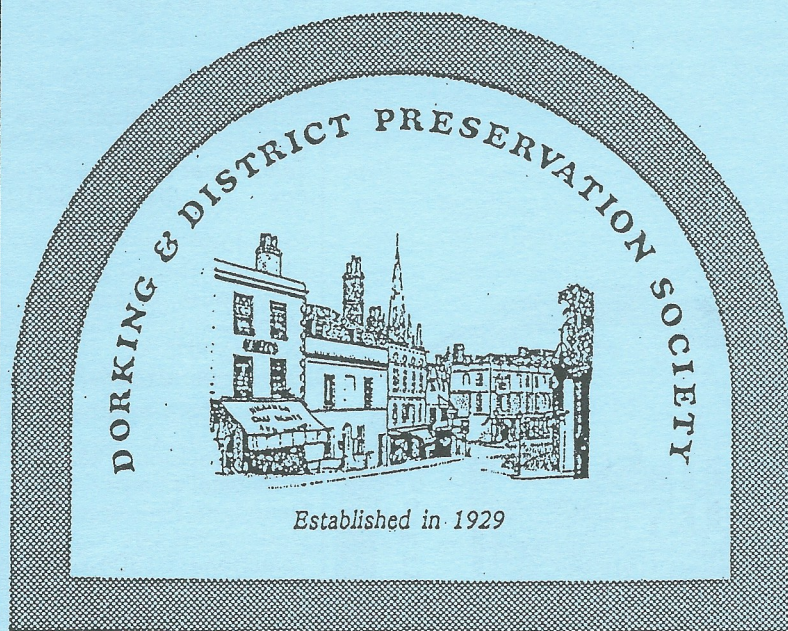


NEWSLETTER

of the Dorking & District Preservation Society

No. 42

Autumn 2005



Registered Charity 246806

NEWSLETTER

of the Dorking & District Preservation Society

Contents

Editorial	1
Chairman	2
Planning	6
News & Views	9
Letters	11
As snug as a bug	13
The character of Dorking	15

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editorial

A book by Professor Sir Colin Buchanan, published in 1958, was shrewdly titled *A Mixed Blessing: The Motor in Britain*. This was followed in 1963 by his Government-sponsored Report, *Traffic in Towns*, which spoke of the private motor car in stark terms:

'We are nourishing at immense cost a monster of great potential destructiveness and yet we love him dearly'.

Buchanan mooted the idea of congestion charging, since adopted in central London by Mayor Livingstone, and he considered it inevitable that motor traffic would have to be banned in parts of small towns and cities, which also has come about in some places. But over 40 years later, Dorking's medieval streets remain clogged with a still increasing army of cars and commercial vehicles, some of the latter almost twice as bulky as those of the early 1960s. When walking home from the Dorking Museum around 5pm, our aged gait now easily overtakes a continuous queue of stationary or slow-moving cars which stretches from the town centre to the Deepdene Roundabout, whilst in narrow Dene Street, another smaller line waits impatiently to join it. Almost all have only one occupant – the driver. Car sharing

schemes are often proposed but have only limited success, since the desire for a private space always seems to overcome cold logic.

On another page, our Chairman paints a grim picture of Dorking in the 2010s should a Sainsbury Store ever be built in the area below the St Martin's churchyard. It is the stuff of nightmares – Dorking becomes another English clone small town, with empty shop premises, its streets clogged with even more cars than today, many driven by frustrated shoppers in a frenzied search for empty parking spaces, desperate to get their cars loaded from the only source of supply and escape before the lengthy queues of homebound car-commuters start forming. Others, trying to avoid this chaos by shopping early or late, find their cars tangling with huge freight trucks, as these manoeuvre in and out of the narrow confines of Mill Lane.

It is not too soon to consider possible ways of at least alleviating this gloomy scenario. Aerial photographs of central Dorking reveal a surprising amount of uncovered space, once mostly private gardens, but now devoted entirely to car parking for only part of each weekday. As you will read on other pages in this issue, more parking spaces are badly needed in



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the town, especially if the Sainsbury store is built; meanwhile central government presses for more residential accommodation to be provided. So why not dig down deep on all these wasted sites, to produce two or even three levels of basement parking in which to conceal most of those 'dead' cars that clutter up the streets and then build above them some unobtrusive low-rise apartment blocks? A challenge indeed for engineers and

architects but it could be done without damaging the townscape. The temporary disruption would be horrendous but the archeologists, bless them, would have an exciting time and might even solve the mystery of the route of the Roman Stane Street through Dorking. On page 17 we are told Mole Valley Council wants to achieve *balance*; perhaps, but from central and local government politicians and planners we also need *vision*.

