

# Ashtead Independents

## Newsletter

Issue No 25



September 2016

### Letter from the Leader

Dear Ashtead Resident.

We recognise that it is important to keep you informed of local issues and what we are doing about them, so we are pleased to be able to distribute this Summer/Autumn update.

We were delighted with the outcome of the May elections as all the Independent candidates were returned with increased majorities and the total votes cast for Independents was the largest for many years. We now have three *new* Ashtead Independent (AI) Councillors, and I was re-elected in Village Ward. Councillors David Hawksworth and Patricia Wiltshire now represent Common Ward, and Councillor David Harper is working alongside Councillor Peter Stanyard in Ashtead Park.

We are also pleased that Councillor Simon Ling (AI Village Ward) has been elected to be Vice Chairman of Council with all party support. He is likely to become Chairman next year. As a result he has handed over the leadership of the group to me.

I would like to thank our two outgoing District Councillors, Chris Townsend (who however remains our County Councillor) and Paula Hancock for their significant contribution to District affairs, and I especially honour the role played by our AI colleague Councillor John Northcott, who sadly passed away in March.

Currently Mole Valley District Council is operating with an all Conservative Executive due to their overall majority. You can be assured we will be holding the new Executive to account for their actions. During the period of joint Conservative/Independent control, many initiatives were put in place, including the Transform Leatherhead Project, the rebuilding of the Meadowbank football ground and the refurbishment of the Pippbrook council offices, and we will continue to keep a close eye on these to ensure they are delivered effectively.

Ashtead Community Vision (ACV) submitted a Neighbourhood Development Plan which will have completed a consultation process by the time this letter goes to press. We will keep you updated on its progress.

These are exciting times for the development of Ashtead and we will continue to work closely with all residents within the community to deliver what is best for Ashtead. As part of a new initiative we will be launching a monthly 'surgery' to further engage with our residents – please drop in and discuss issues directly with your Ward Councillor. The initial dates and location are published elsewhere in this newsletter.

Please do not hesitate to contact us we are here to serve all the community.

Yours sincerely

Mary Cooper

### Green Lane Railway Crossing



Residents living north of the railway line have, for some 150 years, had the convenience of crossing the line over the public right of way which leads from Links Road into Green Lane. Without this crossing many people, including school children, would have to walk the length of Links Road, cross at the Woodfield Lane crossing, and travel the long way down Barnett Wood Lane to get to the opening of Green Lane. People wishing to access the Common from the south of Barnett Wood Lane would have to do the same thing in reverse.

Network Rail considers the crossing to be highly dangerous in spite of the only recorded accident being in 1967. About 250 people a day use the crossing without mishap and Network Rail wish to close the crossing because they see it as a high accident risk. They also claim that the crossing is not a public right of way; this has been hotly refuted by Ashtead residents who claim that it is and was a condition of the railway being built. Network Rail have applied to Surrey County Council to rule on the right of way matter.

Ashtead Residents' Association and Ashtead Independents have been campaigning to retain the crossing. Following various public and other meetings, retiring Ashtead Independent Councillor Paula Hancock organised a public e-petition with Surrey County Council which has nearly 500 signatures at the time of going to press; this is open for additions to 16 October 2016 so do sign if you have not done so already:  
(<http://petitions.surreycc.gov.uk/GreenLane/>).

Surrey County Council is looking into the rights of way issue, and in the meantime following a site meeting with representatives of the ARA, AI, and SCC, Network Rail is looking into other options for increased safety at the Green Lane Crossing, including warning lights and bridges. Your Ashtead Independents continue to monitor the situation and await proposals from Network Rail. We can only hope that common sense will prevail.

**David Hawksworth and Patricia Wiltshire**

## Crossing the A24 between The Greville and The Burrows



### Mission Impossible...

Walk alongside the A24 with baby in buggy, a toddler and her six year old brother on their scooters, drop the toddler at The Burrows childrens' nursery, cross the A24 safely with speeding traffic and no refuge wide enough for buggy, scooter and people. Once negotiated by courtesy of the rare considerate rush hour driver, proceed to The Greville, drop off six year old then retrace the route.

Alternatively, be 75 years of age and in a motorised mobility scooter, and cross the A24 near Ashtead Park

### Solution...

Go by car, or

Reduce the speed of the traffic and install a controlled pedestrian crossing.

Local mothers have organised a petition and with the help of Ashtead Independent Councillors gained acceptance by Surrey Highways of their plan to install a 30 mph speed limit from the Ashtead border with Epsom to the village and a pedestrian crossing on the A24, probably near Bramley Way. Traffic engineers are working on this complex project.

It will not happen quickly but we have agreement to funds and promise to keep this high on the agenda in coming months.

