This statement covered issues such as the Camberley High Street regeneration works, County Budget and SEND issues. He also covered Surrey's Greener Future, the plans to relocate County Hall and SCC funding of the fire service within Surrey.

The full content of Edward's statement can be seen in **APPENDIX E** at the end of the minutes.

### **Borough Councillor Updates**

John Skipper explained that he was still hoping to have a community noticeboard installed in the area around the shops. This would provide a place for community notices to be placed such as information from councillors, HWRA minutes and notices about local events. At present the only notice boards are owned by SHBC and as such they control what can be placed on them. There was a discussion about where this board might be placed and the manager of the Wheatsheaf suggested that space could be found on the wall outside the pub entrance. A possible alternative location was on the wall outside the entrance to Sainsbury's though there is some discussion over the ownership of this site. There was also discussion about how the boards might be managed and who would hold the keys etc. as well as the type of notices that would be allowed on them.

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Graham mentioned that the Heatherside Ward has increased in size since the elections in May and now includes Copped Hall and other areas previously part of Parkside Ward. He introduced Alasdair Pinkerton who has been chosen as the new Liberal Democrat parliamentary candidate and who is now a Heatherside resident.

Graham mentioned that there have recently been some problems with users of Sainsbury's car park not using the correct entrance and exits. There has also been damage to bollards. He is asking for the signage to be improved to try and avoid incidents like this in the future.

Graham gave an update on the ongoing situation with Bovis owned land on the estate. Progress seems to be being made as work to cut back trees and shrubs and clear overgrown paths etc has now begun to be carried out. There still seem to be some outstanding issues to be agreed with SHBC before all the work can be carried out. Graham was asked whether he knew if Bovis would be considering the possibility of selling off areas of land to local residents. Previously Bovis had asked for huge sums of money for small areas. Graham said he was not aware of any areas having been sold off but that it was worth residents contacting Bovis if this was something they were interested in.

Katherine Sargent asked the borough councillors whether they had received any kind of handover meeting or documentation from the outgoing councillors following their election? They said that this had not happened though Kristian Wrenn had made requests for information. This seems disappointing as the previous councillors had been in post for many years and would probably have gathered lots of information about local issues.

### **13) Next Meeting Date**

This is yet to be agreed but will most likely be in January. As mentioned earlier the meeting location may be different from recent meetings with Heather Ridge School and the newly refurbished Wheatsheaf as possible venues.

### **14) AOB**

#### **Wheatsheaf Pub**

The manager of the Wheatsheaf Pub spoke briefly about the redevelopment work which is being carried out at present. He explained that the pub is being given a complete overhaul which will include extending the back bar and converting it into a sports bar. The pub will be open from early in the morning and food will be served from breakfast time onwards. They are hoping that local residents will support their attempts to turn it into a more family friendly



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venue and it will become a community hub. They are currently recruiting for staff. The pub will reopen on Halloween.

**Meeting minutes correction**

Katherine Sargent explained that she had been asked to correct a mistake in the minutes from the 7th June meeting which was attended by Michael Gove. In it the minutes refer to Mr Gove owning property within Surrey Heath but in actual fact the property was only rented.

## APPENDIX A - Treasurer's Report 2018/2019

### HEATHERSIDE WARD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

#### INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2019

	YEAR 2019 £	YEAR 2018 £
<b>Income</b>		
Donations	545	72
Christmas Tree Donations	136	500
Quiz Night	477	190
Community Pillar	210	835
SHBC - High Streets Community Clear Up	817	
Total Income	<u>2,185</u>	<u>1,597</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Christmas Tree and Lights	436	170
Community Centre Hire	123	52
Community Pillar	385	0
Public liability Insurance	118	0
SHBC - High Streets Community Clear Up	571	0
Total Expenditure	<u>1,632</u>	<u>222</u>
<b>Excess Income over Expenditure</b>	<u><b>553</b></u>	<u><b>1,375</b></u>
Funds Brought Forward	2,506	1,131
<b>Funds Carried Forward</b>	<u><b>3,059</b></u>	<u><b>2,506</b></u>
<b>Represented by:</b>		
Bank account	<u><b>3,059</b></u>	<u><b>2,506</b></u>
<b>Fund Balances:</b>		
General	2,153	1,671
Community Pillar (designated)	660	835
SHBC - High Streets Community Clear Up (restricted)	246	0

