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# GUILDFORD ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

## newsletter

DECEMBER 2015– FEBRUARY 2016

### Comments of the Guildford Environmental Forum on

## THE GUILDFORD TOWN CENTRE MASTER PLAN

Guildford Borough Council decided to develop a master plan for Guildford Town Centre for the Local Plan period to 2033 and beyond, and undertook a consultation on this early in the autumn.

Guildford Environmental Forum submitted comments on this.



We supported the Council's approach to having a comprehensive master plan for the town centre. We congratulated the Council for commissioning such a study and the Allies and Morrison team for developing such a clear piece of work, which appears to be understandable to a range of stakeholders.

#### We supported the key principles of the scheme:

- ★ Reconnecting the town to the river and the creation of a river park
- ★ The regeneration of the wider river corridor

- ★ The inclusion of some additional housing within the town centre area

- ★ The attempt to improve the gyratory system

However, we felt that the scheme was lacking in a number of points. These apply both to the study area on its own and how the study area connects to the wider town. Whilst we appreciate that this master plan only forms one small piece of the overall evidence base, some of the cross-cutting issues make it impossible to comment objectively.

We then made more detailed comments – see overleaf.

## PLANNING POLICY

How does the council intend this master plan to be taken forward? It would have been very helpful to have some suggestions for town centre policies that would need to feed into the wider plan.

## INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT THE PLAN

The plan is generally very weak in defining the infrastructure required to support development on this scale.

### Transport

#### The bus station

It's universally agreed that the bus station, like the rest of the North Street development area, needs to be updated and brought into the 21st century. However, it currently does fulfil an important role for the town, a role that will only be more important in the future with the strategy for the town being to move people out of the car. This key infrastructure is very poorly addressed in the report which gives the impression that it was not part of the study. The suggestion that the bus provision should be put on the street is not tested and no area allocated. Moreover, no account has been made for any reduction in road space for the gyratory options tested. We are not necessarily against

the proposed solution of an on-street provision, but any provision needs to provide facilities at least as good as a dedicated bus station, for example a waiting area with adequate seating so that passengers can wait in the warm and dry. There need to be toilet facilities and a café nearby. There also needs to be a fully working indicator board so that passengers can move directly to the particular bus they need just beforehand. We also do not think the impacts of having sufficient spaces and facilities have been defined at this stage.

#### The gyratory options

It is clear that the master plan contains no analysis of the issues which are then covered in separate technical notes. These technical notes demonstrate that none of the options actually work with the current traffic flow without this additional development. In fact the preferred option is one of the worst performing. We support the fact that the council wants to reduce car usage within the town centre; however, nowhere in the documentation does it say how this will be achieved. Therefore, it is impossible for the consultees to understand how the proposed measure will work and consequences of the interventions.

#### Testing the options

None of the work presented actually looks at the wider impacts of the displaced traffic from the town centre and therefore it is hard to make meaningful commentary on the



master plan since we are unable to assess the impacts. The deliverability of this amount of development is uncertain as the impacts are not yet understood.

### Social infrastructure

There appears to be very little or no allowance for any social infrastructure e.g. schools. There is a large new population in the town centre, how will it be supported?

### Sustainable use of resources

There is no real mention of sustainable resources in the plan, nor any mention of an energy strategy to support this development. With a combination of major existing users and new development, both a renewable energy strategy and a heat strategy could have been planned which could have been a provider of income to the council. There is a need for a proper renewable electricity plan and heat modelling covering cooling as well as heating. District heating and cooling feasibility should be part of the plan, which has to last us well on into this century.

gain, for example by including green bridges for wildlife crossing busy roads.

## ECONOMIC IMPACT

The proposed land uses appear to be exchanging warehousing and industrial units for offices. Where will the existing users go? What is the impact on the employment opportunities for a section of the Guildford population? Whilst we understand the growth agenda for the high-tech jobs, where are the 'real' jobs for 'real' people?

## DELIVERABILITY

The land uses have been defined but there appears to be very little work on the deliverability of the master plan in terms of cost or phasing. Therefore, it is uncertain how real this scheme is – we expected this to have been covered in more detail.

