



GUILDFORD ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

newsletter

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

DECEMBER 2014 – FEBRUARY 2015

## GUILDFORD DRAFT LOCAL PLAN

Update by Raymond Smith

THE CURRENT SITUATION with the consultation on the Guildford Draft Local Plan has just been clarified a little. Guildford Borough (GBC) have said that in response to the high number of consultation responses and new Government guidance, the current Draft Local Plan will be reassessed and a new version will be published for consultation next year. Apparently this will give more weight to the importance of constraints like the Green Belt on the number of dwellings that can be built. There had already been suggestions circulating that there will not be any new draft until after the local and general elections next year. GBC has also invited organisations including GEF to join a Guildford Local Plan Forum to help oversee the process.

Over 7,000 individuals or organisations made submissions to the consultation that ended in September. GBC have put out a brief synopsis of the issues raised in these and it is heartening to see how prominent environmental concerns were amongst these.

Much of GEF's (Guildford Environmental Forum's) submission reaffirmed points that we had made in the previous consultation last autumn, or that have otherwise appeared in this newsletter. There were some new points that we included, however, and some of these are set out below.

We started by commenting on a couple of

remarks in the **Foreword**. It said: *"The borough has some exceptional landscape, heritage and beautiful villages, which need to be protected as much as possible, as they are economic drivers also."* We responded that protection is needed for intrinsic reasons, not simply for economic ones.

The other remark was: *"In our manifesto for the 2011 election, we pledged to protect the Green Belt and now, despite the Government's publication in 2012 of the NPPF, we continue with this pledge, but with realigned boundaries that we hope will provide protection for the coming decades."* We said that realigning the boundaries constitutes a clear failure to fulfil this pledge.

We felt that the **Vision and Ambition** section actually lacks both, and as a result is bland and generic. This section is important as it sets the tone and intent of the council outside of any policy context. It needs to be reworded to better reflect what makes Guildford unique and where the council want Guildford to be in the future.

We believe that the Vision should also include the following sections:

**'respecting and enhancing the natural wildlife and landscape'**, and

**'living within the environmental limits'**.





We appreciated that **POLICY 1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development** has been forced on all planning authorities by the government's NPPF. However, we considered that a further explanatory paragraph should be added: "If any proposal fails any of the sustainability tests within the NPPF it cannot be considered to be sustainable under the NPPF. If a proposal fulfils the requirements of one or some of the sustainability tests this does not in any way mean that it is itself sustainable."

For **POLICY 2: Planning for the borough – our spatial development strategy** we repeated our opposition to the use of current Green Belt land for housing (apart from small local-use and affordable housing developments) adding that such use is intrinsically wrong and also devalues the wider green belt, both in its effectiveness and in the perception of its importance.

We also did not accept the calculations that underlie the more than doubling of new home building targets from 322 annually in the (now discarded) South East Plan to 652.

We sought clarification on paras. 4.10 & 4.11. Will the "safeguarded land" be considered for development if there is a shortfall in new dwellings, whether as a result of insufficient applications and thus the failure to use allocated land, or of inefficient (too low a density) use of allocated land, rather than insufficient land genuinely being available?

As to strategic sites, we referred to one especially damaging proposal at Blackwell Farm. This site is on the flank of the Hogs Back, an iconic landscape fundamental to the character of Guildford, but also having landscape significance that pre-dates Guildford. We acknowledged the desire of the University, as now one of the leading Universities in the country, to expand and to increase the availability of higher education, but the destruction of the Green Belt around their site is not a price that should be paid for this, by society or wildlife.

On **POLICY 4: Affordable homes** we welcomed the requirement for 45% affordable housing on greenfield (compared to 40% on brownfield), though considered that 50% would be better.

However, we were concerned about: "4.44 We will expect developments to provide the required amount of affordable

housing. Where developers demonstrate to our satisfaction that providing the amount of affordable housing required by this policy would not be economically viable on a particular development, we will ..... reduce the overall number of affordable homes" and how this will not become a routine 'get-out'. There is a need for some indication of the criteria that would be needed to judge viability (otherwise it could mean "we paid too much for the site (on the basis that we could get out of this obligation) and so we cannot make a profit without dropping this obligation". Consideration should be given to including a statement that the amount paid by the developers for the land is not a material consideration in determining its viability. There is need for complete transparency in calculations of applicants claiming that affordable housing is not viable. It should not be reliant on assertions by the applicants nor their "expert advisers".

