

ACTING CHAIRMAN'S NOTES – MICHAEL C.DOUGHTY

In December our Open Meeting talk was entitled 'Open Spaces, Who we are and What we do'. Nigel Ellis, Team Leader of RBBC Green Spaces Team gave an in depth insight into their enormous responsibility. There are literally thousands of trees to manage and care for in the Borough plus huge areas of grassland, heathland and embankments and hedges, besides all the parks and recreation areas. The audience asked many questions which stimulated a good discussion which could easily have carried on beyond the allotted time. We hope to invite Nigel Ellis to speak again in the next programme of talks.

The Members' Evening, held at the end of October at the Reigate Manor and attended by some 60 Members, was a great success. The Civic Awards projects were announced as described in the Architecture and Planning report. After the buffet there followed an interesting and entertaining talk by Mark Davison on his lifetime hobby of metal detecting. He has found hundreds of interesting and important historical objects in our local area from Roman times to the present day.

There are continuing threats to the precious Green Belt in and around the Borough with blatant attempts by a few aggressive developers to exploit planning loopholes or to circumvent residents' concerns by submitting applications just into the Christmas period when many people who might wish to comment are on holiday or busy with family commitments. The Society continues to be vigilant.

Thank you to Pippa Martin for taking on the Chairmanship of the Redhill Committee. You can read their report in this newsletter. Whilst reading I am pleased to note that the Redhill Town Centre litter problem has improved.

The same problem of litter and debris build up is to be seen around Reigate and this matter has been raised by Member, David Brown, who is keen to promote action on tidying up the town. We shall be discussing this issue at the next GP or Council meeting and with Reigate and Banstead Council.

David Brown would welcome hearing from members on this topic (his e.mail is digby@sweethaven.biz) It would be good to compile a list of town centre places requiring attention.

The Keep Britain Tidy Campaign promotes The Great British Spring Clean in March to April and some of you may wish to find out more by visiting the website www.KeepBritainTidy.org.

An important part of the Society's work is keeping informed on local planning policies. At the beginning of January RBBC published for consultation their Supplementary Planning Documents in respect of the Local Development Plan in areas such as affordable housing, historic parks and gardens, historic building conversions and shop front design. All such documents are very lengthy and detailed and any help from members in reading some of these and letting us know any comments is much appreciated.

My good wishes to you all for the New Year ahead.

Michael Doughty

ACTING SECRETARY'S NOTES – BRIDGET DOUGHTY 01737-240974

The first event of the New Year is the Open Meeting on Monday 20th January – a talk on The Children's Trust, Tadworth Court by James Poole. This will have taken place by the time you receive this newsletter. The rest of the dates are below so please note them on your calendars:

- Monday February 24th - Open Meeting (Talk to be confirmed, check website)
Thursday 5th March - Reigate Society Council Meeting
Monday 23rd March - Open Meeting (Talk on Surrey Wildlife Trust by Sarah Jane Chimbwandira, Chief Executive of SWT)
Monday 13th July - Reigate Society AGM

I hope to have the details confirmed for the February Open Meeting soon and if you do not use a computer, please telephone me for information (01737 240974).

As reported in the Chairman's message, The December Open Meeting and the Members' Evening back at the end of October, were well attended and very enjoyable. Ideas for talks and speakers are always welcome.

At the last Society Council meeting the matter of attracting new members was discussed and it is planned to run an information stand for a couple of hours on a date, or dates, to be decided, possibly in April or May when the weather is better. The aim would be to talk to people in the street to gain their interest and involvement in The Reigate Society and possibly find new members who would be willing to take on leadership of the Society. We would aim to run this in Reigate and/or Redhill and help with this will be greatly appreciated. We have had information postcards printed which you will gradually see appearing at the libraries and around the Borough. Some members picked up copies at the last Open Meeting to pass on to friends and neighbours who might be interested to find out about the Society.

Please note this new e.mail for correspondence:

mandbdoughty@outlook.com

Bridget Doughty

01737 240974

TREASURER'S NOTES – ROBERT BOGIN 01737-248018

We are almost 10 months into the current year and net income stands at around £2000 and Society funds at just over £8000. Further costs of around £500 are expected before the year end in March so it will be a good year in terms of net income. Subscriptions for the year 2019-2020 are running at £144 less than 2018-2019. £475 of subscriptions for 2020-2021 have already been received

REGISTRAR'S NOTES – ROBERT BOGIN

Number of members stands at 457 comprising 143 single memberships, 143 family memberships, 19 corporate and 8 others - thus a total of 313 memberships. 44 memberships representing 65 members have not yet paid their 2019-2020 subscriptions and reminders are being sent out this month. Of the 313 memberships, 147 receive their Newsletters by email, 58 by post and 108 by hand delivery

COMMITTEE REPORTS

ARCHITECTURE & PLANNING - CHAIR: TIM LEE 01737-243540

Planning applications:

During the last few weeks and months the committee has been invited to comment on a few shop front and signage applications as the turnover of retail and eatery units on the high street continues. Notably the arrival of Nandos, Starbucks and Nationwide. There are important historical buildings on the high street still empty such as the old Nat West building as well as The Barons building on Church Street, which in November had a change of use from A1 retail to B1a business granted

The committee recently objected to a planning application for the development of a stables building into 4 semi-detached houses and new stables building in the green belt next to The Clears, Reigate.