*The text was prepared by Alastair Atkinson with additional material from John Bannister, Keith Chesterton and Raymond Smith.*

## BIODIVERSITY

Whilst the master plan seems to maximise the natural capital of the river there is no mention of maximising the benefits of the scheme for the biodiversity of town centre. The river corridor provides an excellent opportunity to actually enhance the biodiversity of the area. We believe that the improvement of the river as a wildlife corridor should be a fundamental aim of a master plan, and would expect the redevelopment of the town centre to have a substantial net biodiversity



## Clean Air Campaign – an update

by Forum member Peter Smart

IN THE MARCH 2015 edition of the Forum newsletter we ran an article about vehicle emissions in the UK and particularly the little-known issues surrounding diesel engine emissions and human health. The penultimate line of the article read *“The House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee Chair wants the public to start making a fuss.”*

Six months later they can happily take that requirement off their agenda. With a huge amount of help from Volkswagen, there can be few around the globe who are not now aware of the diesel emissions scandal and the ‘deceit device’ on VW diesel engines that deliberately delivers false results during emission testing but not during everyday use. The world is also aware of the air pollution caused by all diesel engines, not just VWs.

At the time of writing the last article *Emissions Analytics* reported that analysis in the UK showed that actual real world emissions figures are typically 22% higher than the official emissions, and that NOX can be 3 or 4 times larger than the official figures.

The impact on the VW organisation has been enormous, although perhaps only caused by a few of the VW management who were aware of, and condoned, the ‘deceit’. Their poor management ethics and environmental consideration has resulted in public health damaged, customer confidence eroded, the brand degraded, employees vulnerable and investors punished.

The good news is that this could be a turning point for large corporations around the world who will be sitting up and taking note of the consequences of irresponsible corporate behaviour. At the same time governments across the world are setting up inquiries to review the whole issue of diesel and vehicle emissions in their countries. In the UK Lord Drayson the former UK science minister admitted that the Labour government’s support for diesel cars in the 1990s had been a mistake and warned that diesel cars were *“literally killing people”*. He called for a new diesel car scrappage scheme to encourage owners to trade them in for cleaner models.

Following a case brought by NGO ClientEarth earlier in 2015, the Supreme Court has ordered the government to make plans for tackling the UK’s illegal levels of air pollution by the end of 2015. It has been in breach of EU limits for years and is linked to thousands of premature deaths each year.



March 2015. The sun struggles through the smog.

## Personal Air Monitoring – an update

by Forum member Peter Smart

ALSO IN THE MARCH edition of our newsletter, we featured an article about air pollution based on the BBC Radio 4 programme *Costing the Earth*, which discussed vehicle air pollution and the development of a personal air monitoring device.

Drayson Technologies has now released the “CleanSpace Tag”, the personal pollution monitor which Lord Drayson hopes will contribute towards improving air quality in the UK.

The monitor works in conjunction with a mobile phone app called CleanSpace to record local air pollution levels as measured by users of the device, and then pools the data with that from others to create a high-resolution, dynamic map of pollution hotspots and areas where the air is cleaner or dirtier.

It is expected to be of most interest to walkers and cyclists and to residents in the main UK cities. You can sign up for updates on the new service, download the app, be informed and get involved at <https://our.clean.space>

You will soon be able to order a CleanSpace Tag personal monitor for £50 at <https://our.clean.space/tag/> but at the time of writing you can only “Register your interest” to be informed when the units are available.

## Urban Air Quality

by John Bannister

POLITICIANS AND MOTOR MANUFACTURERS in Europe have been very slow to come to terms with illegal air quality levels in our cities and towns. The problem stems from traffic levels and Europeans being deluded into switching to diesel cars rather than petrol cars. There are hundreds of millions of diesel cars in Europe compared to only a few million in the US, Japan and China. Why, you may ask.

Back in the 90s when, following the Kyoto Agreement, action was taken to address global warming (climate change), Europe began to promote the fact that diesel engines in ideal test conditions produce less carbon dioxide than cars fuelled by petrol. Incentives were created in favour of diesel fuel. Falsely, in hindsight, because real road tests show that manufacturers consistently fail to meet ideal tailpipe carbon dioxide emission results. In fact recent research shows that on the road 12 out of 13 of the latest diesel cars failed to meet the EU’s Euro 6 standards for exhaust emissions. Furthermore, the emissions of nitrogen dioxide and small particulates (less than 2.5 microns) are much higher per mile from diesel cars than petrol cars and these are harmful to our health.

### Premature deaths

For a long time medical authorities have estimated that these pollutants account for 29,000 premature deaths a year, and some maintain as high as 50,000 deaths a year, in the UK. This is second only to the number of premature deaths due to cigarette smoking in the UK. Most of these UK deaths occur in London and recent research shows that air pollution contributed to the deaths of as many as 9,400 Londoners in 2010 – around 3,500 from particle pollution and up to 4,900 from nitrogen dioxide. These premature deaths occur in many other UK cities and towns, such as Birmingham, Southampton and Guildford, where people live and move around near heavily trafficked roads such as, in our case, the A3, M25 and our central gyratory. Remember that Guildford ranks in the top 40 for congestion of all cities and towns in Europe. Imagine if our water supply was found to be causing 50,000 premature deaths a year in the UK’s urban areas. Something would be done. Instead, politicians have been happy to avoid dealing with poor air quality by pretending that it doesn’t actually exist, despite the increase over this period in asthma, strokes and heart conditions seen by hospitals.