Generally we supported **POLICY 5: Rural exception homes** but suggested that there is a need to study the extent to which ongoing occupancy of existing housing after the first tenant has been specific to the parish rather than coming from a Borough-wide list.

We generally also supported **POLICY 6: Making better places**. Although implied in the inclusion of Building for Life standards, we felt that there should also be explicit reference to wildlife provision, especially wildlife corridors (this provision may be facilitated by the use of green walls etc.).

However, we would expect that only exemplar development of the highest quality design would be acceptable and that the council introduce a mechanism to deliver this.

Again we generally welcomed **POLICY 7: Sustainable design, construction and energy**, especially the reduction of energy demand, but we were concerned as to how it would be enforced. We suggested a monitoring indicator of estimates of energy saved by elimination and efficiency.

However, we also found the lack of any targets disappointing at this stage, especially when this element will be then viability tested. There is a real risk that this will essentially make the policy meaningless above the minimum building control standards. The growth in Guildford needs to be within the environmental limits of the town and the country. To make the policy

### Better protection for sharks and rays

New regulations agreed last year by CITES are now in force, making it illegal to trade parts of manta ray, porbeagle, oceanic white tip or three species of hammerhead shark without a licence. Demand for fins for the fin soup trade in China previously resulted in the deaths of over 100 million sharks a year, and manta rays were also harvested for their gills, used in traditional Chinese medicine.

(Source: People's Trust for Endangered Species, Autumn '14)

## FACTS & FIGURES

### Subbuteo

The hobby's scientific name, *Falco subbuteo*, was borrowed by the creator of the famous tabletop football game after the trademark office refused his application to call it 'Hobby'.

(Source: BBC Wildlife, Aug '14)

### Priorities?

More Indians have access to a mobile phone than to a toilet.

(Source: New Statesman, 9-15 May '14)

### Biodiversity on farms

Studies by the University of Oxford have shown that organic farms have on average a third more species of wildlife than non-organic farms.

(Source: Living Earth, Spring '14)

### Drug potential

Approximately 2,000 tropical forest plants have been identified as possessing anti-cancer properties.

(Source: BBC Wildlife, May '14)

## FACTS & FIGURES

### Invasive mussels

The Environment Agency has announced the discovery of an invasive species, the quagga mussel, in reservoirs to the north and west of London, including two near the river Mole. Due to its filtering capacity and ability to produce dense populations, this creature can significantly reduce native biodiversity. There is no effective control or eradication method, but its spread may be slowed by applying the biosecurity approach of 'Check, Clean, Dry'.

(Source: Environment Agency)

### Moggies

A 2003 Mammal Society report concluded that UK cats took 92 million prey items in five months. Now the Society, with the BBC, is launching 'CATlas' – a survey of pet and feral cat populations and behaviour.

(Source: www.mammalorg.uk)

### Smart plant defences

Cress plants are able to detect the munching sounds made by caterpillars feeding on their leaves, and then respond by increasing production of insecticidal chemicals.

(Source: BBC Wildlife, Nov '14)

viable this infrastructure needs to be planned and integrated into the development from day 1. If it is not it will become an expensive afterthought. The council needs to take a longer-term view to protect its residents from the likely future carbon and energy challenges.

We do not recognise the validity of the high housing targets, therefore did not accept the demands that are being placed on villages for supplying more housing in **POLICY 9: Villages and major previously developed sites**. We also questioned the **Green Belt and Countryside Study** on inseting in the case of many villages. We have not carried out a detailed review of the villages proposed for inseting but it seemed to us that at least the following villages do contribute to the openness of the Green Belt: Effingham, Normandy, Peasmarsh, Ripley, Shalford, West Horsley (South), Wood Street Village. Others may also do so, but we are not sufficiently familiar with the details to comment.

