

ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF BUCKLAND PARISH MEETING 2024

DRAFT MINUTES of the Annual Assembly of Buckland Parish Meeting held in the Reading Room at 8pm on Monday 18th March 2024.

1. CHAIR'S WELCOME

Nigel Husband (NH), as Chair to Buckland Parish Council, assumed the Chair for this Annual Assembly of Buckland Parish Meeting and formally welcomed everyone to the meeting. NH introduced himself to the meeting and outlined the agenda.

NH explained that having dealt with the formalities, he would provide a brief Chair's update, introduce updates on the Parish Council financials and our village charity, and conclude by touching on the Mole Valley Local Plan ahead of a short break for refreshments.

Three topical updates will follow the break. Debbie Jones will outline how Buckland might be affected by the Environment Act 2021 which largely took effect at the start of 2024, Dominic Sanders will update us on nature initiatives across Buckland Estate and Alan Horden will provide a brief introduction to the Mole Valley Community Fund.

NH introduced Buckland's Parish Councillors and Sheena Boyce, Clerk, to the meeting and extended a warm welcome to our Surrey County Councillor Helyn Clack and two of our three Mole Valley District Councillors Paul Potter and Paula Keay.

It was noted that there were thirty parishioners and seven members of the public in attendance.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mole Valley District Council (MVDC) Councillor Simon Budd, Simon Elson from the Reigate Area Conservation Volunteers (RACV), Chas Jones and the Revd. Pru Dullely.

3. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF BUCKLAND PARISH MEETING 2023

The minutes had been displayed on the Parish Council Notice Board, published on the village website, and circulated to Councillors. The motion to adopt the Minutes as a true and correct record was proposed by Debbie Jones, seconded by Michael Bourke, and carried by the meeting. NH, as Chair, signed and dated the minutes.

4. CHAIR'S REPORT

The following updates and messages have been extracted from the Chair's address:

When the Parish Council (Council) set the budget for the 2023/24 fiscal year, Council decided, given the current cost of living pressures, not to increase the value of the precept. This meant there was no budget allocation for amenity improvements and the focus would be to schedule maintenance to safeguard funds invested over recent years and to coordinate volunteer activities.

Over the winter period Council arranged for the build-up of soil and vegetation from sections of the hard surfaced footways that run through Buckland alongside the A25 to be cleared. The 40mph speed limit applying to the A25 Reigate Road means we are unable to insure volunteers to work on the footways and need to employ contractors.

As SCC health and safety guidelines limits our work to those sections of footway that have an intact tarmac surface, Council, working with SCC Councillor Clack, has continued to press SCC to complete more resurfacing to bring the standard of all the footways to match the section between the garage and Shepherd's Walk that was reconstructed in October 2021.

Please support Council's lobbying by reporting any maintenance problems you encounter on the footways to SCC and include in your report any challenges you face because of the problems you have encountered.

Thank you to those of you who have taken the time to submit reports – please don't assume someone else will have reported a problem - it is much better for there to be multiple reports as the volume of reports highlights to SCC how well used the footways are and will hopefully help Buckland to be prioritised. Please continue to submit them.

Many residents continue to comment on the lack of street cleaning along the A25 through Buckland and how other areas of Mole Valley seem to be better served. Please submit requests MVDC to arrange a visit from the street cleaning team to clear any build-up of debris to help keep the footways clear.

Please remember that the street cleaning is responsive – the days of regular visits from the road sweeper are long gone and visits are only scheduled if residents report a concern. Put simply if somewhere else is cleaner MVDC will say it will be down to the residents in that area being more proactive.

Another long running local issue has been Gatwick's ambitions to significantly increase its capacity. Gatwick's current proposal to re-purpose the emergency taxiway, which runs adjacent to the main runway, as a fully-fledged 2nd runway, is projected to increase Gatwick's capacity to match that of Heathrow - double what the airport can currently handle. Gatwick's proposals are currently in the phase of the process which involves the Government's Planning Inspectorate, reviewing Gatwick's proposals.