So European air quality standards have not been a complete success; air pollution in European towns and cities has hardly improved in the last decade and

many cities are wrestling with nitrogen dioxide that is two to three times the World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines. Millions of people in the eastern half of England are regularly exposed to pollution levels that are about twice WHO guidelines in hot weather, such as in July this year when summertime smog (ozone) across southern England was the worst since 2012. Ozone is due to high nitrogen dioxide levels emanating from traffic, and as night-time temperatures are increasingly failing to fall then instead of an 8-hour exposure as defined by WHO standards, 36 hours exposure is increasingly the case. Athletes and vulnerable people are now regularly being advised to stay indoors at times when air pollution increases. Cameron may take a swipe at Beijing but he is well overdue to take a serious look at his own back yard.

### Guildford traffic

Unless traffic problems are properly addressed, air quality will worsen. The Forum has raised this with our borough councillors many times when commenting on plans to develop Guildford. *“Congestion is here to stay and there’s nothing we can do about it”* has been a typical response from them. They have been hoping that the take-up of electric vehicles would solve the problem, but that will take years and we have for far too long been in breach of EU Air Quality Directives. *(continued overleaf)*

For over a decade the GUILDFORD IN BLOOM COMPETITION has featured a class for wildlife-friendly gardens. This year the ‘Best in Class’ was a bit different. Instead of a private garden it was a dedicated wildlife study area for a school – an outdoor classroom that pupils can use on a daily basis, for lessons and exploration. The lucky school with this valuable resource is Pewley Down Infants.



It looks as though the London Mayor Boris Johnson may have finally got the message. Having initially denied that London had a problem, after Kings College researchers provided the evidence on air pollution in London his initial "bollocks" response changed, and he is now saying he will introduce the world's first ultra-low emission zone from 2020 with greatly increased congestion charges. He has also launched a campaign to warn parents to choose a less polluting route to school. Too little too late in our view; and we remain to be convinced that he will take all necessary action for the health of London's residents and workers in the shortest time.

It is reminiscent of the heated debate with Guildford Borough Council and Waitrose over permission to build a new Waitrose store on York Road a few metres from Sandfield Primary School, and closing the underpass merely to allow Waitrose to build car access onto and off York Road. Now children are forced to wait on an island in the middle of a busy road, due to get much busier when the store opens. This is a gross misuse of this site, despite a few token dwellings. Most of the air pollution that a toddler breathes in occurs in the two hours on the journey to and from her nursery in a push chair. The same is true of children walking to school. Studies have shown that children and old people are at the greatest risk from air pollution, and that any health setback at a young age remains for the rest of our lives.

**The devil's in the diesel**

Even worse, it now emerges that Britain and Europe may not have reduced carbon emissions from transport by switching to diesel. Scientists now say that the small particles emitted by diesel engines play a far bigger role in global warming than many previously thought. The smallest particles in diesel tailpipes, known as "black carbon", trap heat in the atmosphere and are now believed to be second only to carbon dioxide as a cause of global warming.

It has taken a 5-year legal battle by ClientEarth, an environmental law group, for the Supreme Court, the UK's highest court, to order the UK government to show it is serious about tackling air pollution. EU legislation in 1998 gave the UK until 2010 to meet air quality regulations in the shortest possible time. This they ignored and prevaricated. The government says it will take until 2030 before NO<sub>2</sub> levels meet EU standards (electric vehicles again?).

There are serious implications for plans to expand sites such as Heathrow Airport (where the UK has failed to meet air quality standards for many years) and major housing developments around the country. The government is also open to ridicule as it withdraws all help for renewable energy, apart from offshore wind farms.

**And the future?**

The government, ordered by the Supreme Court to draw up a new air-quality plan, has accepted that air pollution costs the economy £18 billion a year, or a seventh of NHS spending. What is needed is an expansion of low emission zones, investment in clean and affordable public transport, a lowering of speed limits, a move back from diesel to petrol and a ban on diesel vehicles not fitted with particulate traps (that work as claimed).

**ADDENDUM**

Peter Smart in his item comments on the VW scandal. I find it interesting that it was the environmental arm of the US Government that picked this up, ran with it and is now leading the march to bring VW to justice. Not the UK government (far from it, it backs big business even when they know it is illegal), not the EU government, but the US government. The EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) is accusing VW of putting the lives of US citizens at risk due to the undeclared air pollution. Can you see Cameron ever doing that?