We felt that: "4.115 National planning policy states that when altering boundaries we should have regard to their intended permanence in the long term so that they are capable of enduring beyond the plan period. This includes, where necessary, identifying safeguarded land in order to meet longer-term development needs. We have identified safeguarded land at Fairlands, Send Marsh, Normandy and Flexford, as set out in Site Allocation 118-120 and 123. This land will also ensure that we have the flexibility to meet our current development needs should any of our strategic sites not come forward as envisaged over the plan period." misrepresents the safeguarding approach of the NPPF, where there is no suggestion of rolling back the Green Belt in order to insert "safeguarded" land in between the urban area and the Green Belt

We commented that saying in **POLICY 10: Green Belt and the countryside**: "We will continue to protect the Metropolitan Green Belt against inappropriate development" whilst removing large areas of land from it, is gross hypocrisy.

We supported the extension of the Green Belt proposed in **POLICY 11: Ash and Tongham Strategic Location for Growth**, but noted that this proposal is horribly inconsistent with the removal of large areas of the eastern end of the Hogs Back from the Green Belt.



In **POLICY 13: Economic development** it comments "4.141 The NPPF says one of the roles of the planning system is to contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation. It goes on to say local planning authorities should plan proactively to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century." We pointed out that "supporting" growth is not the same as attracting it.

In response to paragraph "4.157 .....We will support any proposals which come forward to redevelop outmoded employment floor space and cater for modern business needs." we asked whether this support is regardless of whether it is compliant with material planning considerations, and whether it is sustainable.

Regarding **POLICY 14: The leisure and visitor experience** we suggested that the data be checked in "4.161 .....The sector makes a significant contribution to Guildford's local economy of around £300 million per annum and supports over 5,000 jobs." as this works out at £60,000 per job.

On "Development that improves the leisure and visitor experience will be encouraged..." we said that it needs to be clear that this is not blanket support, and is limited by other policies, such as Green Belt and AONB.

As to "4.167 Visitor related development by its nature is often located in sensitive areas. Landscaping, careful siting of development, the re-use of buildings and attention to detail can help developments to blend in with their surroundings. Any new built development will be expected to complement the natural attractions of the landscape and reflect the character of a particular area." we felt that it should be made clear that such developments can be refused.

We had no detailed comments to make on **POLICY 15: Guildford Town Centre**, but emphasised the need to protect the river as an irreplaceable wildlife corridor. We of course welcomed better pedestrian and cycling access.

We noted paragraph "4.181 These retail need figures do not include the needs of new housing development included in this draft plan." and felt that this appears to be a massive weakness



at the heart of this policy. We do not, however, favour aiming at substantial increases in retail provision.

We commented at greater length on **POLICY 17: Infrastructure and delivery** starting by saying that many infrastructure issues are already a challenge and need urgent action without adding too much further growth, particularly infant schools, hospital overcrowding, transport, pressure on doctors' surgeries, providing for the elderly and affordable housing.

We did of course strongly endorse the support for wildlife provision, green roofs and walls and the protection of the River Wey.

We argued that the transport evidence base fails to demonstrate that the identified development sites are deliverable without significant traffic congestion. This is likely to have an adverse impact on both the town and its residents. There are substantial infrastructure gaps, especially along the A3 corridor. The Highways Agency has no identified schemes to be delivered within the plan period and therefore the evidence base does not identify a delivery mechanism to solve these issues.

We also said that the phasing of the infrastructure is a critical issue and that any development should be infrastructure-led. Owing to the current deficit in infrastructure within the Borough this will be necessary for a large proportion of improvements during the very early phases of the development.

We were surprised that there is no mention of a new secondary school within the schedule, knowing the 8-12ha land take required for a new school, and we were also surprised that these are not identified. We asked whether the council believe that the current schools can cope with the additional 16,000 houses.

We also had concerns that insufficient attention is being given to waste management problems.

We commented on the statement: *"In negotiating planning obligations, the Council will take into account economic viability. We will ensure that the cumulative impact of planning policy, standards and infrastructure requirements do not render the sites and development identified in the plan unviable and therefore undeliverable."* We felt this must

not be a standard get-out – most costs can be reflected in the discounting of the original site purchase price. Indeed if a site cannot contribute to its infrastructure costs then it is not deliverable. If it does not do so then it is being subsidised by the community.

On the statement that *"In allocating CIL receipts we will prioritise Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area mitigation in order to ensure that we meet our responsibilities under European legislation"* we commented that Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area income needs to be ring-fenced. We presume that it is a legal requirement anyway to provide the facilities.