Alan A Jackson

chairman's report

Limited Liability: we are almost there

By the time the next edition of this Newsletter appears it will no longer be issued by the Dorking and District Preservation Society (registered charity number 246806) but by what in law will be a wholly new entity: the Dorking and District Preservation Society (registered charity number 1107459, a company limited by guarantee, registered company 5126366), and we shall have the protection under law that limited liability status provides. It has taken rather longer than we expected, but we are almost there.

Despite the change we will still

proudly describe ourselves as 'established in 1929', although we can also say that we were incorporated in 2004 – which since it is now almost 2006 may seem surprising, but there it is; so long has the Charity Commission been keeping us waiting.

One oddity is that the old charity (246806) has still to remain in existence. This is because the money that Owen Russ left to us, plus accumulated interest, plus the bricks and mortar into which it will be converted, was given to the old charity and being an endowment cannot under any circumstances be

transferred to another charity, even one with identical name and aims. At the October meeting last year the Council of the Society was given the powers to alter the constitution of the old Society to take account of these changed circumstances and this has now been done. The Charity Commission, however, has allowed us to consolidate the old charity with the new in the accounts that we submit to them, as with the ones members will receive. As far as company law is concerned, the new company does not own the old charity, so it will have to be omitted from the accounts we send them. This sounds complicated and it probably will be to start with. I do hope that thereafter it becomes routine. It is our Treasurer who will have to bear the brunt.

Those who pay subscriptions by standing order will already have received a letter from our membership secretary, Peter Parkin, with new ones to be completed and returned to him. I hope that most will have already done so. The same applies to Gift Aid declarations. We do want to encourage as many members as possible to complete bank standing orders. Peter has to spend quite a lot of time reminding those who forget to pay and standing orders make life a great deal easier for him. They make it easier for you too.

Museum negotiations

A long time has gone by in which it has not been possible to report on any significant developments in our search for a permanent home for the Dorking & District Museum but things have been moving, albeit slowly. A critical meeting is due to take place in the middle of November, after which I hope we will be in a position to issue a press release.

Sainsbury's proposed development

Not much has been heard on the Sainsbury front for some time, so we can be forgiven if we thought that perhaps nothing was going to happen after all. We would have been wrong, all the same. On 17 August I joined our planning committee at a meeting to which we had invited representatives of Thornfield developments, including their architect. They showed us a collection of plans (though no elevations or perspectives) that they had recently produced, and they explained how their ideas for the project had developed since the brief exhibition some two years ago. The plans they showed us in August were indeed an improvement on those we saw earlier.

Our stance when the Sainsbury proposals were first mooted no less than five years ago was that we

wished to see firm proposals in an actual planning application before coming to a view. As time went on, it became clear to us that there are certain problems inevitably connected to Thornfield's aims. These would have to be satisfactorily solved, regardless of the details of the actual application, if the scheme is to have our support. They are as follows:

1. The junction with Mill Lane is extremely awkward both for the cars of those who enter and leave the car park and for the juggernauts that service the shops, because of the sharp descent of the lane and the sharp turn at the top, crossed by a steady stream of pedestrians. If the development is a commercial success, more cars and juggernauts will use the lane than at present. This could well present serious problems with traffic queuing to enter the car park, the commercial unloading bays and even on entering the Lane itself. The extra traffic coming into and out of Mill Lane will require a reconfiguration of the neighbouring areas of the High Street. This would involve extra traffic lights, right-turn lanes, pedestrian crossings and islands – all extra clutter disfiguring the Street. Thornfield maintain

they will be working for a solution that would actually be to the benefit of the appearance of the Street. We shall see.

2. There must be sufficient additional car parking spaces (without taking away the present long-term spaces) to accommodate the extra visitors to Dorking that the development must be expected to generate. If this is not done, the parking for the new supermarket will be all at the expense of parking for customers of the businesses on the High Street, who will accordingly suffer to the same extent as the supermarket will benefit.

3. It is important that the new Sainsbury's be properly integrated with the rest of the business district of the town. For this to be done the project needs to be a highly imaginative connection to the rest of St Martin's Walk, with only gentle changes of level, leading shoppers from one to the other. The plans we were shown this time would actually make the problem worse. Thornfield were proposing a little piazza, open to the air but at a lower level, so that on emerging from the car park visitors would be presented with entrances just to the supermarket

4.

and to Marks & Spencer, effectively isolating them from all the rest of the town. This is hardly encouraging.