Now every day brings a new revelation. Life expectancy is a big deal especially when if you live somewhere like Blackpool you have a life expectancy that is 7 or 8 years less than, say, Guildford. But while this is mainly about poverty, the UK government, by cutting the NHS and care for the elderly and charging outrageous university fees is deliberately and wilfully helping the very rich, damning the poor and widening the gap between them. Also, it fails to accept that urban air pollution is reducing life expectancy and the facts are known and proven. They chose to flagrantly refuse to meet EU air quality limits in our cities and towns because "growth" is the only thing that matters to them whether it is legal or not.

The illegal actions of VW (and please don't tell me that senior management didn't know) won't be confined to VW. All the car companies will be implicated. A comparison for all the major car companies in the *Financial Times* on 5th November showed the emissions discrepancy between real world motoring and lab tests widened dramatically between 2001 and 2014 from less than 10% of CO<sub>2</sub> to in excess of 40% in some cases.

Cars are the main cause of urban air pollution as I have said but there are other sources. For instance when you have farmland outside a city, then ammonium nitrate synthetic fertilizer gives off emissions that can end up as NOx emissions in city streets. Big business will only tell us what it wants us to know. The truth has to be ferreted out by good journalism and by NGOs.

**THE YEAR GONE BY:**

*extracts from A Country Diary by Forum member Michael Tanner*

Tuesday DECEMBER 30th 2014

**WEST GUILDFORD AND ADJACENT HOG'S BACK**

Night has laid a strong white frost on the roads. It is remarkable how localised temperatures may be. The 1½ miles of woodland pathway between Watts Gallery and Puttenham are frozen in some places and visibly quite thawed out in others on the evidence of puddles. This would seem to be caused by differing heights and the proximity of trees which affect sunlight and 'wind' direction. Presumably a somewhat similar pattern of temperatures is present throughout the year but not quite so obviously. Apart from wood pigeon flocks foraging upon the flanks of the downland ridge very little wild life is to be seen or heard. Now there is scarcely a red berry to be seen in the hedgerows or even a fox slinking sadly along the field's edge. Two large carrion crows continue to visit the back garden prodding the lawn for squirrel treasure not yet rediscovered. I wonder if they have a sense of smell like some other crows.



birdsobriain.co.uk

Saturday JANUARY 3rd 2015

**CORNWALL – OUTSKIRTS OF BODMIN MOOR**

Temperature around 8 degrees Celsius. About 20 two-bladed wind turbines on the north-west edge of the moor are motionless. They look like a parked squadron of fighter bombers. Early afternoon: groups of starlings rise intermittently from fields of grazing sheep. Later they will rendezvous in one enormous flock that eventually settles for the night in a sombre fir plantation. Their accumulated droppings in such a place are sufficient to 'burn' the trees and leave a pungent stench on the encroaching misty dusk.

Saturday FEBRUARY 7th

**PUTTENHAM AREA**

Though a frost has stiffened the mud on most footpaths, there is something which suggests that the coming of spring is a possibility: rooks at the western edge of the village are noisily laying claim to what remains of last year's nests. Paths in the area are heavily gouged by horses' hooves. Shaggy ponies in the numerous local paddocks look more interested in their surroundings. Those high, piercing calls from invisible birds mean parakeets are making

a flying visit. An athletic girl preceded by her collie is moving at an impressive rate along the sidewalk. Some professional-looking golfers are setting out on a round. People are doing their things. Anti-cyclonic conditions predominate.

Saturday FEBRUARY 21st

**SEALE AREA**

Truncated stalks of last year's maize still make a stretch of 400 acres or so look like a version of the Somme after repeated shelling in World War 1. But the sunshine, coinciding with an impressive assemblage of clouds on a blue sky, refutes the ugliness. Hedges in this area have been meticulously trimmed but a huge reddish puddle persists, as every year, at the lower, western corner of the area. Manure has been stacked at the eastern end ready for fertilising a crop on the estate. Along some of the local main roads, catkins on high drooping branches catch and hold the mid-afternoon sunlight. Their seductive beauty is a dangerous distraction to some who drive along the busy A31 as it crosses one of Surrey's most threatened belvederes. But, as on so many of this beautiful county's roads, speed limits are not set low enough.



spinalhealth.com

Saturday MARCH 7th

**WATTS GALLERY TO PUTTENHAM AREA**

A really summerlike day: temperatures up to 16 degrees or higher. Wild bees are busy at their oak tree nest near the golf course. Song thrushes fill the valley with an outpouring of song morning and evening. Celandines make gleaming patches on the hedgerow banks, though there remain swathes of snowdrops in some shaded gardens. Bright spikes of bluebell leaves push through half-rotten leaf cover in woods near Eastbury Manor. Large and small birds are pairing off: Canada geese on a pond by Lydling farm, mallard on a new pond at Watts Gallery.



wildflowerfinder.org.uk

Greenfinches make their humble but so welcome contribution of a sweet music from the budding thorn bushes. Chaucer, you should be here!