On **POLICY 18: Sustainable transport for new developments** we noted that a GBC study identified that a large modal shift to non-car transport is required by both 2031 and 2050. Whilst this study is referenced as part of the evidence base the key findings are not drawn through into either the policy or its supporting text. GEF believe that the policy and the support text should set out a vision for the 50% mode share identified, and what is expected in this plan period to achieve this shift to public transport.

We also questioned the deliverability of the new proposed stations, in terms of available land, financial viability and the traffic implication on the surrounding areas. A real deliverability assessment of these stations and the timing of this infrastructure will be needed to demonstrate that the final plan is sound.

We do of course support in principle the provision of sustainable transport services for new developments.

We of course welcomed the provision of green (and aquatic) infrastructure in **POLICY 19: Green and blue infrastructure**. Green corridors may need also to be better embodied in other policies as well. We suggested that developments should not be allowed unless they provide sufficient green corridors.

Finally we welcomed an integrated strategy to show how Guildford will enhance and respect the surrounding blue and green infrastructure, to ensure that any key zones are integrated into the land uses.

### Neonicotinoids

"Five neonicotinoid-dressed maize seeds, or 32 dressed oilseed rape seeds, are enough to kill a partridge."

(Source: Leading bee researcher Professor Dave Goulson of Sussex University, speaking at the Soil Association Conference in October this year)

### Mobile phones

Tantalum or coltan is a component in a range of products including mobile phones. When coltan mining took off in the Congo in the 1990s, a huge influx of people into the mining area (within a national park) precipitated a rise in the consumption of bushmeat and a catastrophic decline in the number of gorillas there. Wildlife conservation measures are hampered even now by illegal mining. Most mobile phone manufacturers are unable to say where their tantalum came from or what impact its mining had on the environment.

(Source: BBC Wildlife, Aug '14)

## FACTS & FIGURES

### A bit of a squeeze

Research data from the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors has compared the areas of living space of semi-detached houses built in 1924 with the average new home today. The 1920s houses averaged 1,647 sq ft compared with the 925 sq ft of new-builds in 2014.

The difference is equivalent to a loss of two double bedrooms.

(Source: The Independent, 2 Aug '14)

## Congestion to worsen in Guildford

John Bannister

TWO YEARS AGO a satellite navigation company listed the 40 most congested towns and cities in Europe. Guildford was one of them. Guildford Council's vision is to maximise the retail offer in the town by turning it into a mega shopping destination designed to compete with Kingston, Basingstoke, Reading, etc to fight it out for the mobile, car-based shopperholic. This vision is shared by the Guildford Business Forum and the Guildford Vision Group. They also want our town to be a major tourist destination and have a strategy to back this up.

The developments now approved for North Street will increase our town's retail shopping area by 60% and will be based around a John Lewis "anchor store". Over 90% of the expected increase in footfall will reach Guildford town centre by car. Even putting Waitrose in the town centre will add to congestion in York Road, already a black spot, which will become the focus of yet more gridlock in the town. Councillor Mansbridge, leader of the Council, made his view very clear earlier this year, saying that nothing can be done to solve Guildford's congestion problems. It simply will be allowed to get worse.

But have the Council and the Business Forum really thought this through? The Centre for Economics and Business Research and Inrix, a traffic information provider, recently concluded that the annual cost of traffic congestion to the UK economy would rise from \$20.5 bn in 2013 to \$33.4 bn in 2030, a 63% increase – a faster increase than any other western economy. Most of this

## Springbok launch

Rachael Hunter

THE FORUM IS DELIGHTED to report that Energy4All and some of the team behind Wey Valley Solar Schools is launching The



**Springbok Sustainable Wood Heat (SSWH) Co-operative.**

This is a new co-operative set up to install a wood biomass based district heating system at an estate in Surrey which provides sheltered accommodation and support for former seafarers and some associated residential accommodation. Terms have been agreed with the main occupier of the estate, a charity called Care Ashore and, following a competitive tender, Douch Biomass have been appointed as the contractors. Douch will be commencing the groundwork and laying the district heating system shortly and the hope is that the boilers will be commissioned in the spring of next year.