#### Declaration

The Committee declare that they have approved the Income and Expenditure Account above  
Signed on behalf of the Association's Committee:

Signature:	K North	C Hibberd
Full name:	Kirsty North	Caroline Hibberd
Position:	Chair	Treasurer
Date:	1 October 2019	1 October 2019

## **APPENDIX B - Heatherside Community Pillar – Len Williams.**

### Heatherside Community Pillar

On August 14<sup>th</sup>, in spite of the weather, the finial was mounted onto the post leaving only one element of the project outstanding, namely the inauguration. This final act will take place on Friday October 11<sup>th</sup> at 14:00 hrs.

The VIP who will be carrying out the ceremony will be our Member of Parliament, the Rt. Hon. Michael Gove MP. All the residents of Heatherside are welcome to attend to see the plaque, which will eventually be fitted to the base of the pillar, being unveiled. As part of the search for a VIP to unveil the plaque the Earl and Countess of Wessex were contacted. They declined to carry out this function but wished us well with its completion. A copy of their letter may be viewed in Appendix C.

In the HWRA minutes of the AGM the pillar fund is quoted as being £660. This was correct as of the 31<sup>st</sup> August. Since then the cost of the crane hire to lift the finial onto the pillar has been paid, leaving the fund at approx. £560.

From this residue of the contingency fund £100 will be retained by the HWRA for future maintenance, e.g. removal of graffiti, and there will be additional costs relating to the inauguration. This will still leave a considerable sum. As the cost of the pillar hardware was covered by the SKANSKA/NATTA grant and the foundations by the SHBC grant, this residue is the remains of the pledges made by individual Heatherside residents and the local businesses. Once the inauguration has been completed and the final residue sum identified all the people who pledged their money will be contacted to identify a cause, which will benefit Heatherside, to which this final residue can be applied.

Len Williams.

**APPENDIX C - Refusal letter from the Earl and Countess of Wessex**



BAGSHOT PARK

Mr A L Williams

27<sup>th</sup> February 2019

*Dear Mr Williams,*

Thank you for your letter of 9 February 2019 and for your kind invitation to Their Royal Highnesses The Earl and Countess of Wessex to attend a ceremony to mark the completion of the Wellington Avenue and the Heatherside Community Pillar projects. Your invitation is greatly appreciated and thank you for bringing these two important projects to the attention of Their Royal Highnesses.

It is with much regret that, due to the many commitments in the spring/summer diary, The Earl and Countess of Wessex will be unable to join you to mark this special event. Their Royal Highnesses do however send their best wishes to you all as you recognise the achievements of so many at an opening ceremony in May.

Thank you once again for writing.

*Yours sincerely,  
Suzanne Lofthouse-Jackson*

Suzanne Lofthouse-Jackson LVO  
Assistant Private Secretary to TRH The Earl and Countess of Wessex

## **APPENDIX D - Heathrow Airport Expansion Consultation**

June 2019 consultation that has now closed

All consultation documents can be found at [aec.heathrowconsultation.com](http://aec.heathrowconsultation.com)

### **Preferred masterplan:**

- New runway to North of existing airport (just south of M4) and slightly west (requires re-routing M25)
- Demolish T3 and replace with a Central Terminal Area
- Increase size of T2A
- New Terminals T5X and T5XN
- Additional M25 junction (14a)
- Reroute A4 (north of airport)
- Reroute A3044 (west of airport next to M25)
- River diversion
- New Immigration Removal Centre (south east of airport)

### **Timetable:**

- Now to 2026 – increase up to 25,000 additional flights per annum on existing runways
- 2026 – anticipated date new runway becomes operational
- 2030 – reaches 115 million passengers per annum (mppa). Half of journeys to airport by public transport
- 2015 – reaches 130 mppa with 740,000 air traffic movements (ATMs)
- 2050 – reaches 142 mppa, 756,000 ATMs

### **Construction:**

- 2020/21 – preliminary work – electricity put underground etc.
- 2021 – 26 – runway, road diversions and demolition work
- 2026 – 30 – new terminal and parking
- 2030 – 35 – new terminal and parking

### **Runway usage**

Proposal for night flight ban to end at 05:30 (scheduled arrival at stand). This means a 05:15 runway landing time, which in turn means overhead here at about 05:00, at potentially 3 – 4,000 ft. (currently out experience is in the 7 – 8,000 ft. range).