Ianthe Cox (IC), who worked as an economic analyst for British Caledonian for nearly twenty years, based at Gatwick, volunteered to monitor how this matter precedes. IC recently made a presentation to the Inspectorate which set out the concerns that have been expressed by Buckland residents.

I would therefore like to thank IC for her efforts and congratulate IC on the impact she is having on the ongoing debate. The hearings continue until late summer and Council will of course keep everybody aware of how things proceed. Council understands a decision will not be made until 2025.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all the Parish Councillors, Debbie Jones (DJ), for doing most of the heavy lifting for me, Julian Steed for his support on matters relating to Highways, Michael Bourke on environmental issues, Alan Pryor for his willingness to step in to represent councils on occasions when some of us are simply unable to volunteer and/or are stuck in the office and to Rupert Gowrley who has brought his Communication Skills to the team.

Each of your seven parish councillors give up their valuable spare time to the role to ensure Council is as prepared as it can be to deal with matters that impact our village. As a community we are remarkably fortunate to have a highly skilled team, many of them professionals who worked in the sectors that we have to deal with.

I would also like to mention Alan Horden, who retired from Council last year. Alan was one of our longest serving Parish Councillors, and throughout his tenure he's been an enthusiastic and dedicated member of Council with his financial background providing guidance and advice. However most of you will recognise him in his role in helping to coordinate the annual pond clearance days. I would therefore like to take the opportunity this evening on behalf of the village to thank Alan for his years of service as a Parish Councillor, and for all the work he's put in in that role over the years.

I'd also like to express a special thank you to Sheena, who uses her now 14 years of experience to go well beyond the conventional role to make sure that we are as best served as we can be, within the Kaffkaesq system we have to operate in and provides an essential conduit between the villages and the Organisations who impact on our lives.

I would like to thank everyone who turned out during the year to help at one or more of the three pond clearance events and the village litter pick. A spring litter pick is scheduled for Saturday 20th April 2024, and we hope many of you will turn out to help.

Our thanks are particularly due to Simon Elson and the Reigate Area Conservation Volunteers (RACV) who led our pond clearance events and to Buckland Estate who kindly offer up assistance to support events and volunteer activity throughout the year.

We have been extremely fortunate in Buckland to have enjoyed the support of the RACV for over twenty years but with many more communities looking to focus on environmental initiatives the demand for their support has increased and we cannot reasonably expect them to support multiple events to support maintenance of our pond.

RACV has indicated a willingness to support a pond clearance on Sunday 18th August 2024, and depending upon how that event goes has pencilled Buckland in on their task calendar for a return visit on Sunday 1st September 2024.

More information will follow closer to the event – if you value our village pond, please make a date to join in at this year's events and help us show our appreciation to RACV for the help and expertise they bring to these events.

As the amount of funded work from Mole Valley and Surrey reduces ever further, we are grateful to those local volunteers who quietly donate their time and expertise to help us complete tasks and deliver amenities that would otherwise require the appointment of paid resource:

- (i) I would like to specifically thank Martin Boyce, who, as our volunteer webmaster, works to ensure our village website is kept up to date, topical and interesting and Alan Pryor for his diligence in completing weekly checks of community assets maintained by Council.
- (ii) I also wish to thank each and every one of our residents we see “volunteering” to complete many other tasks around the villageseriously though, there are often tasks awaiting completion so if you would be willing to help out by taking on a small task as a Council volunteer please let Sheena know.

Finally, what is planned for the next year? Simply more of the same with an emphasis on supporting any activity for which volunteers step forward to help deliver benefits to our community.

We will continue to update you through parish updates, provide links to consultations as they are launched and publish responses as they are submitted by the parish council. Please play your part by taking the time to engage in consultations and express your views.

In the meantime, we encourage you to make regular visits to our village website to keep abreast of topical updates and events being planned.

And on that note: I will conclude by passing you to Sheena Boyce, who will present Council's forecast financials for the past year."

5. BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL FINANCIALS

Sheena Boyce (SKB) presented a summary of the forecast full year accounts for 2023/24 with a comparison against prior year and the budget for the year commencing 1st April 2024, copies of which had been distributed in the Meeting (see appendix).