Unless all three of these problems are convincingly addressed and solved, we cannot see how we can do other than oppose the application once it is lodged. At present we are unable to envisage how any are capable of effective resolution.

Worse still, the proposal is to excavate the whole of the area north of St Martin's Church down to the level of the Pippbrook, and rebuild the whole site so that the top of the construction, looking down on Meadowbank, would be level with the north side of the churchyard. This would place the children's play area on Meadowbank in the shadow of a six-storey car park. The car park will surround the whole supermarket, so that it will appear larger than suggested by its actual capacity. Thornfield proposes to minimise the oppressive bulk of this building by placing two-storey houses up against it. This is disingenuous; the bulk of the building would appear even greater, by the way it will dwarf the houses.

The huge amount of soil that will have to be excavated, plus the rubble from the old car park, would have to be removed via Meadowbank and one or other of the streets to the east or west. This would also

involve the temporary closure (for about two years) of the children's playground.

For the whole of the two-year period of demolition and construction, one major car park would be entirely out of commission and the shortage of parking spaces in Dorking would be acute. This would be bound to have a severely adverse effect on trade in the whole of the High Street. We must therefore expect there to be a higher proportion than usual of shops going out of business – with their premises unlikely to find new tenants while building work continues. The damage to the High Street could be permanent.

If Leatherhead can renew itself, why not Dorking? Leatherhead is a crossroads, a layout that divides the town into quadrants, each of which can be remodelled separately without damage to the other three. Dorking, excluding its specialist West Street, is a linear town (High Street – South Street). Such towns can only expand by constructing parallel streets but the topography of Dorking precludes this. It follows that the only place for a bigger, better supermarket is right on one of its main streets.

For all these reasons we expect that when Thornfield's planning application is at last lodged with the District Council, we shall be lobbying strongly against it.

Martin Wedgwood

5.

planning committee

It has been a very busy two or three months for the whole of the Society's Planning Committee. As you will read in another part of this Newsletter, Sir Martin, Derek Rowbotham and I have had discussions with Jack Straw at Mole Valley Council about the new allocation of house-builds for all of the districts of Surrey but with emphasis on preserving the integrity of Dorking and surrounding rural areas. We also expressed our concerns about the activities of the unelected South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA) in this same context. Add to this dealing with correspondence from Residents' Groups, including one from those opposing the NHS Appeal for the Nook Nursing Home in Horsham Road, and the many activities of my Committee that you will read about below, you will get some idea of what I mean.

Applications

We wrote a letter about the proposed 10ft high cockerel for the Deepdene roundabout. In it, we said that although the Society were in favour of Public Art in the town, we felt we had a duty to ask various pertinent questions about it: its proposed orientation; the colour powder coating of the unrelieved metal; and

what steps would be taken to keep it clean and replace any rusted parts over the years. The Application has been approved but with restraints in the Conditions of Approval. If paint is used, it must be matt and non-reflective, and no trees or shrubs on the roundabout are to be removed. We shall now have to wait to see if sufficient funding is obtained. Although Linden Homes have contributed a large chunk of it, the balance has to be from public subscription.

We received a letter from Professor and Mrs Gillan about their intention to replace some railings at the listed 113 South Street. The railings, we thought, were not in keeping with the period of this building, something with which the Case Officer and Peter Mills agreed. The railings were changed to a more acceptable, historically accurate design and have been approved.

We wrote a letter praising the design of an extension, including a porch, at Bramley Lodge, Old Reigate Road, Buckland. The application has since been approved.

A second proposal for an infill building at 33 Deepdene Wood was, as far as the design was concerned, extremely good and, in our letter to MVDC, we said so. Although we asked for some leeway to be given

with regard to Local Planning Policy, we felt that the reasons for the refusal of the first application still applied. It has been refused.

We looked at, and discussed for some time, an application for an extension to 18 Warrenne Road, Brockham. The reason for this amount of discussion was the fact that the extension, if approved, would remove one of the pleasing features of the buildings in this road: an arched doorway. We mentioned this in our letter, and suggested that, with some adjustment to the plans, this could be remedied, and offered to supply some rough plans showing how. Subsequently, the applicant, via the Case Officer, asked us to supply these drawings. Beryl Higgins, our architect member, drew them up and delivered them to Shaun Hughes, the Case Officer in question. We shall keep an eye open for a revised application.

The Leith Road, Beare Green, application mentioned in our last report has been withdrawn.