In addition to replacing oil and electric heating with locally sourced renewable wood fuel, the intent is to procure wood where possible in such a way that it brings local woodlands back into productive management, thereby considerably enhancing their biodiversity and creating local employment.

increase in business costs will take place in the already over-developed south-east, mainly in London. London's cost of congestion, they estimate, will rise from \$8.5 bn in 2013 to \$14.5 bn in 2030 with the cumulative cost over this period adding up to more than \$200 bn.

Governments are fearful of taking on car drivers and presenting them with the full costs of motoring because they are voters and are a vocal, well organised lobby group. Yet it is car drivers who complain most about congestion. The road tax duty has not been raised in recent years. Any mention of road tolls quickly gets quashed, as happened during the end of the last government when considering improvements to the A14 in East Anglia. But it will need these kind of radical solutions if we are not to be totally submerged by the noise, air pollution, road building and the sheer number of cars. You can't keep expanding the economy and building more houses without having to pull people into Guildford.

Some of our great cities have done more than others to limit car congestion with public transport initiatives such as trams, congestion charging and low-emission zones, London included, but if the projections are correct these will not be enough. We want radical solutions here in Guildford and across our region based on realistic charging for car use, carbon taxes, more efficient public transport, subsidised by hypothecated income from car use, and much greater priority for safer walking and cycling routes.

If we are so wealthy and generate such a large part of the UK's economic income then we must be able to afford solutions that will work on into the future, because at the end of the day most people want quality of life, not more stuff or corporate profits that won't even pay for a decent transport system.

The money needs to be raised urgently and rapidly for this exciting new project since the orders for the boilers and other equipment and materials need to be placed imminently.

The initial share offer will be limited to £150,000. The SSWH Co-op will apply for SEIS status (that is a special tax relief available to investors who invest in some new companies). If successful, those investing will qualify for a 50% tax credit. This means that if you invest £1,000 you will receive a tax refund of £500 if you have paid at least £500 in income tax.

This will be followed up with a second offer almost immediately after the close of the SEIS offer, to raise the remaining £275,000 required. The Co-op will apply for EIS status for that offer (EIS is a tax relief available to investors in some unlisted companies). If successful, those investing will qualify for 30% of the amount they invest to be credited against their income tax liability.

Returns are difficult to predict, but are anticipated to be in the region of 7% from the second full financial year.

This project is exciting and pioneering (and replicable by other communities). Springbok Sustainable believes it will be a first for community energy to build a renewable-energy-fuelled district heating system on this scale. You should be aware that they regard the potential risk as rather greater than investing in rooftop solar projects. The risks will be fully set out in the SEIS offer. Your invested capital will be at risk.

Visit [www.weyvalleywoodfuel.co.uk](http://www.weyvalleywoodfuel.co.uk) for further details.



*"In total some 30 black bin bags of various materials were collected, plus a large sofa chair and a grappling hook."*

# LITTER PICKING – it's highly worthwhile

reports John Bannister

AS YOU DRIVE OR CYCLE along the roads in this country you will see litter just about everywhere along the verges. But this is only the tip of an iceberg. If you were to take a closer look there is a whole minefield of cans and bottles buried in the grass, the ditches, the fields and hedges.

The Germans and Scandinavians call Britain the dirty man of Europe and despite all the efforts here in the UK nothing seems to have changed. Given the location of this type of littering one has to conclude it is being thrown from cars, or cycles. The penalties for this kind of thing don't act as much of a deterrent here like they do in other parts of Europe and in any case other EU countries incentivise people to recycle, and have done for decades. This is why Norway and Germany, for example, achieve 100% recycling rate for cans and plastic bottles compared with only 30% in England and Wales. Why wouldn't a country devise a simple system to recycle these high-value materials as it makes economic sense coupled with a sense of civic pride, a proper legal awareness and a true regard for the environment?

To their great credit Artington Parish Council, which is just outside Guildford, organised a litter pick across the parish on Saturday 8th November. Fifteen people worked for two hours, covering most of the roads and beauty spots in and around the parish. It was great fun and the parish kindly provided liquid refreshment in The Ship afterwards so we could meet our fellow volunteers. The Rural Group of the Guildford Business Forum (GBF), chaired by Michael More-Molyneux, had suggested parish-based litter picks as part of Project Proud – a GBF initiative to improve local civic pride. Artington took up the challenge and already are planning

another litter pick in Spring 2015 and two per year thereafter.

