

## **Minutes of Heatherside Ward Residents Association Meeting (30th January 2020 - Heather Ridge Infant School)**

Present

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

Heatherside Borough Councillors - Kristian Wrenn, John Skipper

Heatherside and Parkside County Councillor - Edward Hawkins

Approximately 25 local residents

Apologies received from Graham Tapper - Borough Councillor

### **Agenda Items**

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

Kirsty welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming to the meeting. She introduced the committee. Borough Councillor Kristian Wrenn passed on apologies from Graham Tapper who was unable to attend the meeting as he was at a meeting at Surrey Heath Borough Council (SHBC).

Kirsty asked Larry to pass on our thanks to Miss Elliott, the head teacher of Heather Ridge Infant School, and her team for making the school hall available to us for our meeting. Caroline explained that as we were not paying for the hall there was no collection bucket for contributions towards the room cost.

#### **2) Chair's Update**

Kirsty gave a quick update on events since our AGM. For the fifth year running HWRA and Heatherside Church erected a Christmas tree in the Arcade and held a tree lights switch on event with carol singing. Kirsty thanked the tree team for all their help in finding and putting the tree up and taking it down. She also thanked all the organisations involved in making the switch on event such a success. As in previous years we had put out collection buckets at the event for contributions towards the cost of popcorn, mulled wine etc and for any other donations to HWRA. Caroline reported that the total amount collected was around £300 which is significantly more than in previous years. Most of this money was collected in the buckets near the popcorn, mulled wine and food tables. Kirsty thanked Ben Leyton, the landlord of the Wheatsheaf for his support for the event.

In November we also held another of our popular quiz evenings at the community centre. The evening was well attended and raised £193.

### **3) Planned HWRA and Heatherside events**

Following our successful quiz evening in April and October last year we plan to hold quiz evenings twice a year and the next one will hopefully be on Friday 24th April. More details to follow nearer the time.

As always, we are happy to hear ideas from residents for events we could hold. Please let us know at [heathersidewra@gmail.com](mailto:heathersidewra@gmail.com) if there is anything you feel HWRA could get involved with or support. There was a brief mention at the meeting of the upcoming VE Day anniversary with some suggestions of a possible event to celebrate this having been discussed with Ben at the Wheatsheaf. He requested that if any events are planned then it would be helpful if the dates could be shared with him so that possible clashes could be avoided between community and pub organised events.

### **4) Councillor Updates**

#### **County Councillor Update**

Edward Hawkins gave a comprehensive update on the latest Surrey County Council (SCC) financial status and issues. The full text of this can be seen at APPENDIX A at the end of the minutes.

Since 2018 SCC has made £200m of cost reductions from a budget of c£1.3bn meaning they are able to balance the budget without drawing on reserves for the first time in years.

Edward explained that the level of financial support for future years is not certain. At a recent party conference he asked the Conservative Party Chairman to ensure that the south was not forgotten as we had many of the problems as the rest of the country.

Getting to a balanced budget in a short period of time has been hard and some unpopular decisions had to be made. Although there have been some hard decisions to make, SCC will not be closing any of the community recycling centres, there will be no charges for parking in the countryside and libraries will not close although there will be some changes to make them more of a community hub.

Edward has campaigned to move SCC away from Kingston and is pleased that this year County Hall will be moving to a much smaller building in Woking. This is part of the programme of being in Surrey and moving closer to residents. The revenue saving is £700,000 per annum in running costs.

A lot of the new work being undertaken is in Children's and Adults Social Care. This area takes up about two thirds of the SCC annual budget. Demand is increasing along with costs and we have an aging population. It is estimated that SCC through the work

it does subsidises the NHS by about £40m per year. SCC's aim has been to combine the various streams of work carried out supporting the young and families. They are already working with Surrey Clubs for Young People to create provision at a number of locations including the Old Dean. Ensuring the right provision for children in care is a key part of the improvement programme and bringing children in care closer to home remains a priority for the service. There has been a strong focus on expanding the pool of SCC foster carers throughout 2019 and this has resulted in 24 new foster carer households being approved since April with a further 17 being reviewed before the end of March. Despite this continued effort to bring children closer to home, it will take some time for the overall numbers of looked after children living outside of the County to reduce significantly. Edward thanked the foster carers in his division for the work that they do.