**Monday MARCH 23rd**  
**VALLEY AT LOWER EASHING**

Warm and sunny. Several first butterflies in the lane south of The Squirrels Inn: brimstones, a tortoiseshell (small I think); a large, orange-tailed bumblebee ('cuckoo' or otherwise I cannot tell). A thermal-riding buzzard calls above the valley; it seems to disturb flocks of woodpigeon and jackdaw. Cock pheasants clang from the riverside coverts. Local gardens are bright with primulas and woodland with primroses. Nettles thrust robustly from fertile soil beside tracks where ridden horses leave their droppings. Spring is her busy self.

**Easter Monday APRIL 4th**  
**SEALE AREA**

Temperatures rise to 18 degrees today. Invisibly, a skylark is singing over the cut maize field. Buzzards call from the sky in the Guildford direction. A few peacock, brimstone and tortoiseshell butterflies are restless about the tangled hedgerow brambles. What looks like a Mandarin drake flies up into nearby tree. No rabbits visible today in this sandy area. There is a small cluster of frog spawn in a pond near 'Marigolds'. In my own pond some usually invisible bottom-feeding koi have been rooting around a finely stranded pond grass which now floats horizontally on the surface like the drowned Ophelia's hair.

**Wednesday APRIL 15th**  
**THE OLD RAILWAY LINE TRACK FROM GUILDFORD TO CRANLEIGH**

Sunny and hot (up to 25 degrees C.) Sprinklings of wood anemone in shaded places beside the path. Some bluebells already breaking dark blue buds. Several kinds of warbler sing from the flowering thorns, one certainly a blackcap. Just a mile short of Cranleigh town I am halted in my tracks by the unmistakable, long pleading notes of a nightingale's song. I cannot see the bird. The blackbirds here have phrases in their songs which seem new to me. Wild duck fly frequently and urgently overhead. The most obvious mammals visible from the track are horses or ponies which abound in the area.

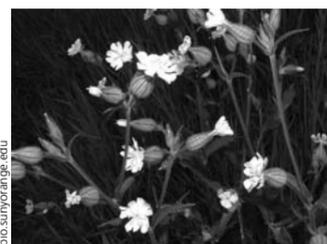
**Sunday MAY 18th**  
**COASTAL NORTH CORNWALL**

Very windy and rain certainly coming. A great tit is nesting in the cottage's Victorian letterbox. Cards and letters posted in it rest on a huge ball of moss. The cheerful postman is sympathetic and the authorities concur. Blackbirds spink their alarm call

throughout the day, made anxious by a lurking, shaggy cat of unusual black and tan colouring. No doubt it will make short work in a week or two of most of the plump immature fledglings. A few swallows have arrived – rather late for these parts. The resident herring gull is not gracing the chimney pot today with her pristine breast. Even from here I can see white horses riding the dark ocean a mile away.

**Monday JUNE 15th**  
**SEALE AREA**

Temperatures into the 20s today. The green acres of potatoes on the Hampton Estate are likely to suffer from lack of water just when they need it most. Water cannons throw plumes of spray high as houses across some of the crop which already bears white flowers. Other parts out of range will seriously suffer if the dry continues. White campion in the



hedgerows contrasts with the mauve-purples of foxgloves and the gold of tall buttercups. But the foxgloves here do not compare in height or colour with those of the North

**Thursday JULY 23rd**  
**IN AND AROUND GUILDFORD**

Cornish lanes. In local back gardens which are watered, there is an abundance of rose blooms.  
We badly need rain and are, I believe, about to receive it. Sunshine is markedly no longer continuous. Back gardens have seen plenty of butterflies: large whites, small whites, meadow browns, speckled woods, small blues, in particular. The long-stemmed lavenders have been nodding up and down all day long, literally weighed down by bumblebees who seem not able to get enough of the precious nectar. The pond at Watts Gallery has been sheeted by unbroken duckweed – unbroken except for mysterious thin tracks left on it by creatures or forces I cannot identify – currents maybe or a super mouse that can walk on water! Ash, sycamore and lime trees are all set to release their delicate harvest of winged seeds. Fat hazel nuts gleam palely high up amidst the foliage. They are by no means ripe but that will not hold back the grey squirrels of which there are far too many locally. The spindle berry trees also have well-formed clusters of their distinctly shaped berries.

