

Draft

## GUILDFORD RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Note of meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2022 at the Guildford Institute

Chair: Amanda Mullarkey

Note: Richard Jarvis

Present: Amanda Mullarkey CRARA  
Andy Clapham Burpham CA  
Ray Briggs Onslow Village RA  
Ramsay Nagaty Compton PC  
Alistair Smith Guildford Society  
John Baylis Guildford Society  
Sue Hibbert Abbotswood RA – CC  
Martin Dowland Save the Hog's Back  
Emma Shaw Downsedge RA  
Jane Vessey Downsedge RA  
Richard Jarvis Tyting Society  
Jennie Kyte Holy Trinity Action Group  
John Harrison St Catherine's VA

Apologies received: Fazia Cater, David Bird (WBRDA), Bob McShee (Wood Street VA), West Clandon PC, Karen Stevens (Compton and STHB), Steve Knight (Jacobs Well), Keith Meldrum (Merrow), Donna Collinson (Stoke), Arjen Naafs (Beechcroft Drive)

1. The Chair (AM) welcomed all present, who then introduced themselves. The minutes of the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> May were approved. Matters arising were covered by the agenda. AM said that Fazia (our Treasurer) had prepared the accounts for August, which were satisfactory.
2. Major Planning Applications
  - **St Mary's Wharf - 21/P/02232**

It was agreed that the proposed development should be rejected because of the height and mass of the buildings. It was noted that development now includes 5 affordable homes. AS noted that the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Society is again objecting to the demolition of the existing building, and that the current proposals would have a significant impact in terms of embodied carbon. ES said that we need to check whether the proposals conform with the National Design Code. There was a discussion on viability, and it was noted that the current rules mean that developers can show the scheme as loss-making.

AM proposed that we restate our objections, using that the images we prepared for the Dragon showing the very significant impact on views, and this was agreed. AC asked that the images are circulated to members, which was also agreed.

We discussed using a FoI request on the sale of the existing building – and decided that it would probably not be likely to succeed. There was an extensive discussion on the position of the GBC planning officers on building height, and that they are unwilling to advocate limits.

- **North Street Redevelopment (Friary Quarter) - 22/P/01336**

AM explained that the coordination group is arranging a meeting with St Edward, the developer, postponed from 19<sup>th</sup> because of the late Queen's funeral.

Guildford Society had held their meeting with St Edward and JB said that they gave an impression of not being concerned about objections, and confident of approval.

AS pointed out that there will be a large number of dwellings consented in the town centre over the current local plan period, many of which will be one or two bed apartments. It was noted that this will not in fact protect the Green Belt from further development in the next plan period, because brown field sites will have been used up. Also, the base number of properties will be higher – and hence the growth required by government (under current rules) will also be higher. RN pointed out that the properties will be 'investment grade', and there was a discussion about the difficulties faced by young workers and families finding homes in the town.

The 14-storey tower block is a major concern for all. It would set a precedent that others will follow.

It was noted that Historic England have yet to comment. AM suggested we write to them. ES said that the NDC is relevant here as well, and also BRE daylight standards.

It was agreed that we will reiterate our objections, and encourage members to respond to GBC on the application.

- **Wisley New Settlement - 22/P/01175**

AC raised the issue of essential infrastructure provision, which has been examined and commented on by Jim Allen. This is a major concern.

RJ explained the situation regarding the proposed north-facing slip roads on the A3 at Burnt Common. The Wisley application includes evidence that the new development does not require the slip roads. Highways England is carrying out a study of the A3/A247 junction, but it is unlikely to report in the short term.

RN said that he was concerned about the fact that the development is in 3 parts, and that delivery over an extended time period will mean that there is a significant risk of lack of infrastructure. For example, there is no guarantee on schools.

AC proposed that we produce a note for members on the issues, which was agreed. And information will be put on our website.

### 3. Development Management Policies

AM said that we are preparing for the DMP Examination, which is scheduled to take place from 15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> November. The Inspector has issued a note on the questions that he expects to be covered, and the scope of those is remarkably narrow. She proposed that we write to the Inspector asking for the subject of building height and mass to be included. There was a discussion of the merits of introducing such a policy, in preference to an SPD, say. There is an opportunity to make use of the National Design Code to support the case.

AM explained that she had researched the options for obtaining independent advice on this issue and found that our best option is the Landscape Institute. They can produce a paper for us on the case for a height policy for £5,000. She asked if there is an appetite among those members present to ask for funding for such a document to support our arguments to the Inspector. The alternative is that we do it ourselves. It was agreed that we should commission the Landscape Institute and seek to raise the necessary funds. AM will draft a proposal urgently.

SH stressed that for members, the arguments must be concise and straightforward. We will prepare a brief statement on the issue for members.

The deadline for submitting documents to the Inspector is 21<sup>st</sup> October. There was a discussion on the aspects that should be covered, including economic factors, and also on the experience of other towns, including Farnham and Basingstoke.

4. Other issues

- Solar farm proposal (UoS)

AM proposed that GRA should object to this as an inappropriate use of pasture/agricultural land in the green belt. The focus should be on using solar panels on the roofs of buildings such as car parks. There was general support for this position. RN pointed out that the initiative is led by SSE, who want sustainable energy projects to make use of incentives.

- Guildford and Waverley Councils

There has been a Joint Chief Executive (Tom Horwood) since November 2021. The joint operations of the two Councils now includes the three Joint Strategic Directors. They are:

Ian Doyle            Transformation and Governance

Dawn Hudd        Place

Annie Righton    Community Wellbeing

It is anticipated that the sharing of officers will be extended to the next tier before long.

It was noted that the leadership of the Guildford council is due to revert to the LibDems in October.

- Shaping Guildford

The GBC Executive will consider a report on the town centre masterplan on Thursday 22 September, and be asked to approve funding for Stage 3 of the project. The latest thinking is set out in a report that is available on the GBC website in the papers for the Executive meeting. The proposals are hugely important for the town. It is essential that we engage with the process to take them forward. It was agreed that a summary of key points should be sent to members.

- RJ reported that National Highways is carrying out a study of the A3 through Guildford. NH has determined that there is a case for action, even though this section of the A3 was dropped from the DfT's Road Investment Strategy for 2025-30. The timetable for the study has not been published. There was a brief discussion of the tunnel option, which was not thought to be a realistic prospect.

5. Members' topics

RB referred to the provision of GP services, discussed at the May meeting, and explained that there is to be another round of consultation. A meeting will be held in Onslow Village Hall on 22<sup>nd</sup> November, which all are welcome to attend.

AS invited all to see the Guildford Design Awards Exhibition, which will be at a various locations over the coming weekends. The exhibits show the 2020 and 2021 Guildford Design Award winners. See the Guildford Society website for locations and dates.

6. The Chair closed the meeting with the message that residents CAN make a difference. We need to make our voices heard.