The budget for this next year includes the following proposals

- **Adult Social Care** - Support for older people and adults with physical disabilities, mental health support needs and learning disabilities: £372.1 million
- **Children's Social Care and Commissioning** - Child protection and care for vulnerable children: £139.8 million
- **Early years and education support** – this is additional to the ring-fenced education funding set by government and pays for things like early help for families, school transport and additional school places: £52 million
- **Highways and transport** - Road and pavement maintenance and improvement, streetlights, gritting, bus services and road safety: £62.9 million
- **Waste disposal** - Disposing of waste and delivering the County's 15 Community Recycling Centres: £67.9 million (A 1% increase in recycling saves the County about £0.3m)
- **Community Protection** - Fire and Rescue, Trading Standards and Emergency Planning: £33.8 million
- **Cultural Services** - Libraries, Registrars, Surrey History Centre, Surrey Arts and Adult Learning: £7.8 million
- **Environment and planning** - Looking after the countryside and putting in place strategic planning policies: £3.7 million

In addition, the revenue budget includes spending on Public Health (£36.3m), Special Educational Needs and Disabilities services (£45.7m) and school support (£18.6m), which are paid through grant funding rather than Council Tax

To fund all these projects Council Tax will rise by 1.99% and in addition, there will be the Government's permitted 2% ring-fenced 'precept' for use in supporting vulnerable adults and those in need of social care.

SCC has also recently published a schedule of Headline Capital Schemes for the next five years.

- **Highways** – £92m to be spent on improving and maintaining Surrey's highway network.
- **Greener Futures** – Around £84m in projects to protect the environment and help tackle the Climate Emergency, including a Solar Farm, Ultra Low Emission vehicles and electrification of transport services including buses and school transport.
- **Extra Care** – Up to £7m in the first phase of a programme to deliver 725 specially adapted homes for elderly residents, to increase independence and reduce hospital admittance.
- **Surrey Flood Alleviation Scheme** – £270m to protect over 30,000 homes and businesses from the risk of flooding – enhancing the environment, attracting investment and keeping residents safe.
- **Special Educational Needs & Disabilities** - £31m to provide 883 additional places for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, including a new SEND school in Woking.
- **Schools** – A further £70m to provide additional school places and improve school facilities across the County
- **Community Investment Fund** – We are creating a £100m fund to regenerate high streets and invest in local communities, working with residents, businesses and partners like the Districts and Boroughs.

Edward is pleased that Inglewood has been resurfaced. This work alone cost £103,000 but he is aware that there are many other roads requiring work. Various roads were discussed at the meeting including The Maultway, Old Bisley Road, Edgemoor Road and Upper Chobham Road. It was also mentioned that Surrey has the second highest usage per mile of our roads nationally but that we receive the third lowest amount of money to resource them. This is because the funding is based on the miles of roads rather than the amount of use.

The poor quality of pothole repairs and dissatisfaction with the quality of road works such as the recent work on The Maultway was raised as an issue. Edward explained that he is putting pressure on cabinet members and senior officers to get improvements to the system of road repairs and the monitoring of these works. There has been some work to try and test different substances and methods of filling the potholes with the hope of prolonging the life of the repair work. In some cases holes have been filled temporarily until drier weather allows them to be properly fixed. Repairs should be guaranteed for 2 years but it is clear that many are failing almost as soon as they are repaired. In addition it seems that some of the work which is being signed off as satisfactory is in fact not good enough. Any work carried out is done as part of a contract, we do not pay the contractors for each individual repair carried out. Edward explained that the current road repairs contract has another two years to run after which SCC will be able to consider whether a different contractor may do a better job but there are a limited number of companies available to take on the work.

Edward reiterated that he is pushing hard for as much money as possible for roads and other projects. But the problem is that there are 80 other County Councillors doing the same. He also asked that if you are reporting potholes or other road issues that you share this information with him so he can monitor the work. His email address is [edward.hawkins@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:edward.hawkins@surreycc.gov.uk)

## **Borough Councillor Updates**

### **John Skipper**

John gave an update on the various issues he has been working on over the past few months. He hopes to be able to supply HWRA with a copy of the presentation he gave at some point soon so that we can share it with residents.

