



Cobham and Downside Residents' Association Newsletter, Spring 2019

Residents' Meeting and AGM

Thursday 25th April, doors open 7.30pm for 7.45pm start
Cobham Village Hall, Lushington Drive
Sue Kilpatrick reminisces on her time in the CDRA

Our chairman, Sue Kilpatrick, on her retirement will be talking about some of the important local issues during her time on the committee. Sue is giving a little party after the AGM. She hopes as many as possible of you will come to the meeting and join her afterwards. Don't eat too much before you come!!

From the Chairman

This is probably the most difficult message I have had to write since I became a member of the CDRA Committee in 1991. I am retiring at the AGM but will be leaving the Association and the Committee in good heart. At a time when many organisations are finding it hard to get volunteers, we have been successful in recruiting new members to our committee. We have formed a Planning Sub-committee which is working well, more details below. A group has also explored better ways in which we can promote the Association and attract new members. We are still actively seeking more committee members especially with IT skills.

During my time on the Committee, I have been Secretary, Chairman, and in charge of Planning matters – and sometimes all three at the same time! I am extremely grateful to all Committee Members and Officers, both past and present, for their unfailing support and work on behalf of local residents. Many of them have become friends for life. I am particularly indebted to Sandy Brook, our Secretary, who is also retiring at the AGM. She has worked tirelessly for the CDRA and, without her, there were times when we simply could not have managed.

All good wishes to Cobham, its community organisations and its residents and I hope to see many of you at the AGM on 25th April.

Committee News

AGM 2019: We will be electing the officers and committee of the CDRA for the coming year at our AGM. Sue Kilpatrick, Sandy Brook, and Sumi Sarma are stepping down. The remaining members of the committee have agreed to stand for re-election. The committee will be nominating Ian Clifford as Acting Chairman, Rosemary Bailey as Acting Secretary and Wendy Whitaker as Acting Treasurer to take us through this time of transition. Much of the work previously done by the Secretary will be shared amongst other Committee Members. If you are interested in joining the CDRA Committee please email info@cdra.co.uk

Accounts: The accounts for 2018 will be

presented by our Treasurer at the AGM. We are grateful to Mr. Alan Ward for again reviewing them without charge.

Facebook: A few weeks ago we started a CDRA Facebook page which proved to be extremely popular and produced much feedback. Special thanks to Sumi Sarma who lead and worked on this successful initiative and to Rosemary Bailey for her contribution to it. We need extra help to be able to run our Facebook page permanently so have temporarily taken it down. If you are interested in helping us with this exciting project please email info@cdra.co.uk

New email addresses: Please note we have got two new email addresses. For planning matters please email planning@cdra.co.uk and for everything else email info@cdra.co.uk everything else email info@cdra.co.uk

CDRA Planning Sub-Committee

In August 2018 the CDRA sent out a leaflet seeking new members of CDRA and its Committee. At the same time CDRA Chair, Sue Kilpatrick and Secretary, Sandy Brook announced that they were retiring from their long standing and highly effective roles. Sue was particularly keen to recruit people to take on her work representing the CDRA on Town Planning matters. Those readers who have had experience of the Planning process will appreciate that this is something of a minefield. One which Sue has navigated with great energy, always with the best interests of the community at heart.

The CDRA Committee decided that a new Planning sub-committee should be established. Its brief, to review and make representations on Planning, Listed Building and Conservation Area applications in Cobham and Downside, and strategic Planning Policy consultations in Elmbridge and Surrey which may affect Cobham and Downside residents. They will also be available to advise members on planning matters that concern them; including individual applications, appeals, and the all important Local Plan consultation this summer, which will set the planning decision criteria until 2025/6.

The four members of the sub-committee are Vanessa Brown, Dilip Mathew, Denise

Stanczyk and Steve Wood. Steve is the chair of the sub-committee and the designated point of contact with third parties. Sue will ensure a smooth handover. You can email him on planning@cdra.co.uk.

The sub-committee started work in October 2018 and meets monthly. It is clear that areas of Cobham and Downside may soon be subject to change as Planners and Councillors balance protection of Green Belt against increased urban housing density as they struggle to meet national housing targets. A number of developers have already submitted applications which seek to address this issue by providing low rise flats; driven by falling demand for larger houses and Elmbridge's need for 1,2, and 3 bed homes.

Councillors, planning officers, and residents will be faced with very difficult choices. In the face of these challenges the committee will promote resident participation in the Local Plan consultation, and take a practical view when assessing individual planning applications; based on valid Town Planning criteria, quality of development proposals and factual impact assessments. This maintains credibility with the planning authorities, so that objections and observations carry weight and credibility, hopefully avoiding expensive appeals which cost the Borough, taxpayer and those in need of social support.

Cobham Health Centre Receives CIL Grant Award *by Dr S Karim*

Like many areas across the county, Cobham is seeing a growth in its population due a variety of factors from new housing developments coming to fruition to an increased life expectancy of our elderly patients. As a consequence, it's imperative that infrastructure and local services are invested in to maintain and improve their quality. This has been recognised in the past by Elmbridge Borough Council who have

generously provided funds for projects through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The Patient Participation Group (PPG) has been instrumental and have for example provided ambulatory blood pressure monitors and are contributing in various other ongoing projects.