## The nitty-gritty

Artington Parish is roughly bounded by New Pond Road (B3000) that runs into Compton, the Old Portsmouth Road (A3100), the North Downs Way, the west bank of the River Wey and Navigation Wey from Ferry Lane to the Shalford railway bridge, and threading through this area you have Sandy Lane, Littleton Lane and Stakescorner Road.

In total some 30 black bin bags of various materials were collected, plus a large sofa chair and a grappling hook.

I was working with Roberto Vogel along Stakescorner Road. We had hi-vis jackets, gloves, boots, litter pickers and a roll of plastic bags. On one side is a deep ditch full of water, backed by a hedge and a field and on the other a grass verge, a hedge also backing onto a field. The tip of the iceberg analogy certainly applies because once we took a bit of trouble we found dozens of aluminium cans and some bottles hidden away, plus the sofa chair, which on a cursory glance you would not have noticed. In addition we dragged out of the ditch four plastic bags stuffed with videos, including *Wind in the Willows*, but not all so child-friendly! Another bag full of concrete was too heavy to lift out of the ditch. Who knows what remains buried there that we never found?

A quick review of the source of the aluminium cans shows most were Stella Artois, followed by Coke, various energy drinks and 1667. We need to find a way to involve these companies.

Roberto Vogel

## Why is any of this important?

Why? Well firstly, it is against the law, littering being an offence under the Environmental Protection Act, and if someone is caught the result will be a fixed penalty notice or prosecution in court. But you have to catch the person littering in the act of doing so! GBC serves only five or six penalty notices each year across the borough. You can imagine monitoring 630 miles of carriageways 24 hours a day – it is not easy.

The second reason is that aluminium cans, plastic containers and glass are high value materials and the council provides all of us with an excellent service to recycle these materials. Not just these materials but paper and card also, but as these disintegrate in the wet we didn't find much.

Thirdly, one consequence of climate change is flooding, that now costs Guildford heavily each year. Ditches need to be kept clear, so dumping cans and bags full of videos and concrete in ditches may end up causing a blockage, then a flood, defeating the efforts of landowners and the council to keep them clear. Ditches serve a useful purpose to hold water back, so dumping may reduce the available storage capacity.

Fourthly, ditches and roads drain eventually into rivers, like the River Wey, and what goes into the river, especially the lighter materials such as plastics and wrappings, can eventually end up in the sea. Our seas and oceans are now full of our plastic waste floating in huge rotating gyres thousands of kilometres across. Fish, sea birds and sea mammals



**We can't believe how much litter people discard without a single thought**

pull some of this waste into their mouths when feeding and it ends up undigested in their stomachs and will kill them. I'm talking whales, dolphins, porpoises, albatrosses, razorbills, turtles, and so on. Recent research shows that plastics disintegrate in the ocean into minute particles which then enter the food chain and come back to us humans in the fish we eat, along with the wide range of chemicals such as mercury, arsenic, DDT, pcbs, etc that we've dumped via rivers, ditches, outfalls and boats into the sea.

Roberto Vogel

In the case of plastics the minute particles drift through the water column with 70% sinking to the ocean floor. You may be so concerned about this that you have taken part in collections of plastic washed up on beaches. You may have a favourite beach, like I do, where you never leave without stuffing a bag or rucksack with plastic found on the high-tide line. My favourite beach is the most beautiful place imaginable close to Crackington Haven in north Cornwall (see photo below). Recently a friend Jackie and I hauled as much plastic as we



**Separating cans, plastic and glass from the remaining rubbish meant we could recycle as much as possible**

could carry up a steep cliff, but of course huge amounts remained to continue its deadly work because someone, somewhere, was too lazy to dispose of it responsibly. The sea is not big enough to dilute all our waste as was once suggested.

## Take it home

So it starts with our litter. Whether you are a cyclist or a car driver please be responsible and take your litter home, however small the item, and place it in the excellent waste facilities the council has provided us with, so value can be recovered and the environment protected.