SKB alerted residents to a change MVDC had recently made to the description of the financial support MVDC has been providing towards the cost of maintaining open areas for recreation.

SKB explained that:

- (i) amounts previously paid to parish councils as concurrent payments and uplifted each year by the same rate of inflation as being applied to council tax are now categorised as grants;
- (ii) the 2024/5 payments have been frozen at 2023/24 levels, in line with an MVDC decision to freeze all grants; and
- (iii) the precept (i.e. parish council element of the council tax) is being increased, in part to make up for the shortfall in contribution from MVDC.

SKB outlined how the value of the precept relates to the numbers that appear on Council Tax bills before inviting questions. As SKB did not receive any questions she suggested anyone with a query could speak to her during the refreshment break or contact her after the meeting.

6. BUCKLAND PAROCHIAL CHARITY

DJ, Clerk to the charity presented Financials for the year ending 31st December 2023, copies of which had been distributed in the Meeting together with a written update.

DJ asked those attending to be mindful of the needs of residents, shared that it can be challenging to identify those that are in need in the parish and emphasised the trustees will welcome any suggestions and consider all requests.

DJ provided assurance that the names of the recipients are never divulged to any outside source.

7. MOLE VALLEY LOCAL PLAN – NIGEL HUSBAND

Those of you who were involved may remember that the topical item at the Annual Parish Meeting held in 2018 was Future Mole Valley – the project name MVDC gave to the development of a new Local Plan to direct development during the fifteen-year period 2018 – 2033.

The results of this consultation fed into a draft local plan which, after a rather lengthy review (initiated shortly after the May 2019 District Council election), was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for independent examination in 2022.

The plan was 'paused' in December 2022, leaving Mole Valley open to opportunistic planning applications against a backdrop of failing to deliver sufficient new homes to meet calculated demand.

We have observed that the impact of not having an up-to-date local plan can be significant. In practical terms any planning application that is refused permission by MVDC and taken to appeal has a very good chance of being allowed to proceed when the local plan is judged to be "out of date" as has been observed in Mole Valley.

Following an Extraordinary Council Meeting of MVDC, held on 25th January 2024, MVDC has now restarted work to prepare and adopt a new local plan; work that had been paused in December 2022. A consultation on a schedule of changes to the Local Plan the Planning Inspector necessary for it to be compliant with relevant government policy opened on Friday 1st March 2024 and will close at 5pm on Tuesday 23rd April.

Council, having reviewed the consultation documents will shortly submit a response which will closely follow the response submitted to the Regulation 19 consultation conducted late 2021. Council sincerely hopes the process to adopt a new Local Plan will progress without further delay to remove the current vulnerability.

A break for refreshments followed.

8. GUEST SPEAKER : DEBBIE JONES

DJ introduced Biodiversity, the Environment Act 2021 (EA 2021), set out how Council is demonstrating compliance with EA 2021, and highlighted the requirement within EA 2021 for all land across England to be within the remit of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

DJ explained the importance of Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) to Local Nature Recovery Strategies, the role of the Surrey Nature Partnership and the responsibilities of Surrey County Council whose Chief Ecologist has been tasked, with the support of the Surrey Nature Partnership to draft the Surrey Nature Recovery Strategy. DJ accepted an offer from Simon Humphries, Surrey Wildlife Trust's Volunteer Reserve Manager, who spearheads a volunteer effort on part of Buckland Estate, land which extends into Dawcombe reserve, to expand on the slide that illustrated means by which linkages between BOAs could be enhanced.

DJ concluded by taking everyone through a set of questions that it is hoped will help anyone ensure a proposed activity or initiative is planned, implemented, and maintained in a way that remains consistent with the wording and spirit of the EA 2021.

9. GUEST SPEAKER : DOMINIC SANDERS, BUCKLAND ESTATE

Dominic Sanders (DS) provided an interesting update on nature initiatives across Buckland Estate (visit the environment section of the village website for full details) and highlighted ongoing work close to Lawrence Lane.