John has spent a lot of time recently dealing with reports from residents about potholes, pavement faults and broken manhole covers. While strictly these fall under the SCC remit and therefore are the responsibility of Edward Hawkins, John has been happy to help and report them where residents are not able to use the self reporting system. He explained that if you are reporting a fault it is important to be as specific as possible about the area and issue to ensure that the problem is taken seriously and properly fixed. As mentioned above, he too is concerned that the quality of the repairs being carried out is substandard. He cited an example of two uneven, wobbly paving slabs in the Heather Ridge Arcade which he had reported. SCC had replaced these with tarmac and said the reason for this was because the the slabs were being pushed up by tree roots, yet there are no trees growing in this area.

John has also asked SCC to look at the pavement where Pendragon Way meets Martindale Avenue as the camber on the pavement is very steep. This makes it difficult for disabled people and pedestrians with pushchairs to safely navigate round the corner. Unfortunately SCC do not think the issue is severe enough to warrant correcting.

John mentioned that he had recently been alerted to a problem with a broken manhole in Silver Drive. He suggested that in cases like this it is worth seeing if there is a company name on the manhole. In this case he contacted Thames Water who came out very quickly to fix it. Doing it directly would seem a lot quicker than going via SCC to report it and then them having to pass it on to Thames Water. A number of residents asked what was happening with the broken manhole in Heather Ridge Arcade where the Christmas Tree is sited. This was reported before Christmas but is still yet to be fixed.

There has been a recent spate of graffitiing around the Community Centre area. This has been reported to SHBC but not completely removed. Some of the graffiti is on the fencing belonging to Sainsbury's so not SHBC responsibility. A local resident, Giles has very kindly removed the graffiti from all these areas. Residents and councillors asked that he be formally thanked for this kind gesture and that it be recorded that HWRA were very grateful for his actions.

John reported that he has been in regular discussion with officers at SHBC about the state of the Heatherside play area. They will soon be replacing some of the black matting with Eco tumbler surfacing which is rubberised matting. This should be cleaner and more hard wearing and hopefully reduce flooding. He also mentioned the current placement of the large stones within the park as a number of people have complained about them.

John has been in discussion with SHBC about work needed on the Community Centre to modernise and bring it up to standard. This includes fire doors, replacement electrical consumer unit, brickwork issues, guttering, replacement windows, extra storage and repairs to paths. There are also problems with parking as many of the spaces in the car park are used by residents meaning there is little parking for the centre users. In addition there are no dedicated disabled spaces or dropped kerbs which are causing a problem for disabled users of the centre.

The joint community and SHBC noticeboard which John has been campaigning for for some time should hopefully soon be installed on the wall opposite the entrance to Sainsbury's. This is dependent upon permission being granted by the landowner if not an alternative location may need to be found.

There was a discussion once again about the ownership issues in the Heather Ridge Arcade and it was proposed that a meeting be held between HWRA, Councillors and SHBC/SCC officers to see if any progress can be made in improving the appearance of this area.

### **Kristian Wrenn**

Kristian updated the residents on a number of issues.

The work to replace the Maguire Drive play area has finally commenced and should soon be completed. This will also benefit the residents of the Heathlands development.

A new litter bin has been installed in the alleyway which runs between Cheylesmore Park and Theobalds Way. This should hopefully resolve the problem of litter being persistently dumped in this area. Katherine reported that since the bin was installed there has been no litter dropped in this area.

Heathlands residents have been in touch with the council regarding the outstanding work to complete Admiral Drive. This should soon be completed by the contractor.

A number of questions were raised around the recent changes within Surrey Heath Borough Council. The Council Leader and Deputy Leader resigned and have left the Conservative Party. A meeting had been held to elect the new Leader. Residents were wondering what impact this would have on them though none of the councillors involved represent Heatherside. There was a brief discussion about this.