### **Directional preference:**

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Planes have to land into, and take off against, the wind (unless wind speed is quite low). Prevailing wind direction at Heathrow is westerly, this results in 50% of flights having to land/take-off in a westerly direction. 30% of the time the wind is easterly, so landings and take-offs happen in the opposite direction. The remaining 20% is when the wind speed is low enough that any direction can be used, and currently there is a westerly preference, so this remaining 20% operates as if there was a westerly wind.

They wish to replace this 20% with a 'managed preference', although the rules of how this will operate have yet to be determined. Potentially we could end up with a significant increase in very low flying approaches early morning overhead.

#### **Flight growth:**

- Current maximum of 480,000 ATMs p.a. generally operating at about 98% of this number (approximately 1,289 flights per day)
- Proposal to increase max to 505,000 ATMs p.a. on existing 2 runways (approx. 1,384 flights per day)
- Fully expanded on 3 runways will have max 740,000 ATMs p.a. (approx. 2,027 flights per day a 57% increase on where we are currently)

This will allow Heathrow to use up all of the currently available (spare) ATMs for the whole of the UK.

#### **Road user charging:**

- By 2022 there will be in place a Heathrow ultra-low emissions zone (ULEZ)
- From approx. 2026 there will be a Heathrow vehicle access charge

#### **Airspace usage:**

- The design envelopes (flight paths) consultation responses from early 2019 are currently being considered.
- Airspace change proposal will be submitted to the CAA, but not until after Development Consent Order (DCO) for the expansion has been granted.
- There will be a further flight paths options consultation in 2022, assuming that the DCO is granted.

Watch this space....

## **APPENDIX E - Update from Edward Hawkins**

### **Heatherside Ward Residents 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019**

This evening I am at a meeting of the Camberley Town Centre Working Group (which I chair). This is a Member Working Group established to enable members local to Camberley have a direct input the shaping of Camberley both now and into the future. A similar group has been set up for the rural area.

### **High Street Works**

More a Borough matter but with County involvement. In Respect of the regeneration works to the High Street, Princess Way and Knoll Walk, the contractor will start to mobilise their materials into Camberley on Friday 1 November 2019 and the works will start on Monday 4 November 2019.

The High Street will be closed to all vehicles apart from service and emergency vehicles from the roundabout at Pembroke Broadway/Portesbery Road up to St George's Road from 4 November 2019 until 11 December 2020.

All businesses will be open as usual throughout the works and the High Street will be accessible to pedestrians. The contractors and council will work with businesses to minimise inconvenience and ensure access by service vehicles is maintained

### **County Budget**

When I became a County Councillor two years ago, the budget deficit was in the order of £250m. Since that time there have been some radical changes in the way the County manages its affairs. There still remain challenges especially as the Government's Fairer Funding Review has not as yet been delivered, in part due to the debate over Brexit. There are also the increasing costs and demand for Children's and Adult Social Care. These two areas account for some 74% of Surrey's net budget. Currently we are looking towards a balanced budget possibly being able to put a small amount into our reserves. There are also some encouraging noises from Central Government regarding additional funding for Statutory and Non-statutory services but we have to realise we are not the only ones in the queue.