An application to add an extra storey to the top of the Robert Leech building at 1-3 The High Street in Reigate has been refused. The committee objected to the addition as we felt it was over-dominant, and an inappropriate roof design. However, the proposed design does seem to be in keeping with how the building originally was between the 1900s and 1950s. The flat roof and balustrade details to the existing building are more recent additions.

Another outline planning application has been submitted for the creation of a retirement village development on land to the north of Rockshaw road in the green belt. The development plans to add 85 care units and 4 new detached dwellings. The committee commenting that this was inappropriate use for this area sandwiched in-between the M25 and M23.

Civic Awards 2019:

There were two buildings shortlisted for consideration for an award this year, both in the conservation and restoration category. The first project was the refurbishment of the Lower Hall at St John's Primary school, Redhill. The project was designed and managed through the construction stages by Surrey County Council. The project's success lies in the mutual respect and love for the building and the retention of its architectural heritage. This meant the building was restored to a high standard of finish with high quality of materials used and received an award.

The second project was the refurbishment of Knights Yard on Bell Street in Reigate. This building was carefully restored, and in places, re-built to create modern apartments on the upper floors as well as refurbish the retail units on the ground floor. The judging panel felt that the building had been successfully and sensitively restored sustaining an important local building for the community and providing much needed modern living accommodation and as such received a commendation

Other local Architecture and Planning news:

With the help of the committee's members, we have now finalised a revised and updated description to be published on the Reigate Society website describing the roles, tasks and responsibilities of the Architecture and Planning Committee. This part of the website has not been updated for many years and a review of what is currently displayed is being undertaken.

The committee has been active in liaising with John McNally at Reigate Borough Council on the potential of applying for listed status for two cottages to the south of Reigate on Cockshott Hill that are under threat of demolition due to plans to build new houses to surrounding land by developers. The committee hopes that something can be done to save these important historic buildings.

The committee has also been approached by a Reigate Society member asking whether the Vogan memorial in Priory Park could be cleaned and given a new lease of life as it is the centenary year of the memorial in 2020. The Vogan Memorial commemorates the donation to the Borough of what is now Priory Park by a local corn-merchant, Mr Randal Vogan in February 1920. The committee has been in contact with Nigel Ellis, head of the Greenspaces team at Reigate & Banstead Council to see what can be done in the new year.

TRANSPORT

- CHAIR: BRUCE HEALEY 01737-240577

Roads:

The M25 junction 8/A217 interchange work which was due to start in September and was then deferred until the New Year, has now been delayed until April 2021. The work is expected to complete in July 2022. The reason for the delay is not totally clear although Surrey County Council were concerned that these roadworks should not overlap with the M23 Smart Motorway works. The M23 works have mostly moved over to the central section with the outer lanes nearing completion with the effect that the Gatwick and Crawley interchanges have been narrowed to 2 lanes in both directions. There does not appear to be a predicted end date for these works on the internet.

Reigate Level Crossing:

Although GWR are still expecting to run 3 trains per hour in each direction over Reigate Level Crossing from May, the decision on the increase of service has not happened and the situation is complicated. At the North Downs Community Rail Partnership (NDCRP) meeting on 9th January, Network Rail explained that they are still objecting to the new service on the grounds that they do not think the new service will be reliable enough and will cause service disruption at Redhill/Gatwick, Guildford and Reading. NR announced that they are prepared to allow a partial introduction of the increased service but only between 9-11am and 2-5pm to 'see how it performs'. However, this situation is complicated by the Gatwick Station refurbishment. which is due to start in May. Platform 7 is scheduled to be closed until January 2021 when Platforms 5 and 6 will close until May 2022 for widening. During this time there will be a reduction in service for Southern and Thameslink owing to the reduced platform availability. It would therefore seem bizarre to allow GWR to run the extra service to Gatwick during this upgrade. Presumably the final decision will be made by the Office of Road and Rail (ORR).

On December 22nd, there was a substantial embankment collapse near Edenbridge on the Redhill Tonbridge line. Rail replacement buses are currently operating between Redhill and Edenbridge. The site is a difficult one to access and Network Rail will not give an expected completion date except to say that the line will be out of operation for 'months'.

Trains:

The 4 car Class 769 trains which GWR expect to use on the Gatwick to Reading line are still nowhere to be seen. There have not been any recent updates on predicted entry into service. Also at the NDCRP meeting, Network Rail stated that there were working on a business case to convert the entire Reading to Redhill line to third rail electric operation. There has been a lot of opposition to extending third rail operations but the general opinion seems to be swinging in favour of allowing certain in-fill electrifications. This would allow the class 769 units to work in electric mode over the entire journey. However, approval and funding would be needed.

Gatwick Airport:

A representative from Gatwick Airport was at the NDCRP meeting. In the light of the delays to Heathrow's third runway, Gatwick are applying for permission to use their taxiway as an additional runway for take-off only.