Councillors were also asked when the outstanding situation with the SHBC Chief Executive was likely to be resolved. She was put on special leave several months ago after pay increases were queried and the results of the subsequent investigation into this have not yet been published. At present the CEO continues to be paid but is not working. Katherine asked who was doing the work she should be doing. Tim Pashen is currently standing in for the CEO but in that case who is now doing his job? Councillors replied that the report is in the process of being finalised and that it has not yet been widely released due to sensitive personal material within it.

## **5) 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 (SCC) and has been reported to them. At the last meeting the plans to treat it were discussed. SCC had hoped to treat the plant before it died back for the winter but if not the treatment would have to be delayed until spring. A local resident reported that the plant appears to have gone and asked whether it had been treated or whether it had died back. Edward Hawkins said he would chase this up at SCC and see what the status of treatment is.

## **6) Esso Pipeline**

Caroline gave an update on the latest progress of the Esso pipeline replacement project. The Planning Inspectorate are carrying out site visits in areas where they are not happy with the planned work. These are not within the Heatherside area but may be of interest as they are fairly local to us. The two sites mentioned were Queen Elizabeth Park in Farnborough and Turf Hill in Lightwater. Esso will also be carrying out utilities

surveys in the areas affected. Red Road is scheduled to be investigated on the 10th Feb so it may be worth avoiding it on this day. All the reports are due to be submitted by the 9th April.

Esso had expressed an interest in using a piece of land off Deepcut Bridge Road as a logistics hub during the replacement work however this plan has now been downgraded and the site may be used as a storage compound instead. This would significantly reduce the number of lorries using the site. It has been suggested that part of the St Catherine's SANG will be used in addition to the Deepcut site which may mean more traffic in the Paddock Hill (Frimley Green) area. However, SHBC are resisting this plan as they feel it is an unsuitable location. All the latest information on the project can be found at <https://www.slpproject.co.uk/>.

## **7) Heathrow Expansion**

Caroline gave a brief update on the latest developments to the proposed Heathrow Expansion project. Heathrow wanted to begin their intended planned works before planning permission was granted but the CAA said no to this as it would mean any costs being passed onto airport users if it was refused.

It is intended that the planning application for the expansion work will be submitted by the end of 2020. There is a further round of consultation on the intended work planned for later this year but the exact details and dates for this are not yet clear. More information can be seen here <https://www.heathrowconsultation.com/>.

## **8) Crime and Policing**

Our local Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's) were unfortunately not able to attend the meeting but Larry shared some information from Neighbourhood Watch. He explained that he has recently become an admin on a Facebook group which local residents might wish to join to receive helpful updates and advice on local criminal activity. If you would like to join the group the web address is <https://www.facebook.com/groups/568384326884016/> or search for Surrey Heath Neighbourhood Watch on the app.

There was a discussion over the types of crimes that seem to be happening more frequently in the area. There has been a peak in burglaries in the area in recent months. It was suggested that often these are committed by people who travel in from outside the area, break in to properties and then leave the area again. Larry mentioned examples of people being flown in from as far away as Chile to commit crimes then flying home again once they had been involved with a few burglaries.



There have also been a number of cases of catalytic converters being stolen from cars in the local area. This has happened recently in Bagshot in the Waitrose overflow car park and also in Lightwater. They can be cut off the car in just a couple of minutes! The quick access from this area to the M3 means thieves can quickly get away after breaking into houses or stealing from cars.

Another local issue of concern is drug dealing. Larry said he knew of at least one person who has been openly dealing on the estate. He has reported this to the police but they have so far been unable to act. He asked everyone to be vigilant and to report any signs of drug use or selling.

Larry suggested that if you live in a road where there is already an established Neighbourhood Watch then you should join it or if there is not one in your road then consider setting one up. Help and support to do this is available to from the already established Surrey Heath Neighbourhood Watch group.

As always the advice is that if you witness a crime being carried out or if it is an emergency you should phone 999. If the situation is non urgent or you see something suspicious you would like to report then you should use the police non emergency number which is 101.