DS explained clay is currently being imported to restore a workable depth of earth in the "Football field", a field located adjacent to Lawrence Lane to the immediate south of the North Downs railway line. The need for the restoration had been prompted by drainage work undertaken by Network Rail to safeguard the northern embankment that had been at risk from scouring. Once restored the Estate's plan is to create a new area of woodland.

10. GUEST SPEAKER : ALAN HORDEN

Alan Horden (AH) introduced the recently launched Mole Valley Community Fund (MVCF), a fund dedicated to Mole Valley that will provide support to local projects which tackle need and disadvantage across the district. The MVCF is the latest in the network of local area funds supported by the Community Foundation for Surrey and will be run by volunteers from the local communities in Mole Valley.

AH encouraged anyone able to support approaches to potential donors or with skills to support the volunteer effort needed to run the new fund to contact him. More information is available on the Community Foundation for Surrey website [<https://cfsurrey.enthuse.com/profile>].

11. CHAIR'S CLOSING REMARKS

NH expressed thanks to all for attending tonight for what he hoped had been an interesting evening that would sponsor further discussions and debate about what Buckland's residents want Buckland to be.

To that end, NH repeated his enthusiastic invitation for anyone who has an issue they consider the Parish Council needs to be aware of to attend a meeting and for everyone to make sure they submit requests and highlight concerns by submitting reports to MVDC, SCC and/or Surrey Police and to engage in consultations that are launched over the coming year.

Appendices

- Buckland Parish Council Forecast Financials 2023/24 (unaudited)
- Buckland Village Charity 2023
- Annual Report to the Parishes in SCC Dorking Rural: Helyn Clack

END

BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL
ANNUAL PARISH MEETING : 18th March 2024

EXPENDITURE (Vat excluded)

REVENUE EXPENDITURE

Parish Amenities

	Actual 2022/23 £	Forecast 2023/24	Budget 2024/25 £
Village Green and Pond	4662	724	3200
Verges, Footpaths, Rights of Way	2535	1698	2200
Village Website : Hosting/licences/support	528	446	400
Maintenance parish assets	245	173	150
Contingency	0	0	200
Subtotal	7970	3041	6150

Council Running Costs

	Actual 2022/23 £	Forecast 2023/24	Budget 2024/25 £
Clerk Salary	9758	11516	11200
Council Training	25	371	450
Travelling Expenses	45	34	50
External Auditor / SLB	0	210	0
Internal Audit	110	110	115
SALC	199	199	202
SLCC	144	146	183
GDPR	35	35	35
Insurance	383	300	360
BPC mtgs - Room Hire	160	126	184
Parish Mtg Expenses	0	23	30
Office costs	713	1096	1262
Contingency	0	0	200
Subtotal	11572	14166	14271

Discretionary - funded from 2022/23 precept

	Actual 2022/23 £	Forecast 2023/24	Budget 2024/25 £
Floodlighting to the Church	139	130	130
Subscriptions (Surrey Hills / GACC)	30	30	30
Amenity Improvements	974	83	500
Local Support (S137)	0	0	0
Contingency	0	0	0
Subtotal	1143	243	660

Bus shelter roof funded from CIL reserve	5712
ROW - Resurfaced footpath from specific reserve	3125

Total Expenditure

29522	17450	21081
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INCOME

REVENUE INCOME

	Actual 2022/23 £	Forecast 2023/24	Budget 2024/25 £
Precept	16505	16505	17767
Interest	142	458	0
MVDC grant re Localisation of Council Tax Benefit	888	924	924
MVDC grant re maintenance of areas for recreation	2298	2390	2390
CIL Receipt	0	0	0
SCC Member - Community Funding	1000	0	0
Other contributions/donations/grants/local fundraising	675	395	0
Total Income	21508	20672	21081

0

Cash Balance / Unallocated Reserves : Inc / (Dec)

-8014	3222	0
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Reserves as at	Allocated	Unallocated
31st March 2023	6557	9,439
31st March 2024	9332	9,889

Buckland Parochial Charity

The Buckland Parochial Charity has been operating since 1889 when it brought together the entitlement to an annual grant from the Henry Smith Charity and several small local charitable endowments. The Henry Smith Charity was founded by Henry Smith, a Salter who was born in 1545 and died in 1628. A wealthy man who, having no family issue, created a number of charitable trusts for the relief of the poor and needy - amongst other beneficiaries the Henry Smith Charity makes grants to over 200 parishes.