Bracken and nettles have closed in on the paths favoured by trail bikers and walkers, who find themselves suddenly confronted by horse riders, dogs or others like themselves.



**Wednesday AUGUST 12th**  
**THE WEY'S WATER MEADOWS**

A warm, humid evening. Mown grass mixed with reeds lies over many acres on the east side of the gently flowing Wey. Half a dozen or so roe deer feed or lie unobtrusively along the boundary hedgerows. In the available light they are hardly visible until one moves or something alarms them so that three or four leap off across the cut pasture to another secure feeding station. For an instant they are like antelope on the African savannah. No swans on the river today, but overhead, small skeins of young geese learn how to fly in formation while the older ones bark occasional instructions. In the deepening dusk of the suburbs young, inexperienced foxes cross dangerous roads.

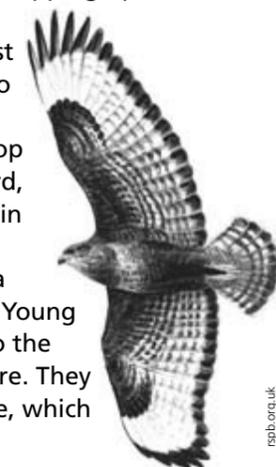
**Monday SEPTEMBER 14th**  
**SOUTH-WEST SEALE**

Not actually raining but hedgerows and banks are full of damp vegetation. Blackberries, so abundant this year, are still plentiful in the hedge opposite the already established new crop of maize. Each 5-foot stem bears a single tasselled cob and some of these already seem mature. If you cooked one (they are for animal winter feed) the water would stain the colour of peat. Some Himalayan Balsam has strayed a long way from water to lend its pink to an otherwise drab hedge. I wonder whether any elephant hawk moth caterpillars have benefitted from this isolated scattering of that flower species. Large burrs clutch at one's clothing and are difficult to disengage. Each slender, 1-centimetre single seed-bearing stalk (separated from the mother sphere and held under a magnifying glass) shows the deadly little hook at the end. You might almost catch a small trout on it! This is recorded as the inspiration for the Velcro fastener. Overhead, patrolling in huge circles, a Chinook helicopter banks, its rotors juddering like machine-gun fire.

**Sunday OCTOBER 11th**  
**SOUTHERN FLANKS OF THE NORTH**  
**DOWNS WAY BETWEEN SHIP INN AND WATTS GALLERY**

Early morning. Heavy dew on rank grass but the day promises to be pleasant. A strong easterly breeze makes itself felt on the ridge. Heavily armed dog rose stems arch up over the path. They now bear few leaves but plenty of scarlet hips to brighten the morning. Various fungi are more obvious now in shady spots, including *Amanita Muscaria* with its attractive white-spotted, bright red dome. Somewhere I have read that deer will nibble it for an intoxicating effect. It can make humans very sick. Wild geese, foraging somewhere on the stubbled hillside, shout to each other like boys in a

playground. A young rabbit with an unusually white belly sits on the path, straight up, pausing out of curiosity, or was it a stoat? Too quick for my eyes. I wish the County Council would put a few spade-men on the tarmac footpath which still exists under years of organic debris. It would certainly make it more inviting to those who wished to walk safely down Down Lane. The spindle trees cropping up in local ancient hedgerows now bear their ripened berries – the most seductive of all plant colours to my mind and one difficult to define. As I return along the top of the northern flank a buzzard, managing the easterly breeze in masterly fashion, is futilely harassed by a large crow and a hopelessly outclassed magpie. Young cattle have been released onto the rough, clematis-infested pasture. They keep their rumps to the breeze, which is growing stronger.



**Thursday NOVEMBER 5th**  
**BACK GARDEN IN GUILDFORD**

Well what does one expect? It has been raining most of the day, though that does not deter firework fanatics who do not wait for the dark. I suppose even the local urban foxes have got used to these gunshot bangs. My valiant 'Bishop of Llandaff' dahlias have not long now to burn out their own kind of fire in the garden. Through the pouring dark, across a few miles of Surrey hill, the maize crop at Seale is safely gathered in – stem, leaf and cob all minced up in enormous iron jaws, rammed down by heavy tractors, covered in tarpaulins and left to ferment into cattle feed. Autumn colours, so remarkable this year, now for the most part endure a similar process at the sides of roads and on woodland paths. What a year, and still not predictable! Weather records broken for sunshine and high temperatures (even in this month of fog and slanting rain). Will there be record cold, record wind, record flooding before December 2016? Sometimes it is almost comforting not really to know.