### **9) Next Meeting Date**

This is yet to be agreed but will most likely be at the end of April or at the very start of May. We are not yet sure where the meeting will be held but it is likely to be at the Community Centre

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### **10) AOB**

#### **Heatherside Pillar surplus money**

Following the completion of the Heatherside Pillar there was around £400 leftover surplus money that the community had donated to the project. Len Williams proposed that this money be given to a local project to benefit the residents of Heatherside and has carried out a voting process to choose a scheme from those put forward. The successful scheme proposes the installation of CCTV to monitor potential antisocial activity in the park. The camera would be located on the Wheatsheaf pub with the footage only being available to the police. Simon Mattinson who proposed the scheme had intended to come to the HWRA meeting and do a brief presentation on the scheme and his proposed plans. However, he was unable to attend at the last minute.

Consequently this presentation will now take place at the next meeting when the project will be more advanced and the details have been agreed.

### **Pop Up Coffee Shops**

The Heatherside Pop Up Coffee Shop runs every third Saturday of the month from 10am to 11.30am. It is usually held in the Community Centre but sometimes moves to other locations. Each month it raises money and awareness for a different charity.

The February coffee shop will be on the 15th and will be in conjunction with Cancer Testing South. They will be offering free PSA blood tests to men aged 45 to 70 as a possible early indicator for Prostate Cancer. The Wheatsheaf pub will be giving a free pint of Hogs Back TEA beer to any men who have the test done. You can book an appointment at

<https://cts.mypsatestests.org.uk/Events/?0d8171e8-d1b1-4334-a203-68a00a8d4798> or drop in. The blood tests will be continuing until 2pm after the coffee shop.

The next coffee shops will be on the following dates with the various charities to be announced nearer the time.

March 21st

April 18th

May 16th

June 20th

July 18th

## **APPENDIX A - Notes from Edward Hawkins**

Since 2018, SCC has made £200m of cost reductions from a budget of c£1.3bn. For the first time in years we are able, as required by law, to balance the budget without drawing on reserves. As a result of this situation the County is now able to take a longer term view on the services we provide with a move towards outcomes as against process.

A settled political situation – irrespective of one's views – is a help and for the next year we know what financial support we will be receiving. The following years are not so certain as undoubtedly there will be much attention on the North of England. At a recent party conference I ask the Conservative Party Chairman to ensure that the south was not forgotten as we had many of the problems as the rest of the country.

Getting to a balanced budget in a short period of time has been hard and some unpopular decisions had to be made. Some felt we were going too far and too fast but urgent action needed to be taken. As part of the changes, not just to the budget but the way the County interacted with the residents and what we did for them, a series of consultations were held. As a result, we will not be closing any of the CRC's; there will be no charges for parking in the countryside; libraries will not close although there will be some changes to make them more of a hub – centre for communities'.

When I became a County Councillor in 2017, I said that one of my aims was to get out of County Hall in Kingston. This had been tried a number of times before and failed and the wise money was that any new attempt was also doomed to failure. This year we will be moving County Hall to a much smaller building in Woking. This is part of the programme of being in Surrey and Moving Closer to Residents. The revenue saving is some £700,000 per annum in running costs.

An example of the Transformation work being undertaken is that around Children's and Adults Social Care. This area takes up about two thirds of our annual budget. Demand is increasing along with costs and we have an aging population. It is estimated that SCC through the work it does subsidises the NHS by about £40m per year. In respect of the Day Care Centres about 1% of the people that need help went through them. It is not the buildings that do the work – it is the people. We are concentrating on getting the required support out to the people in need rather than wait for them to come to us. Evidence shows that early intervention often works and saves heartache later on. It is interesting that the Duchess of Cambridge has recently said the same thing on the recent launch of her foundation.

SCC's aim has been to combine the various streams of work carried out supporting the young and families. For Youth there is consultation to the end of April looking at whether or not Surrey County Council permits the voluntary community and faith sector to use the youth centres for the benefit of young people at little or no cost and how the Council delivers universal open access youth work. There are engagement events planned for each centre that is owned or leased by Surrey County Council. The events will be 'drop in' market stalls with no booking necessary and will be published in advance on the consultation website:  
<https://www.surreysays.co.uk/csf/universal-youth-work-proposal>.

We are already working with Surrey Clubs for Young People to create provision at a number of locations including the Old Dean.