We looked at plans and elevations for a five-bedroom 'Chalet-style' house on land adjoining Chenies in Ockley. Our letter to MVDC commented upon the environmentally wasteful amount of bricks used to construct two overstated chimneys that had been designed for effect rather than practicality. We like the overall design though. It has since been

refused.

The owners of *Ker Shan Ard* in Headley Heath Approach, Box Hill, applied for an extension to the side of their property that we thought very good, architecturally improving the existing building to a large degree. Although the building is tucked away in a dip, and the proposed extension would not be seen from the road, it is outside of the permitted development area of the village. Because of the excellence of the design, we have asked that the application be considered favourably. It has been approved.

Other developments

The meeting with Thornfield, the potential developers of the as-yet-to-be proposed Sainsbury Store, St Martin's Walk, scheme that we trailed in our last report, eventually took place at one of our meetings at Pippbrook. Our Chairman was in attendance. The managing director (London) brought his team, including the architect, and gave a very slick presentation. We were not shown any elevational treatments, only colourful, aerial-views and proposed site plans. Their approach is to extend the churchyard out toward the existing car park, and build the Sainsbury supermarket beneath it opposite the present M&S. On the whole, we thought that the plans were a great

improvement on the previous scheme of two years ago. However, we expressed extreme concern about the traffic situation likely to arise if this – or a similar scheme – were approved. Later, we found out from Clive Smith that this scheme included three- and four-storey housing at the edge of the site. We

Would the new Sainsbury plans adversely affect traders and traffic?

also expressed concern that this proposed development would not benefit High Street traders whatsoever, a point vigorously denied by one of Thornfield's team. In a somewhat non-committal letter to Thornfield's MD, we reinforced our comments regarding traffic. Our Chairman has also written to Clive Smith with an itemized list of our concerns (see page 4).

Earlier this year, an application for a small development of detached and terraced houses at the **Tutt's Garage** site next to Pippbrook Mill, London Road, was approved. Since that time, the developer has sold the site, with its permission to build, to another developer, Life Properties. They have produced some new ideas about the design of the buildings. We were shown their first thoughts

about this change – a sort of toe-in-the-water project, and found them profoundly silly, another case of an architect plundering the architectural timeline from Tudor through to Victorian. We wrote to Life Properties outlining our response, and later, speaking with them on the telephone, invited their representative to one of our meetings with their revised thoughts based upon our discussions. When he showed us the next stage in their thinking, we were pleasantly surprised. The new outline drawings were a vast improvement, utilizing bold surrounds to windows and doors, and pastel-coloured artificial shiplap boarding, giving the scheme a New England look but in keeping with the Dorking ambience. (Much of New England architecture is based upon Georgian styles in England but with more reliance on easily obtained wood on the north eastern seaboard of the USA.) Our only reservation at this time was with regard to roof ridge heights that we thought a mite too high, although the relevant Case Officer doesn't seem to mind. We have written to Life Properties in a positive manner saying we were looking forward to seeing more developed drawings.

Hank Etheridge
Chairman of the Planning Committee

news&views

A Dorking Cockerel on Deepdene Roundabout?

The proposal to erect a large metal sculpture depicting a Dorking cockerel at the centre of the Deepdene Roundabout which has been made by MVDC Councillor Neil Maltby has not escaped controversy. It has been approved by the Council, subject to certain conditions as noted in the Planning Report on page 6. Linden Homes, the developers of nearby Deepdene Square, have contributed £14,000 towards the initial cost and the remainder will be sought by public subscription, **not** from Council funds. At the time of writing it is unclear what arrangements will be made about maintenance, insurance against damage by vandals, road accidents etc.

No e-mail Newsletters

So few members responded to this suggestion (Newsletter 41, page 20) that the Executive agreed it would not be pursued at this time.

Barry Collins

As the two organisations have similar interests in preserving the heritage and countryside, Barry Collins, who has given much support to the Society over many

years, has rejoined the Society's Council to strengthen the link between it and the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE).

Capel Motocross

Although a permitted activity, the Capel Motocross creates nuisance, destroys hedgerows and has an adverse impact on rights of way. The CPRE is in discussion with the event's promoters, and any Society members having points to make may wish to contact Mr Collins (see above) at 01306-887522.