**ENVIRONMENTAL COURSES IN FREIBURG**  
A Freiburger who runs courses for "Green Living" in Freiburg has asked whether anyone in Guildford might be interested in attending them.  
**Contact:** Ute Unteregger at Oekostation Freiburg, Falkenberger Strasse 21b, 79110 Freiburg  
**Phone:** 49 761 892 333  
**Email:** [Ute.unteregger@oekostation.de](mailto:Ute.unteregger@oekostation.de)  
**Website:** [www.oekostation.de](http://www.oekostation.de)

# LED lighting

## and what to do with compact fluorescent bulbs

by Lionel Smith,  
Technician, Climate Change,  
Guildford Borough Council

### What are LED bulbs?

If you are looking for energy-efficient lighting, there will now be an LED bulb for the purpose. An LED is a light-emitting diode and diodes are electronic components that only allow current to flow in one direction. LEDs are generally 50% more efficient than the compact fluorescent bulbs the energy companies handed out free, and ten times more efficient than incandescent bulbs. LEDs are so universal that in the Electric Theatre in Guildford not only are the foyer lights LEDs, but the stage lights are as well.

### What should I look for?

There are two main factors to look for when buying LED bulbs, which are the power equivalence and the colour. LEDs use so little power that the bulb power consumption in watts will not mean much. Most manufacturers will quote a power consumption equivalent, such as "equivalent to 60 watts".

The temperature rating of the bulb determines the colour of the light. We measure this in degrees Kelvin (K). To make sense of K, the scale is the same as degrees centigrade (°C) but K starts at absolute zero, which equals -273.15°C. For a background light choose 2700 – 3000K, for daylight white 4500 – 5500K and the blue white 6000 – 10000K. Please also make sure you choose the right fitting: bayonet, Edison screw, GU10, MR16 etc.

Please be aware that if your bulb has two narrow pointed prongs, it will be an MR11 or MR16. The bulb will require a 12V DC supply and will have a transformer somewhere in the AC circuit. You will probably need to change the transformer to a suitable power rating.

### Where can I get LED bulbs?

You will find common LED bulb types in most supermarkets or DIY stores. For the most complete range, you have to go on the internet. There are a number of online suppliers selling a huge range – I even got G4s for my cooker hood. If in doubt, ask the retailer or speak to Climate Change at Guildford Borough Council.

### What to do with old or broken compact fluorescent bulbs

Compact fluorescent bulbs, like fluorescent tubes, are likely to contain 3-5 mg of mercury vapour as a "starter" to enable the gas to fluoresce, so they should not go in your waste bin. You need to take them to recycling centres like Slyfield where they can be recycled. Some big supermarkets also collect and recycle compact fluorescent bulbs.

If a compact fluorescent bulb does break, move people and pets out of the room for 5 - 10 minutes and open doors and windows. If you have blown-air heating or air conditioning, turn it off. DO NOT vacuum straight away. Most of the mercury turns to powder and sticks to the glass, so do not touch parts of the bulb. Use card or sticky tape to collect the pieces and place them in a sealed container before taking to the recycling centre. If possible, leave doors and windows open for a further 2 - 3 hours before closing.

Look in libraries for a copy of WHICH? Magazine June 2015 which contains an excellent report on LEDs.

### No neonics – bigger harvest

The first harvest results of oilseed rape planted without neonicotinoid seed treatments reveal a better than usual crop, with yields higher than the 10-year average. (Source: Buglife newsletter, Aug '15)

### Cost of waste

Hotels, pubs and restaurants could save an estimated £724 million per year by increasing recycling rates and preventing food waste, according to the Waste and Resources Action Programme. Hundreds of thousands of tonnes of food are wasted annually due to poor portioning, storage and preparation strategies. (Source: i, 11 Jun '15)

### Kitty, kitty

The UK's cat population catches up to 275 million prey items every year, of which 55 million are birds. (Source: The Mammal Society)

## FACTS & FIGURES

### Hidden chemicals

In 2013, up to 30% of bread sampled contained the weedkiller glyphosate, and half of that bread also contained other pesticides. Use of glyphosate on British cereal crops has increased over 400% in the last 20 years, says the Soil Association, and it has set up a petition to remove it from the food chain – [soilassociation.org/notinourbread](http://soilassociation.org/notinourbread) (Source: Living Earth, Summer '15)

## A FEAST OF APPLES

John Bannister



Margareth Mayerbeth

THIS YEAR WE HAVE HAD a mild autumn with the leaves hanging around for a long time, and it being so warm that everything started to bud and flower again – a taste of things to come perhaps. The apple crop has been really good this year, on average that is, as some trees failed due to an early cold spell in spring. It depends what the weather is like when the blossom is at the point of pollination and what insects are flying. It has to be said that apples provide an amazing variety of colours, textures and flavours, a great point of discussion on which pleases the palate the most, and likewise all the other fruits that make up our harvest and brightens our approach to winter.