We also on occasion receive donations from Buckland residents.

Our Trust Deed specifies how the annual grant is distributed: -

'The object of the Charity shall be to relieve, either generally or individually, persons resident in the area of the Parish of Buckland as constituted in the year 1889, who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress.'

The Trustees

Liz Vahey	Trustee & Chair
Martin Boyce	Trustee
Amanda Oakes Smith	Trustee
Margaret Abu-Nimeh	Trustee
Debbie Jones	Trustee & Clerk

The Distributions

The Trustees meet several times a year to discuss any needs that have come to light and agree the distributions. There are regular quarterly distributions to a number of Buckland residents and one-off purchases and/or payments for specific needs. We also aim to give flowers or plants to those residents who are unwell or in need of cheering up.

It can be challenging to identify those that are in need in the parish – the trustees welcome any suggestions and consider all requests. Please approach any of the trustees with any requests or suggestions and be assured that you will be treated in the strictest of confidence. It must be emphasised that names of the recipients are never divulged to any outside source.

Debbie Jones

Clerk to Buckland Parochial Charity

The Buckland Parochial Charity

Receipts & Payments Account

For the 12 months ended 31 December 2023

2022	Receipts	2023		2022	Payments	2023
£		£		£		£
	Opening Bank Balances				Buckland Residents	
733	Current	2,658		2,575	Miscellaneous Purposes	4,400
3,168	Reserve	3,804				
	Other Income				Support	
629	COIF Dividends	631			Gifts & Plants	(Gifted)
8	Bank Interest	45			Other Support Donations	
	Donations	1,000			Bank Charges	
	Bank Compensation	200				
					Closing Bank Balances	
	Grant Received			2,658	Current	2,258
4,500		2,800		3,804	Reserve	4,480
£9,038		£11,138		£9,038		£11,138

COIF Charities Investment Fund – Income Units

The Charity holds an investment of 1,158.36 income units in COIF Charities Investment Fund, managed by CCLA. The value of these income units held at 31 December 2023 was £21,053 (2022 £21,053).

The Trustees have not needed to use their Reserves to enable them to meet special requests for support during the year. The Trustees believe that their reserves are sufficient to meet all normal support payments until the next annual grant from the Henry Smith Charity is received.

Distributions from the Henry Smith Charity grant are made in accordance with their requirements.

The income from the investment in COIF Charities Investment Fund is applied for the benefit of beneficiaries or added to reserves as appropriate.

The above accounts have been reviewed by the Trustees.

Debbie Jones Trustee & Clerk

Date:



February 2024

[County Councillor Helyn Clack, Dorking Rural Division, Surrey County Council](#) [Annual report 2023/2024](#)

- **LOOKING BACK**
- **COUNTY COUNCIL BOUNDARY CHANGES**
- **BUDGET 2024/2025**
- **LOCAL ISSUES AND SURREY HIGHWAYS**
- **GRANTS AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**
- **GATWICK AIRPORT**
- **DEMOCRACY**

LOOKING BACK

It finally begins to feel that we can move on from the pandemic that caused such a shadow over our lives at the beginning of this decade, always remembering those that lost family and friends or suffered mental and health problems. Over the last year I am back to being out and about with enthusiasm to meet residents, attend parish council meetings and other local events in the villages I represent on Surrey County Council.

2023/2024 has been a very busy year for me here in Dorking Rural, with much to do across the villages, I won't apologise for the length of my report to the parishes and residents though except to say that there is a lot more I could have added!

In May 2023, I stood down as Chair of Surrey County Council after four and half years in office as Vice Chair and Chair. A very rewarding experience, supporting the County's amazing voluntary sector, being Armed Forces Champion and representing the County Council in many different fields.