A Transformation in Church Street

'Chapel Mews', in the L-shaped block about halfway along the south side of Church Street, currently advertised as 'newly converted two bedroom apartments' at 'prices from £214,950' has an interesting history. The three-storey section parallel to the Street began life in 1772 as a Wesleyan Meeting House and John Wesley may have preached there in the 1770s and 1780s. About 1908, shortly after the Wesleyans had moved to their new church in South Street, it became a roller skating rink and subsequently housed a carpet beating establishment. In 1945 a committee was set up by Captain

Evelyn Broadwood of Lyne House, Capel, to create a local Museum in Dorking and he acquired the Church Street premises as a possible home for it. This objective was put on the back burner during the long drawn out controversy over an horrendous 1950 proposal by Surrey County Council to construct a 'Dorking Relief Road' which would pass through this site. The threat of a new road cutting right through Dorking town centre was not removed until after Broadwood's death in 1975. Subsequently both buildings were purchased by J & M Coombes Antiques, 44 West Street, and used as store and show rooms for antique furniture.

The two-storey section at right angles to Church Street appears to have been added in the 19th century and by 1890 was in use as a 'common lodging house', this continuing until the mid 20th century. So far as is known, there were never any mews on this site.

'Longfield Grove'

Gala Homes are building 30 housing units (three- and four-bedroom houses and two-bedroom apartments and maisonettes) on the north side of Longfield Road. This development, to be completed around the end of 2006, is on former County Council school land.

A plea or three from your editor

A question frequently asked is *What is the date for material to be sent for the next Newsletter?* Taking a deep breath, we point out that the answer is to be found on the inside front cover of each issue. It is helpful to observe these dates as delays cannot always be easily accommodated within the other commitments of your Editor or our hard-working Production Manager, Rachel Fardon. If copy arrives when the layout has

reached final proof form around seven to ten days after the due date, rearrangement can be tiresome and lead to further delays.

Regular contributions are received from the Society's Chairman and the Chairman of our Planning Committee. Hank Etheridge also helpfully produces other contributions and artwork. Otherwise the editor has to resort to selecting items which may be of interest to the general membership from the minutes of the Society's Council and Executive. These are brief and the editor much prefers to

have from the officers concerned fuller reports (say 100-200 words or more if necessary) once or twice a year and more frequently if a particular topic merits it, on the Museum, the Local History Group, Transport & Highways, Footpaths and Bridleways, Countryside Conservation, Membership, Heritage Days & Best Development competitions and Publicity/town centre retail and other related topics (Town Manager). Such reports are often prepared for the Society's meetings and it is simply a matter of making a second copy with any necessary amendments. Unedited notes are quite acceptable!

Lastly it is regrettable that apart from planning matters, little if anything now appears in these pages about Forest Green, Mickleham, Westhumble, Box Hill, Capel, Ockley, Abinger, Holmwood, Coldharbour, Brockham, Betchworth, Ranmore, Wotton, Wallis Wood, Newdigate, Buckland, Charlwood and Hookwood. It would be pleasant to have occasional contributions, with or without illustrations, from members living in these communities on matters relevant to the Society's concerns and objectives. Is there anyone out there willing to tackle this?

letters to the editor

Dear Sir,

Is Dorking in the running?
(*Newsletter 41, page 9*)

I have never been able to understand why all through traffic from the East hasn't been directed along the Bypass and up Flint Hill while that from the West taking the Station Road and Ashcombe Road route.

There is so much traffic about now that I'm sure residents would soon get used to it, thus leaving the High Street a quiet shopping centre with delivery vans and lorries restricted to out-of-hours times.

Yours faithfully

(Mrs) M Woolven
Anstie Grange, Holmwood
27 July 2005

Dear Mr Jackson,

I refer to the draft legislation reported by *The Times* (Newsletter 40) and the interesting response by Mrs Rosemary Miller (Newsletter 41). May I suggest that our Society is an admirably fit institution to approach Sir Paul Beresford for the purpose of enquiring what advance has been made.

Yours sincerely –

James Berry-Clarke

Little Tiphams, Weare St, Ockley RH5 5NW
22 July 2005

We raised this matter with the Society's Footpaths & Bridleways Officer and he replied as below:

Dear Alan,

Use of unsurfaced country byways by motor vehicles

After reading the two DDPS Newsletters regarding footpaths, I was hoping some members would write to me but the only letter I have received is yours. Byways in Surrey have been a problem for many years in regard to motorised vehicles, and the land owners – whether they be the National Trust, The Forestry Commission or Surrey County Council – have placed notices at the beginning of byways asking the public to notify them and provided a telephone number if motorised vehicles are racing, off-roading or causing damage to an embankment.

They have erected barriers to prevent these vehicles leaving the byways and put up notices throughout the byways informing people of the environmental damage that can be caused by motorised vehicles. Although 4x4 vehicles are a problem, by far the greatest problem are motor cycles, which often go off the byways onto open land. This is a particular problem around the White Down area of the North Downs; the National Trust and Surrey County Council are well aware of this problem and have had the cooperation of the police.