**Chris Townsend and Peter Stanyard**



## Traffic around the schools to the west of Ashtead

(Downsend, St Andrew's, St Peter's and West Ashtead)

We have the children who need to go to school, all our schools are full and there is nowhere to build new ones. We will therefore continue to have problems with traffic at drop off and pick up times.

At a meeting of The Heads of Downsend and St Andrew's, Surrey County Council traffic planners and engineers with your Ashtead Independent Councillors Chris Townsend and Peter Stanyard, the point was made that this is a major inconvenience to residents and users of Grange Road at these times but it does not appear to be dangerous. There is no record of serious accidents or fatalities, but any action which increases traffic speed might make matters worse.

A number of options were proposed to ameliorate the problem but none is ideal. The planners committed to look at the options and report back but we are not optimistic of an acceptable solution.

Staggered timings for each school do help. However, putting even more yellow lines would only move the problem elsewhere, and the Safety Audit team at Surrey have expressed the view that the parking and congestion reduces speed and effectively improves safety – a point with which the Heads agree.

In the meantime, we have been pursuing the improvements to A24/Grange Road junction and hope to have firm news in the autumn, and we will continue to keep a close eye on all these issues.

**Chris Townsend & Peter Stanyard**

## Stop Press...

## Ashtead Draft Neighbourhood Development plan

As we go to press, local residents businesses and other interested parties will have been engaged in presenting their views to MVDC as part of the consultation stage on the draft Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) for the Ashtead Neighbourhood Area.

The NDP contains policies about housing, economy, environment and infrastructure issues. It builds on existing planning policies in Mole Valley and addresses issues of particular concern in Ashtead. The NDP does not propose any alterations to the Green Belt.

### So what happens next?

MVDC will now appoint an independent and appropriately qualified person to examine the Ashtead NDP, the evidence behind it and the representations received during the consultation period. The examiner will decide if the NDP should go forward to a referendum in the form that it has been submitted, whether it should be modified before a referendum or that it should not proceed to a referendum.

Subject to a successful examination of the NDP, there will be a referendum when the Ashtead community will be asked "Do you want Mole Valley District Council to use the Neighbourhood Development Plan for Ashtead to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?" If over 50% of those who vote say "Yes" the NDP will be adopted by MVDC.

We will keep you updated regarding its progress and for further information do visit

[www.ashteadcommunityvision.org.uk](http://www.ashteadcommunityvision.org.uk)

**Mary Cooper**



## Highways

We are now getting towards the end of the SCC Operation Horizon initiative which improves our road surfaces across Surrey. Ashtead has had a number of roads done over the last 3 years, with Links Road finally being re-surfaced and Oakhill Road and Dene Road being due this year. Oakfield Road is being re-assessed and we have had no cancellations of any roads in Ashtead put forward. The scheme may well continue over the next few years. There is now a new initiative under the same Operation Horizon banner to deal with poor pavements. I am currently getting together a list for Ashtead which will include Park Lane, parts of the Leatherhead road (A24), outside the shops in Barnett Wood Lane, Woodfield Lane and Cray Avenue for starters. I know others will come forward. The programme will start next year 2017.

**Chris Townsend**

## Local Allocation

As in previous years I receive a small allocation from SCC for use within our community. As before, this year I have spread this amongst Ashtead Scouts, Ashtead Chess Club, Head2Head Theatre, ARA (for additional lighting across the Wood Field to the Station), The Greville primary school, Age Concern and the Youth Centre. Remember if you have a potential need do let me know, although I am already very low on funds this year, so perhaps next!

**Chris Townsend**

## Ashtead Pond



**Ashtead Village Pond - with heron**

The northern margins of Ashtead Pond, adjacent to Barnett Wood Lane, were becoming dominated by re-growth of previously cut willows and young ash trees. In addition to increasingly obscuring the views of the Pond from the road, this re-growth was threatening the wetland plants that had been established there.

Following concerns expressed by Ashtead Independent Councillors Hawksworth and Wiltshire, much of the re-growth was cut by MVDC staff in early August which has made the water area more readily visible again.

Pressure is now being placed on the Council to arrange a site visit with a view to preparing a long-term management plan to both enhance the many attractive wetland plants put in place there and also maintain conditions favourable to the ducks and other wildlife, of which the herons are a particular feature.

**David Hawksworth**

## Launch of Ashtead Tree Wardens Group

Ashtead has not had Tree Wardens for many years but, during the course of surveys carried out by our new Ashtead Independent Councillors David Hawksworth and Patricia Wiltshire, it became clear that there were trees and wooded areas that either merited protection, or were in need of care. Following meetings convened by Cllr Hawksworth, the new local group was established in August, and operates under the auspices of the Ashtead Residents' Association. It will liaise with MVDC Tree and Countryside and Tree (Planning) Officers, and other public bodies as appropriate.