My civic term included the 70th celebration of our Queen, Elizabeth II, her death and funeral and the coronation of our King, Charles III and Queen Camilla. As Chair of the County Council, visited many charities across the county, and spoke to many volunteers, Surrey is an amazing and compassionate county, people can be very generous with their time and money, and as the County Council Armed Forces Champion, I learnt a lot about the services and the roles they play in making sure we are safe.

County Council continues to settle in to its move back into Surrey both here at Woodhatch in Reigate and in other areas of the county such as Weybridge, Guildford, Woking.

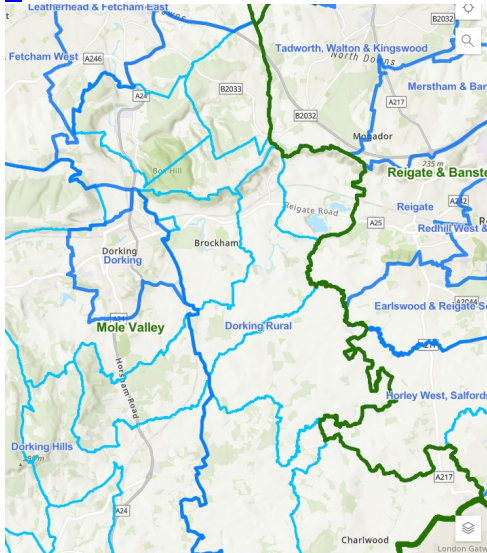
The County Council's Chief Executive Joanna Killian leaves on 6th March to take up the role of Chief Executive at the Local Government Association. This demand for Joanna's expertise exemplifies the high esteem this council has held in within the sector, in my opinion, she has served us well in Surrey in her operation leadership role. Recruitment for a permanent Chief Executive is underway.

COUNTY COUNCIL BOUNDARY CHANGES

There is currently a review of county divisional boundaries by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) which should conclude in May. My divisional boundaries of Dorking Rural, are expected to change with some villages currently in the division moving out and others moving in. All these changes have been consulted on. The predicted changes are waiting for confirmation but can be followed here.

<https://lgbce.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/basic/index.html?appid=ff513d041a604f2680be277b50b3214>

3



BUDGET FOR 2024

SCC budget was ratified at full council by members on 6th February, outlining £1.2bn of revenue spending (an increase of £95m). Costs are rising faster than income, and despite £53.7m of identified efficiencies, we agreed to raise Council Tax by the full 4.99% (including 2% Adult Social Care Precept).

The biggest pressures come from services for children with additional needs and disabilities, including providing Home to School Transport and Education Health & Care Plan assessments. The increasing demand and cost of Adult Social Care services is also adding huge pressure, with future uncertainty of policy and funding arrangements unhelpful.

The County Council continues its widescale transformation within the organisation and with partners to ensure public services can continue to improve in the face of widening budget pressures into the future. Further transformation work will focus on prevention and early intervention to reduce demand on services.

The leadership are in negotiations with DLUHC (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) about a County Deal for Surrey, seeking further clarifications from government to progress this quickly to bring benefits for Surrey.

LOCAL ISSUES AND SURREY HIGHWAYS

Locally, the council leadership has increased the budget for members highways allocation to £120,000 for the coming year, giving local county councillors more opportunities to deliver on highways issues most important to local people. Working with local people has seen the delivery of schemes such as footpath improvements for access, Gateway signs, traffic calming measures such as 30mph speed limits, bollard requests, vehicle activated signs, some still to be installed! As well as commissioning works for the coming year including projects to resolve wet spots in Buckland and Pebble Hill, pedestrian warning signs in

Ockley, traffic calming, 20mph and Gateways in Hookwood, removal of 25-year-old broken rumble strips in Charlwood, and investing in Project Horizon to advance resurfacing across rural roads in my division. I still have funding available for 2024, so please do let me know of your priority.