For Family Centres all district and boroughs have now completed the transfer of staff and restructures with one exception. Some areas are still in the process of recruiting new staff. Overall there will be an increase in the capacity of outreach workers to support families compared to the previous children's centre model and new providers include Barnardo's.

Ensuring we have the right provision for children in care is a key part of the improvement programme and bringing children in care closer to home remains a priority for the service. There has been a strong focus on expanding the pool of SCC foster carers throughout 2019 and this has resulted in 24 new foster carer households being approved since April with a further 17 being reviewed before the end of March.

It is however important to note that despite this continued effort to bring children closer to home, it will take some time for the overall numbers of Looked After Children living outside of the County to reduce significantly.

I am aware of some Foster Carers in my Division and I thank them for what they do.

The balanced budget for this next year sets out nearly £1bn in net revenue funding on vital services such as Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Highways, Waste Management, maintaining the countryside, Community Safety and cultural services like libraries.

The proposals include:

- **Adult Social Care** - Support for older people and adults with physical disabilities, mental health support needs and learning disabilities: £372.1 million
- **Children's Social Care and Commissioning** - Child protection and care for vulnerable children: £139.8 million
- **Early years and education support** – this is additional to the ring-fenced education funding set by government and pays for things like early help for families, school transport and additional school places: £52 million
- **Highways and transport** - Road and pavement maintenance and improvement, streetlights, gritting, bus services and road safety: £62.9 million
- **Waste disposal** - Disposing of waste and delivering the County's 15 Community Recycling Centres: £67.9 million (A 1% increase in recycling saves the County about £0.3m)
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- **Cultural Services** - Libraries, Registrars, Surrey History Centre, Surrey Arts and Adult Learning: £7.8 million
- **Environment and planning** - Looking after the countryside and putting in place strategic planning policies: £3.7 million

In addition, the revenue budget includes spending on Public Health (£36.3m), Special Educational Needs and Disabilities services (£45.7m) and school support (£18.6m), which are paid through grant funding rather than Council Tax

Council Tax will rise by 1.99%, helping to deliver this programme and in addition, there will be the Government's permitted 2% ring-fenced 'precept' for use in supporting our vulnerable adults and those in need of social care.

The County has also recently published a schedule of Headline Capital Schemes for the next five years to support the revenue schemes.

- **Highways** – We are increasing our investment in our 3,000 miles of road and pavements, spending £92m on improving and maintaining Surrey's highway network. This greater emphasis on pavements is to be welcomed as they have been neglected over recent years.
- **Greener Futures** – Around £84m in projects to protect the environment and help tackle the Climate Emergency, including a Solar Farm, Ultra Low Emission vehicles and electrification of transport services including buses and school transport.
- **Extra Care** – We are investing up to £7m in the first phase of a programme to deliver 725 specially adapted homes for elderly residents, to increase independence and reduce hospital admittance.
- **Surrey Flood Alleviation Scheme** – £270m to protect over 30,000 homes and businesses from the risk of flooding – enhancing the environment, attracting investment and keeping residents safe.
- **Special Educational Needs & Disabilities** - £31m to provide 883 additional places for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, including a new SEND school in Woking.
- **Schools** – A further £70m to provide additional school places and improve school facilities across the County
- **Community Investment Fund** – We are creating a £100m fund to regenerate high streets and invest in local communities, working with residents, businesses and partners like the Districts and Boroughs.

Over the past few weeks I have attended a number of seminars and Scrutiny Committees where we have looked in detail at the proposals and their impact on the budget and residents. I am confident that through the use of savings made and the new structures put in place what we are proposing is affordable via a combination of Capital receipts and Prudential Borrowing

Closer to home I am delighted that Inglewood has been resurfaced – another of my targets, however there are many more roads and pavements that need working on throughout my Division. There have been further successes in getting pot holes repaired and works carried out, but again more needs to be done. At a recent Select Committee I pressed Cabinet Members and Senior Officers to get improvements to the system of road repairs and the monitoring of these works.

Rest assured I will be pushing hard for as much money as I can get and not just for roads (and with the local Borough Cllrs we may even get some progress on the precinct). The problem is that there are 80 other County Councillors doing the same.

**Edward Hawkins**

**30<sup>th</sup> January 2020**