As this is not just a local occurrence but rather a nationwide problem, I am glad that there has been such media coverage on Television, in National newspapers and in Countryside magazines; most people are horrified that the activities of a few individuals can cause so much environmental damage to the countryside.

As the Footpaths Officer for DDPS, I object for several reasons to motorised vehicular use on byways never intended for such activity but only for local use whether by the local farmer or by people working on adjacent land. The environmental damage that can be caused by these vehicles is considerable and there are Health & Safety issues; not everyone walking in the countryside has good hearing, and to try to get out of the way of a

fast vehicle on such narrow paths can be impossible in places. Most of us go into the countryside to get away from vehicles and noise.

Understanding the present legislation regarding byways is difficult; most interested parties seem to interpret the law in different ways; hopefully the new guidelines that are to be published during 2005 under the heading *Making the Best of Byways* will clarify matters.

Yours sincerely *David D Read*
Footpaths Officer
2 August 2005

It is also relevant that a Bill regarding off-road use of motor

vehicles in the countryside is now before Parliament. All MPs have been briefed by organisations favouring the proposals, notably the Campaign to Protect Rural England, the Ramblers' Association, the Country Land & Business Association and the Cyclists' Touring Club. Sir Paul Beresford MP, as an honorary member of the Society, will have seen the views expressed in our columns. Aware as he is of local concerns, we are sure he will be reporting back to his constituents on this matter either here or in his occasional contributions to The Dorking Advertiser [Editor].

How to be as snug as a bug

The price of oil and gas goes up, up, up. Predictions of \$100 or even \$160 a barrel of oil have been quoted recently. The quantity of oil on the planet is finite and it is only a question of when and not if it will run out. As the supply of oil reduces, prices will rocket.

What can we as individuals do about it? One way is to increase the insulation of our homes. Although building regulations have improved

recently, the average home insulation in the UK is abysmal. If every home was insulated to the building regulation standard, the energy saved nationally would be 23 per cent (official government figures). This is equivalent to all the nuclear power stations in the UK or several large, dirty and polluting coal-fired power stations.

To insulate a home efficiently, we require the minimal surface area for a given volume. The most efficient shape is a dome. However, this is impractical. The nearest shape to a dome is a chalet-type

house. Of course we need extremely good insulation all round, which can be achieved using modern materials. There is a material on the market called *Actis Tri-Iso*, only one inch thick, which gives the equivalent insulation of eight inches of glass fibre. It can easily be retro-fitted on old houses. Next we need efficient windows and doors (wooden frames give far better insulation than other materials). Swedish triple-glazed windows have a 'u' value (heat loss in watts/sq metre per C°) of 1.0 compared to best UK double-glazed windows with a 'u' value of 1.61, i.e. 60 per cent more efficient, and they are cheaper. Next, we must have no draughts. It doesn't matter how well a house is insulated: if it is draughty, the insulation is a waste of time. As the house must be virtually sealed, we need a ventilation/heat recovery system. On the market now there are several single room heat recovery systems for less than £100, only slightly bigger than a normal fan. These systems use around 12 watts ticking over and recover 70 per cent of the heat from extracted air.

We now have to heat the house. I am not going into the pros and cons of the options but modern wood burning stoves are extremely efficient, with minimal pollution providing the wood is seasoned. Even better, we can surround the

stove with blocks or bricks to store the heat. The fireplace/stove must of course be in the centre of the house, never on an outside wall.

What else can we do? There are two ways a house loses heat: firstly on cold, starry, frosty nights and secondly in strong winds. So, we build our house in a sheltered position and have large overhangs all round. This has the effect of making it less cold under the overhang, reducing heat loss. Overhangs also prevent the high summer sun entering the windows. And why not store your wood logs under the overhang, giving even more insulation? Velux windows are not a good idea energy-wise.

So, we end up with a chalet-style house, with a wood burner in the middle and large overhangs. This is exactly what they have been building in Austria, Switzerland and Sweden for centuries. Perhaps we can copy some of their ideas?

What else can we do? We can use solar energy. In my view the most promising method is photovoltaic cells, which on clear days when plugged into the mains will run your meter backwards. You are giving electric energy to the grid and reducing your electricity bills, with no moving parts and no maintenance. I can foresee the day when every house will have them (like chimneys) – on roofs, greenhouses, on poles. If millions of

homes, factories and schools had them, the energy saved nationally would be substantial. On clear days (there are a surprising number in the UK), power stations would be merely ticking over, thereby reducing pollution. In other countries, such as the USA, Spain and Italy, the energy savings would be even greater.