### **SEND Advice**

The Department for Education have announced a review into support for children with SEND, aiming to improve the services available to families who need support, equip staff in schools

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and colleges to respond effectively to their needs and end the 'postcode lottery' they often face. The review will include a focus on:

- How the system of SEND support has evolved since eligibility for SEND services was extended to wider age groups;
- How it can work best for all families and places across the country; and
- The role of healthcare in SEND

Surrey provides information, advice and support to children and young people aged 0 to 25 years with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This information is available to all and enquiries should be made to; [SENDAdvice@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:SENDAdvice@surreycc.gov.uk)

### **Surrey's Greener Future**

In support of the Government's aim of eradicating the UK's contribution to climate change by 2050 the County has agreed that it will

- Deliver a strategy in 2019/20 involving a task group that clearly outlines how we plan to deliver the target including actions that will be taken. In doing so the County will urge government to confirm what support will be made available to local authorities
- Declare a 'Climate Emergency', and commits actions to support businesses and all local authorities in their work to tackle climate change by providing a strong unified voice for councils in lobbying for support to address this emergency, and sharing best practice across all councils.

Furthermore, the County has taken notice of the importance of trees in slowing the pace of climate change by absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen into the air, as well as providing a habitat for wildlife along with the contribution trees make to the environment in our towns including shading and cooling, pollution and noise mitigation, as well speeding up floodwater drainage and improving the quality of our street scene.

In support of the national campaign Members at County have

- I. Called for a review of Surrey County Council's current policies on, and attitude towards, the planting of trees in urban areas with a view to introducing a more proactive policy, which looks to increase the number and regularity of trees planted;
- II. Requested a new strategy to include providing opportunities to educate children in understanding the benefits of trees and to get involved in tree planting;



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- III. Closer partnership working with Borough and District Councils, and landowners seeking sites for new tree planting; and
  - IV. Recommended that Surrey Highways take advantage of any outside funding to assist with costs, including any Borough and District schemes that enable residents and community groups to fund the planting and future maintenance of trees.

I have also put forward a motion to SHBC on Climate Change to support the work being undertaken at County. This motion is to be heard on 9<sup>th</sup> October and I would hope to get support from all Members.

In support of the above, Highways England have issued new guidelines which direct local authorities to cut grass verges only twice a year, down from four times a year. The move is hoped to encourage greater wildflower diversity across the country, as well as save money for councils and increase pollinator habitats. I recognise that this move is not universally popular and it will be debated by County groups going forward,

### **Moving Closer to the Residents**

This is the banner for the work surrounding the relocation of County Hall from Kingston. The policy of relocation, whilst it will help in reducing the property costs and therefore the budget is driven by a desire to focus on outcomes for the residents of Surrey as against process.

There are about 1,500 County staff some of whom are already located away from County Hall which presently has an occupation rate of about 45%. There is a gradual introduction of agile working with the greater use of technology. Less need to travel as more staff will be located in their work area meaning less time lost through travel and less emissions. This is a major shift in culture and one that many staff have openly embraced.

Discussions continue over the two potential locations for the relocation of County Hall. This will be a “Civic Heart” with about 250 to 300 people. There needs to be a steady shift to the new way of working to ensure that all systems work and that the residents that need the County’s services do not suffer.

### **Fire Service**

There has been much talk on social media about the plans by SCC to modernise the Fire Service. It is true that we have fewer fire-fighters in Surrey now than in 2010 - a situation replicated across the country with other fire and rescue services. And, with most fire authorities outside of large metropolitan areas like London, we have switched from five to four fire-fighters per

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pump, however, unlike some we are actively recruiting fire-fighters. In the past year, we have recruited 82 full-time fire-fighters and 20 more on-call fire-fighters are being trained.

Over the past decade there has been a dramatic fall in the number of fires in Surrey, largely as a result of prevention and protection work carried out by the Fire Service. County's Making Surrey Safer plan aims to direct more of our resources into this type of work, so that the number of emergencies in Surrey can be reduced even further.

**Japanese Knotweed.**

This is an item that, unfortunately, shows that all the services at county have not been improved as we would have wished. Both Graham Tapper and I have been pushing for action on the incident of Japanese Knotweed at the junction of Yockley Close and Maultway. This has been going on for some time. The most recent communication I have received says that the location is already on the treatment programme and the responsible officer has chased the contractor to ensure that he can treat the plant in the next 2-3 weeks, before the treatment window closes for this year. If he is unable to treat the location this year, then it will be treated in late spring - just as the plant starts to regrow and when treatment is most effective. I do not consider this to be acceptable.

Edward Hawkins

1st October 2019

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