Apples are believed to have originated in China (like so much else). Birds are thought to have carried the seed of an early apple to Kazakhstan where the Tien Shan brown bear fell in love with them. Bears like big juicy apples and will hack their way through a tree to get the best fruit, pruning the tree as they go. They poop out the seeds in a perfect germination package.

Bears don't roam much but horses do and Kazakhstan was one of the first places where horses were domesticated. Horses love apples, and they distribute the bear-selected apples far and wide. So Kazakhstan is one of the places where a rare and unique apple gene pool still exists, although regrettably this is gradually being eliminated by over-grazing, industrialisation and development. This matters as the clues to pest resistance and new apple varieties may lie there.

Humans loved the perfect apple meal package, full of liquids and minerals, as they travelled the dusty Silk Road and there are records of Romans, Vikings, ancient Greeks and Persians eating apples. Traces of apple seeds at human settlements go back as far as 6500 BC.

Through our apple pressing events we try

to bring some of the simple joys of apples to as many people as possible and particularly to children. We took some children to a 100-tree apple orchard on the Downs right next to our Rosamund Garden and they picked a few from each tree. The great variety of English apples was here on display and we are very grateful to owners Robert and Sue. In fact we are grateful to all the people who allowed us to collect from their trees for our apple pressings.

We took our apple press to four public events this year – Winkworth Arboretum Community Day, the Surrey Hills Wood Fair (two days), the Rosamund Garden Open Day and Witley Junior School. Families look forward to us coming each year, especially the children who love chopping the apples, working the grinder, pounding the fruit, pressing the fruit and drinking the product. It gives them enormous pleasure and wonder to see the apples go from the tree to apple juice. We do it because of the pleasure it gives, the useful lessons on benefitting from what is in our own back yards and for the donations we receive for the juice taken away, which more than covers our insurance.

There are some lovely examples of children taking highly original initiatives at our events, like the girl who walked off into the crowd with a tray of cups offering juice, with a collection box over her arm. Also, Witley Infants School managed to raise over £100 for their school from the sale of juice to their parents and carers. Finally, we thank the few who helped us turn out with our gear, set up and serve the public, clean up and pack away.

Same again next year? Yes of course.



### Guildford Environmental Forum aims to improve the environment in and around Guildford for wildlife and for people and to build a sustainable future.

Join us in our work for the town and have this newsletter posted to your door four times a year. Forum membership costs only £10 per year or £15 for a couple, and new members are warmly welcomed.

Please contact Adrian Thompson on 01483 222687 or e-mail [adrianthompson46@talktalk.net](mailto:adrianthompson46@talktalk.net)



# CALENDAR



All the Forum's Group meetings are open to the public

## Monday 18 January 2016

Geographical Association of Guildford at the Royal Grammar School auditorium.

Professor David Petley, Pro Vice Chancellor, University of East Anglia:

**"Future Trends in Earthquakes and Landslides".**

1730. All GEF members are invited.

## Monday 18 January

Have you ever wondered what impurities there are in our drinking water, how good a job conventional water treatment plants do at removing toxins and whether some things are best left in for the good of our health? On a global scale, some communities face real danger from contaminated water, following disasters for example.

Robert Wiltshire, CEO of the PureH2O company, will talk about

**"How Membrane Technology is being used to produce Drinking Water from Waste Water".**

1900. Committee Room 3 (new room), GBC Millmead Offices.

## Monday 8 February

Geographical Association of Guildford at the Royal Grammar School auditorium.

David Thomas, Fellow of Hertford College, Oxford:

**"Deserts and Desertification".**

1730. All GEF members are invited.

## Tuesday 23 February

GEF Biodiversity Group. Paul Ritchie, Community Engagement Coordinator, Surrey Wildlife Trust:

**"Veteran Trees of Surrey".**

1900. Committee Room 3 (new room), GBC Millmead Offices.

## Monday 7 March

Geographical Association of Guildford at the Royal Grammar School auditorium.

Professor Kate Willis, Royal Holloway College, University of London:

**"Geographical Perspectives on Development after the MDGs".**

1730. All GEF members are invited.

# GUILDFORD ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

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### Transport – Alastair Atkinson

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### Waste and Recycling – Position vacant

(Contact Raymond Smith: see Chair's details above)

### Sustainable Building – Position vacant

(Contact Raymond Smith: see Chair's details above)

### Community Projects – John Bannister

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### Membership – Position vacant

(Adrian Thompson pro tem: see Treasurer's details above)

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Please send contributions for the next issue to Clare Windsor by Monday 8 February.

The views expressed in this newsletter are strictly those of its contributors and Guildford Environmental Forum.