Higher insulation standards with use of solar power and other energy-saving methods could reduce the power requirement of UK plc by 50 per cent. Solar cells are expensive

but the price will come down with greater demand. The Government is considering building yet more power stations, which are also expensive.

These are but a few ideas for discussion. I would like to see some of these proposals incorporated into new houses.

John Gillard

(John Gillard is a member of the Society's Planning Committee and has made a special study of environmental issues)

Trying to protect the character of Dorking

Over the past year we have been following closely plans to increase the number of new dwellings in the South-east with a great deal of concern about the likely effects on Mole Valley, and especially Dorking, the surrounding villages and our countryside. Our planning group has attended workshops, seminars and meetings, as well as studying the available material from the office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), the South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA) and Surrey County

Council. We have been trying to get a grasp on the likely outcome of these plans and we have been increasingly worried about some of the figures being bandied about. To clarify the situation, we decided we should have a meeting with Jack Straw, Mole Valley's Planning and Housing Policy Manager. This took place on 30 September at Pippbrook.

The position is as follows. Regional Assemblies are required to produce what are known as Regional Spatial Strategies. These will set out a twenty-year planning strategy for a region and will include an indication of how much and where new housing should be built. The Regional Assembly for the South

East produced a draft plan for the region at the beginning of this year called the South East Plan. It offered for consideration three levels of housing provision in the region. The highest was 32,000 dwellings a year, the second was for 28,000 new dwellings a year, and the third was for a lower figure still. After consultation with the counties and districts as well as interested organisations, it decided to go for a figure of 28,900, close to the middle option.

The share of these 28,900 allocated to Surrey is 2,360. Surrey has now arrived at a division of this figure among its districts, and Mole Valley's share is 170. This is slightly less than the average of 190 dwellings a year it has been achieving recently but slightly more than required under current guidelines.

This seems reasonable enough to us. Mole Valley has got off relatively lightly, although it is still possible that the ODPM could throw out SEERA's figures and impose higher ones, in which case we may not be so lucky after all. Surrey County Council has made it clear that it will see to it that the Green Belt will continue to be protected. So how will it be possible for almost all the development to take place within already designated urban envelopes? The Government envisages that some land presently designated for commercial or

industrial purposes will be converted to housing land. Also, new housing will continue to be provided through redevelopment and infilling. SEERA says that with this option the Green Belt will be protected, a more sustainable pattern of development will be possible and use will be made of existing infrastructure. On the other hand higher densities can only change the character of towns, and possibly have an adverse effect on the quality of life. It is also disingenuous to think that infilling will somehow avoid the necessity of spending money on infrastructure. The more people and dwellings there are, the more money will have to be spent on improving the supply of water, gas and electricity, and the capacity of sewerage systems, roads, public transport and schools.

We told Mr Straw that we were very concerned about the last two points, and that the character of Dorking would suffer, especially in those parts of the town with open space around properties. Dorking as an ancient market town would suffer if it became a less congenial place to live. We asked that the District Council 'act tough' with Surrey and SEERA, to try to avoid large-scale development in these sensitive areas.

Mr Straw said that some incursion in these areas would be unavoidable. 'Development will have to take place in some of the

existing developed areas, if we were to keep the Green Belt as it is', he told us, 'but the issue will be to do so in a sensitive and sustainable way that does not harm the character of the area'. He also noted that converting industrial and commercial land to housing could cause problems if there were an increase in the need for employment in the town. He was aware of our concerns, and asked the Society to

continue to work closely with Mole Valley and add our voice to their deliberations. Mole Valley will identify sites for new housing in its new planning framework for the District and would welcome our input in this process. What Mole Valley wanted to achieve was *balance*, and to maintain as far as possible the character of Dorking and its surrounding villages. On this we are agreed.

Hank Etheridge

membership

We regret to report the death of the following members:

Mr E Sykes, Garth Nursing Home, Dorking
Miss K McLeod, Vincent Lane, Dorking
Mrs P Hart, Westcott
Miss A M Burgess, Hill Cottage, Westcott
Mr O M Bennett, Leslie Road, Dorking
Mr R Jacobs, Old Road, Buckland
Dr F W Wheeler, Partridge Lane, Newdigate

We welcome the following new members:

Mr & Mrs Orme, Deepdene Drive, Dorking

And the following new corporate members:

Christique Antique Centre, 11 West St, Dorking
Friends of Holmwood

CORPORATE MEMBERS SUPPORTING THE SOCIETY

Note that all addresses are of Dorking town and all telephone numbers have the code 01306 unless shown otherwise.