**Wood Field**



**Cricket Club**

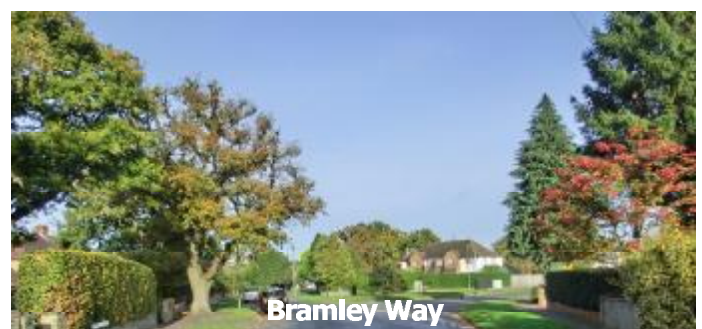
Tree Wardens operate under the national Tree Wardens scheme ([www.treecouncil.org.uk](http://www.treecouncil.org.uk)) and will be involved with:

1. Checking on the condition of protected trees
2. Documenting other trees that might qualify for protection
3. Drawing attention to trees growing in, or impinging upon, public areas that need management, such as those that are diseased, excessively overgrown, or a public nuisance

In the future, the Ashtead Tree Wardens may also organize a nursery of native tree species. Saplings would then be available for planting on verges, and in other public spaces, when and where appropriate.

Currently, there are four Ashtead Tree Wardens, Roy Guy (Chair), Keith Lelliott, Steve Kirton, and Chrissy Kerton (Secretary), but more members are required to share responsibilities in the different parts of Ashtead. The ecological and botanical expertise of Councillors Hawksworth and Wiltshire will be available whenever required. If you would like to help on a casual basis, or are interested in joining the group, you can find out more by emailing [treewardens@ashteadresidents.org.uk](mailto:treewardens@ashteadresidents.org.uk).

**David Hawksworth**



**Bramley Way**

## Woodfield Lane Road Widening

The road widening on the station approach section of Woodfield Lane was completed last June. This followed almost a decade of evaluating the various options for improvement, campaigning for the widening, local consultation, and pressure exerted by our Independent County Councillor (Chris Townsend) and the late John Northcott.

The new lay-by provides short-stay parking and, not only allows for a two-way flow of traffic for the first time, but also alleviates congestion on Craddocks Parade. The "No Right Turn" restriction preventing turning over the crossing from St Stephen's Avenue is expected in the next few weeks having had to wait the necessary legal work. The improvements have been warmly welcomed by residents.



Woodfield Lane after widening

There were concerns on the impact of the widening on the spectacular avenue of horse chestnut trees. The trees were already stressed because of attack by leaf miner larvae, and some had signs of bacterial weeping canker. Because of this, plans for damage mitigation to the trees were agreed in advance by Surrey Council (in consultation with MVDC). It was unfortunate that the works could not proceed in the autumn after leaf fall, and was delayed until the late spring of 2016 which was not an ideal time.

Two trees have had to be removed after storm damage in the Spring, and it will be unfortunate if more losses arise, but a close watch will be kept on the avenue in the future.

## New! Ashtead Independent Councillors' Surgeries



Scout Hall in Woodfield

Ashtead Independent District Councillors will be holding a drop-in surgery on the first Saturday of each month, starting on Saturday, 1st October 2016 in the Scout Hall (Woodfield). Each session will be for one hour from 12.00 mid-day to 1.00 p.m. and no appointment is necessary.

Your Councillors for Common Ward (Patricia Wiltshire and David Hawksworth) will be in attendance each time, and one from each of Park Ward and Village Ward will attend on a rotational basis.

It is hoped that you will take this opportunity to drop in to discuss any issues you have that we may be able to help with or take up with MVDC Officers on your behalf.

Your Councillors see this as a way of getting to know you better, as well as learning of matters that concern you. We look forward to seeing you at the Scout Hall.

**Patricia Wiltshire**

## Vice Chairman of MVDC

At the Annual Council meeting last May following the election I was elected to be the Vice Chairman for this year (until next May) which all being well (and if I behave!) means that I will become Chairman for the following year. Roughly speaking the groups on Council take it in turns to provide the Chairman, but as the Independents are the smallest group we can only expect to fill the role once every 6 years or so – John Northcott was the most recent Independent Chairman in 2010/11.

I am very honoured to have been elected and am looking forward to my year as Chairman during which I will represent Mole Valley at functions around Surrey, as well as chairing full council meetings. The Chairman usually holds a Civic Service, a Civic Day and a Civic Dinner during his year. As Vice Chairman I have already had to stand in for the Chairman at several events. One or two of these have been in Ashtead and the eagle eyed among you may be able to spot my name on a plaque in some recently opened premises!

**Simon Ling**

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