Residents experienced localised flooding following Storm Henck in January, which the County's Flood Team is advising landowners on, and improvements to gully maintenance has been an important part of protecting local homes as well as ensuring landowners keep their ditches flowing. This is on top of the county highways budget, road safety and countryside rights of way budgets or any nationally funded project such as the DfT £1.5m A 25 from Dorking to Reigate road safety project which may well see average speed cameras (ASC) installed. I am also asking for ASC to be considered for the A24 south of Holmwood roundabout to Beare Green as well as on parts of the A29 in Ockley. Average speed cameras can be controversial, but the cameras on the A 24 north of Dorking shows they can be effective.

Local road congestion raises concerns with residents. Motorway diversion routes have changed, and overnight repairs see residents sleep disturbed and the M25/A3 junction improvements have most likely added to congestion in our rural roads. Road safety has received investment following an increase in killed or seriously injured incidents and is jointly funded with Surrey Police. Residents both here in Surrey and nationally continue to report road defects and condition. Please do continue to report on line and tell the County Council about [road issues here](#) and sign up for the county councils regular newsletter.



<https://pages.comms.surreycc.info/pages/your-highways-update>

GRANTS AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Surrey County Council's Your Fund Surrey continues with applications for grants to help transform our communities. I am a member of the YFS advisory panel and help to advocate on behalf of applicants. Using the local members allocation for small projects (£5,000) and the larger capital Small Your Fund Surrey members allocation (grants from £1000-£50,000) I have been able to support Mole Valley Arts Alive, a new apple press in Leigh, a new sound system for Beare Green village hall, church community improvements in two villages, facilitating an afternoon tea for Brockham residents at Bookham Grange as well celebration funding for the coronation, and voluntary sector funding. In larger projects, helping in delivering new toilets refurbishments at the Reigate Pilgrims Cricket Club, based in Buckland, flooring, tables and chairs in the Hamilton Room in Betchworth, village hall room conversion in Brockham, and with a neighbouring county councillor to see a new classroom built at Amber Foundation in Ockley, new sustainable improvements to village halls, and several projects being looked at for the coming year. I look forward to hearing from more projects who require capital funding in my division.

GATWICK

The National Planning Inspectorate will commence the enquiry into Gatwick Airport's second northern runway application in February 2024, this will take about six months we are advised. Locally residents are concerned about the impact of doubling the number of passengers using the airport – 45 million currently but rising to 90 million per annum in ten years and the consequent traffic and noise this will bring with more flights over local homes and more traffic on our already congested roads. People want to fly and holidays can be vital to health and wellbeing in a stressful world, but there will be a consequence for such growth and I am asking residents to raise their concerns with the Government to ensure mitigation for our village and rural roads is considered, this should not be a council tax burden but part of an agreement with the airport owners and Government to improve public transport and road safety. I continue to represent residents at Gatwick Airport, as Vice Chair of GATCOM, the airports regulatory body and as Vice Chair of the airport's noise management board (NMB). I will continue to make sure your voice is heard.



DEMOCRACY

Over the last 23 years I have enjoyed working together with our dedicated parish councillors, the parish clerks as well as residents – I hope to continue doing so going forward. We may well see more changes in the coming year about how decision making is made. There is a general election to get through, new boundaries to our constituencies and party-political manifestos to consider on what the next government expects from local government.

The county council continues to be extremely well led by C.Cllr. Tim Oliver, County elections will be held in May 2025. Current political make-up of the County Council is 45 Conservative, 16 Residents' Associations/Independents, 16 Liberal Democrats, 2 Labour and 2 Green. There are 81 county councillors in total.

As always, I am proud to live in this beautiful county division made up of our many rural villages and communities and I look forward to working with the changes the LGBCE will bring. Thank you to all of you that get in touch, report issues and advise on local problems, I do so appreciate the work that everyone does and the role they play as well as listening to your views and of all Dorking Rural residents.

Helyn Clack

Mrs Helyn Clack, Surrey County Councillor, Member of Dorking Rural Division, Surrey County Council

Beenleigh, Russ Hill, Charlwood, Surrey, RH6 0EL

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