Name, address, telephone number	Business
Betchworth Park Golf Club, Reigate Road, RH4 1NZ (882 052)	Golf club
Bray Estate, 278/280 High Street, RH4 1QT (740 837)	Valuers, surveyors & property managers
Broadheath Restorations, Dean House Farm, Church Road, Newdigate, RHS 5DL (631 773)	Window frame restorers
Browns of Dorking, 182 High Street, RH4 1QR (881 212)	Coffee shop
Bullimores, Old Printers Yard, 156 South Street, RH4 2HF (880 880)	Chartered accountants
Burley, G & Sons, Burley Corner, Moorhurst Lane, S.Holmwood, RHS 4LJ (711 799)	Amenity horticulturist

Corporate Members (continued)

Chandler Cars, Unit 23, Vincent Works, Vincent Lane, RH4 3HQ (882 001)	Services and sales
Christie Antique Centre, 11 West Street, RH4 1BL (883 849)	Antique furniture & interior design
Clear, S J & Co Ltd, 65 High Street, RH4 1AW (883 340)	Electrical contractors/shop
David Cowan, 114 South Street, RH4 2EZ (886 622)	Solicitors
Dorking Desk Shop, The, 41 West Street, RH4 1BN (883 327)	Antique furniture dealer
Dorking Golf Club, Club House, Deepdene Avenue, RH5 4BY (886 917)	Golf club
Downs, 156 High Street, RH4 1BQ (880 110)	Solicitors and notaries
Downsman Ltd, Overdene, Paper Mews, RH4 2TU (887 023)	Management services
Ellis Atkins & Co, 1 Paper Mews, 330 High Street, RH4 2TU (886 681)	Chartered accountants
Friends Provident plc, Pixham End, RH4 1QA (654 4220)	Financial services
Garth House Nursing Home, Tower Hill Road, RH4 2AY (880 511)	Nursing home
Hart Scales & Hodges, 159 High Street, RH4 1AD (884 432)	Solicitors
International Sports Marketing Ltd, Bales Court, Barrington Road, RH4 3EJ (743 322)	Marketing consultants
Kuoni Travel Ltd, Deepdene Avenue, RH5 4AZ (840 888)	Tour operators
Munro, Ian, 10 High Street, RH4 1AT (882 270)	Men's outfitters
Newton & Co, Ranmore House, 19 Ranmore Road, RH4 1HE (884 208)	Chartered accountants
Omya UK Ltd, Curtis Road, RH4 1XA (886 688)	Minteral extraction
Patrick Gardner & Co, 16 South Street, RH4 2HL (887 775)	Estate agents
Priory School, The, West Bank, RH4 3DG (887 337)	School
Rose Hill Nursing Home, 9 Rose Hill, RH4 2EG (882 622)	Nursing home
Sears, Philip, Designs, 18c Horsham Road, RH4 2JD (884 477)	Architectural building surveyors
Seymours Garden Centre, Stoke Road, Stoke D'Abernon, Cobham, KT11 3PU (01932 862 530)	Garden centre
Songhurst, W Ltd, Rayleigh House, Chapel Lane, Westcott, RH4 3PJ (880 411)	Builders
Super Specs, 62 High Street, RH4 1AY (875 201)	Opticians
Treeline Services Ltd, Chadhurst Farm, Coldharbour Lane, RH4 3JH (741 800)	Tree care and maintenance
Uden, C J & Co, Pledges Yard, Falkland Road, RH4 3AD (887 551)	Drainage consultant and surveyors
Viscount Agencies, Concept House, 3 Dene Street, RH4 2DR (880 715)	Duty free agency
Whitelegg Machines Ltd, Fir Tree House, Horsham Road, Beare Green, RH5 4LQ (713 200)	Electrical engineers
Wyevale Country Gardens, Reigate Road, RH5 1NP (884 845)	Garden centre

OTHER CORPORATE MEMBERS SUPPORTING THE SOCIETY

Abinger Parish Council	Friends of Holmwood
Amis de Gouvieux, Les	Headley Parish Council
Betchworth Parish Council	Holmwood Parish Council
Brockham Green Village Society	Mickleham Parish Council
Buckland Parish Council	Newdigate Parish Council
Capel Parish Council	Ockley Parish Council
Charlwood Parish Council	Westcott Village Association
Coldharbour Sports and Social Club	Wotton Parish Council
Friends of Boxhill	

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