Following on from this, I am pleased to be able to announce that a joint application from Cobham Health Centre and Surrey Downs Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to the Council for further funds from the CIL has been successful which will allow us to refurbish empty space within the health centre. The area will likely be used for

further consulting rooms and a conference room and will allow us to provide more clinics and access to a variety of clinicians. Over the past few years, the team at Cobham Health Centre has grown to include, GP registrars, a Clinical Pharmacist, an Advanced Nurse Practitioner, and Diabetes Specialist Nurses meaning that space is now at a premium. Having more clinical space will allow us to grow our team and continue our quest to improve the healthcare provision for our patients. We are therefore very grateful to the Council who chose our project over 7 others and in particular

to Jules Wilmshurst Smith Head of Estates at the CCG who worked with us on the grant application. A further vote of thanks to Claire Yarborough, the business manager at the practice who jointly presented our bid with myself to the Council at their offices in Esher.

There is a long way to go, with the Council needing to ratify their decision in the near future at a senior level, and then a variety of stakeholders to be consulted, but this is the first step in an exciting project that will without a doubt benefit the patients of Cobham.

The High Street

by David Worsfold, Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce

As a business who have been on the High Street for over 120 years we have seen many, many changes; some good (local organisations such as CCHT, CDRA and Cobham in Bloom), some that at first appeared bad but ended well (coffee shops) and the downright bad ones (parking charges). What becomes apparent is that change is integral to survival. In recent years we have seen the large number of estate agents give way to the influx of restaurants and coffee shops which will, in turn, change into more service based operations such as fitness, beauty and health. These businesses will continue to fill the empty units so, on the outside, Cobham High Street will continue to appear as a thriving, in demand, centre. The internet and high rents will also continue to take their toll on the traditional retailers although it is interesting to note that Stoneleigh's the butchers has bucked the trend, or is it the fact that things have come full circle and what was once an 'essential' has become a luxury? Of greatest concern is the erosion of the business 'community'. It is easy to remember the Chamber of Trade (as it was previously called) holding its Christmas parties at La Capanna (now The Ivy) with 200 attendees dancing and socialising till the early hours; regular meetings in the British Legion would see 40 plus traders and businesses planning and organising events that made Cobham centre a great place to visit and work in. The owner-occupiers gave their time and skills to work together, as they saw that only as a cohesive unit could we compete with other centres. The rise of the national chain with its necessary branch manager and transient workforce who often travel long distances to get here has inevitably led to a lower level of engagement with the local community and sense of belonging. The remaining members of the Chamber then have to absorb a greater burden as the shoulders become fewer. We have seen the strain lead to the inevitable consequence of no Christmas lights one year (wholly funded and organised by The Chamber) and a serious wobble this year with the Extravaganza itself threatened.

Perhaps it is time for The Chamber to change as the environment in which it exists has changed.

David Worsfold.

Farrants. In Cobham since 1896.



The retirement flats in the High Street, gradually being unveiled. The latest we have heard is that the flats will be ready for occupation in June. No news on the date for the shops

Meet our new Planning Sub-Committee Members!

Steve Wood has lived in Cobham for 25 years with Valerie his wife. He is a Civil Engineer undertaking projects in the UK, Iraq and Jordan in his early career, later becoming Development Director at a number of commercial property companies. He retired from full time employment in 2016 and focussed on local matters, becoming a Trustee of the Walton Charity and volunteering at Painshill. Keen to make use of his Town Planning and infrastructure skills to benefit the local community, he joined CDRA and was asked to Chair their new Planning Committee.



The Planning Sub-committee, Denise Stanczyk, Dilip Mathews, Steve Wood and Vanessa Brown

Steve says: *“Cobham and Downside has a great heritage and future, with a wealth of historic buildings and conservation areas binding together the whole community including recent developments. Its social and economic success inevitably attracts new residents, increasing demand for housing and pressure on land and infrastructure. Through our work on the committee I hope to build on the great contribution that CDRA has made and help ensure that new development respects our heritage, sustains our community, and maintains our quality of life”.*

Vanessa Brown has lived in Cobham since 2007, with a hiatus for five years in Toronto, Canada. She is Head of Theology, Philosophy and Ethics at a local school. Vanessa has two young daughters and two step-sons and also has numerous animals. She is involved in a wide variety of country sports and is still playing touch rugby at the Cobham Rugby Club.

“I am particularly interested in supporting young people and the most vulnerable in our society, and believe that community involvement and collaboration within schools is imperative for a cohesive society. I am increasingly concerned about the effects of ‘financial sustainability’ for our local authority and what that means in real terms for Cobham in terms of education, policing, health and access to services”.

Dilip Mathew has lived in the Cobham area since 2002 and is married with two grown up children. He is a retired banker and is still engaged in providing consultancy services to banks from time to time. His wife teaches at the University of Westminster. *“Cobham is a great place to live and I am keen to ensure that the town develops in line with the character of the town and in a sustainable manner with the available infrastructure and amenities”.*

Denise Stanczyk - has lived in cobham since 1999, raising three children while working in charitable organisations focusing on rehabilitation of adults and children with physical disabilities. *“I am now a member of the arts society, enjoy walking the length and breadth of the woods and heaths surrounding cobham and improving my gardening skills. I am passionate about maintaining cobham as semi rural character which my family has had the privilege of enjoying whilst understanding the need to balance the demands for housing for young families in the future”.*

Join the CDRA!

If you are not already a member we hope you will decide to support Cobham and Downside by joining the Association. Send your name, address and a cheque, made out to CDRA, for the £5 annual subscription, to CDRA Membership, 32 Freelands Road, Cobham, KT11 2ND. You can also pay by

online or telephone banking, our details are; account number 12422371, sort code 60 06 03; account name: CDRA. Please use your name and street name as reference so we know who you are. If you join in this way you will also need to email us your name and address. In both cases, let us know if you would like to be sent a receipt. Alert us if you don't want your details held on our computer files.