Website and Facebook:

The website is receiving a large amount of 'spam' email and we are looking at putting in standard (reCaptcha) freeware to limit this.

REDHILL COMMITTEE CHAIR: PIPPA MARTIN 01737-763395

In September 2019 Gerry Moss resigned as Chairman of the Redhill Committee and Pippa Martin agreed to take over.

The face of Redhill has changed considerably in the last few years with a large new Sainsburys and a much needed Travelodge Hotel and gym above. The Warwick Quadrant received a modern facelift to replace the red eighties façade. The car park in Sainsburys is now excellent with plenty of space provided between cars and good provision for the disabled. There is almost no signage so it can be challenge remembering where one's car is parked.

The market on Thursdays and Saturdays is very successful with excellent fish, fruit and flower stalls. These stall holders have been loyal to Redhill for several years despite comments that rents in Redhill are more expensive than other boroughs. There is an international feel in the market with street foods and merchandise from several Eastern and African countries providing an exotic flavour. The litter in the centre seems much improved recently encouraged by a borough organised litter pick which attracted many people, including young families, and the provision of strategic bins.

Parking is a perennial problem and will only worsen with the completion of the residential properties with minimal parking. The parking is already putting pressure on the surrounding streets and Redhill Common.

The Harlequin Waller Cinema reopened in October 2019, after refurbishment, and has hosted several very successful screenings. The theatre has also staged pantomime and other excellent events. We are fortunate to have this excellent attraction in the borough together with the very good library.

The Picture House, our very own skyscraper, has now reached 18 stories – somewhat higher than the original 13 expected but all will be revealed when the cladding is removed.

Marketfield Way car park closed in mid-January 2020 as did the shops in the block on the east of the High Street as far as Boots the Opticians. They are now boarded up.

The Belfry provided a lively and festive Christmas in Redhill with Santa's Grotto, carols and many charitable activities. The footfall was slightly down on last year and the retailers reported mixed results but they were slightly above the national average.

John Capon organised a celebration of 175 Years of Redhill with a great family festival in the Memorial Park in June and coined the term Redhill "THRIVE" to encourage Redhill to take a pride in the town.

PMM January 2020

NATURAL AMENITIES - CHAIR: COLIN BURBIDGE 01737-245264

Natural Amenities is taking a break at this time. There is little to report at present further to the report published in the Annual Report for the year 2018/2019 published for the AGM in July.

IN MEMORIAM

The Society would like to pay tribute to the memory of one of its long standing members, Mary Slade, who died recently at the age of 89. Her work and achievements in the local community were celebrated in an article in the Surrey Mirror of January 16th.

CORPORATE MEMBERS

All phone numbers prefixed 01737 and addresses Reigate unless otherwise stated.

Care Homes of Distinction Ltd	Wray Park, 55 Alma Road RH2 0DN	248245	Care Homes & property development
Crow Watkin	14 Bell Street RH2 7BE	245886	Independent estate agents, surveyors & valuers
Dunottar School	High Trees Road RH2 7EL	761945	Independent secondary school
East Surrey College	Claremont Road, Gatton Point RH1 2JX	772611	College of Further Education
Franchise Accounting Services Ltd	48 Nutfield Road, Merstham RH1 3EP	649839	Accountancy
Micklefield School	10 Somers Road RH2 9DU	242615	Independent preparatory school for boys & girls aged 2 1/2 to 11
Reigate Architects	24 Holmesdale Road RH2 0BQ	243540	Architecture & sustainability
Reigate Art Studios	42 Castle Walk RH2 9PX	(0)7959 829627	Various art classes and studio space for artists,
Reigate Grammar School	Reigate Road RH2 0QS	222231	Grammar School
Reigate Heath Golf Club	Reigate Heath RH2 8QR	226793	Heathland golf course
Reigate Priory Cricket Club	Park Lane RH2 8JX	244477	Cricket club with senior & junior sections
Reigate Priory School	Bell Street RH2 7RL	245065	Junior school
Royal Albert & Alexandra School	Gatton Park RH2 0TW	649050	Boarding school for boys & girls aged 7 to 18
Skipton Building Society	43 Church Street RH2 0AE	245716	Local building society (mortgages & investments)
Stanton Construction	1 Castlefield Road RH2 0SA	227430	Development & construction service, public & commercial sectors
Stentor Music Co. Ltd	Albert Road North RH2 9EZ	240226	Manufacturers and distributors of musical instruments
Stoneman Funeral Service	Doran Court, Reigate Road RH1 6AZ	763456	Funeral directors & memorial craftsmen
TWM Solicitors LLP	40 West Street RH2 9BT	221212	Solicitors
White & Sons	24 High Street RH2 9AY	222600	Independent estate agents, surveyors & valuers

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

NAME(S): _____

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EMAIL: _____

I enclose our subscription for 2019/2020	Individual	£10
Cheques to 'The Reigate Society'	Family	£15
	Corporate	£30

If you are not a member and would like to join, please tick here ____

Please send cheques and/or completed form to:

Robert Bogin, Townsend House, 64 Church street, Reigate RH2 0SP

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