At the end of the Artington litter pick, Sean Kitson from the parish council and I went through the 30 bags and pulled out the valuable materials like aluminium, plastic bottles and glass so the council could recycle them and keep them out of landfill. Having pulled them out of one hole we didn't want them to end up in another. From the 30 bags we rescued 7 bags (by volume) for recycling. An unpleasant task but we all felt better.



**At Strangles Beach in Cornwall**

Jackie Carpenter

# People and wildlife of Guildford threatened by over 9,000 additional landfill HGV movements

by Forum member Harry Eve

YOUR ATTENTION is drawn to Surrey County Council Council Planning Application 2014/0150 which can be found at <http://surrey.planning-register.co.uk/planappdisp.aspx?recno=4579>. The details are also available under application 14/P/01718 on the GBC website. The application will be decided by SCC.

To summarise, a golf course wants to improve its facilities and rainwater harvesting by importing a huge quantity of waste material, rather than use an approach for which it already has planning permission.

The prescribed route for the HGVs will be one-way leaving the A3 southbound at the A3100, through Burpham using London Road and Clay Lane to access the A3 northbound, leaving at the Ripley/Send slip-road to continue along the A247 through West Clandon to the A246. The route passes East Clandon before turning into East Horsley along Ockham Road South and then via Forest Road to The Drift.

The Drift has a well-known registered Toad crossing that will be traversed by the HGVs to access the golf course. A colony of Great Crested Newts migrates from the Surrey Wildlife Trust nature reserve, The Forest, on the south side of The Drift to breed in ponds on the golf course on the north side. The Golf Club plan envisages widening the road to make laybys and passing places. The woods bordering both sides of The Drift are listed Ancient Woodlands and Great Crested Newt habitat. The Golf Club has carried out an ecological survey, but this was limited to the golf course



and the proposed development site itself. It did not cover the sides of The Drift which is the access route.

The return route to the A3 northbound is along The Drift to a busy crossroads near primary schools and then through West Horsley and Ockham using Ockham Road North.

The applicant anticipates approximately 9,311 HGV deliveries at 50 per day for nine months.

Many important points of objection have been raised and can be read on the GBC planning website along with the details of the application. I would recommend that you read the letter sent by Brian Austin (List Date 30 October) as this covers the wildlife aspect in detail as well as a number of other points such as the heritage of the site and the particular risks posed.

The letter from West Horsley Parish Council (List Date 28 October) is also recommended. You can access comments in the Documents column. It does appear that some golf courses



have discovered that finding a way of operating as a landfill site for waste material is particularly lucrative.

The application might be decided by SCC by mid-January but there is still time to comment should you wish to do so, even though the formal consultation period has ended.

**Comments should be addressed to:**  
**Mr Alan Stones**  
**Development Control Manager for Surrey County Council**  
**County Hall**  
**Kingston upon Thames KT1 2DY**

## Living (dying?) planet index

According to the latest Living Planet Index compiled by WWF, the number of wild animals on Earth has halved in the last 40 years.

(Source: *The Guardian*, 1 Oct '14)

## A big hoard

A single jay may cache as many as 5,000 nuts for the winter.

(Source: *BBC Wildlife*, Nov '14)

## Going grey

The number of Britons who are 40 or over now outnumbers those who are 39 or younger.

(Source: *Radio Times*, 12-18 Apr '14)

# FACTS & FIGURES

## How did they get there?

According to the Consumer Council for Water, there are many unwelcome objects in sewers apart from the usual cooking oils, wet wipes and nappies. Here is its list of 10 of the stranger items discovered in the last year.

**Prosthetic leg** (Anglian Water)

**Football net** (Welsh Water)

**Dead cow** (Northumbrian Water)

**Cutlery** (South West Water)

**Severed finger** (Southern Water)

**Half a Mini car** (Thames Water)

**Settee** (United Utilities)

**False teeth** (Wessex Water)

**Mobile phones** (Yorkshire Water)

**Piranha fish** (Severn Trent)

(Source: *i*, 20 Nov '14)

# THE YEAR GONE BY:

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

## 2013

### Saturday NOVEMBER 16th

#### PUTTENHAM GOLF COURSE AREA

Winter has stamped the envelope (3 to 4 mm of ice on bird bath). Car windows painted with frost. Leafless rowan trees startlingly crimson with berries; difficult to pin down the colour of the numerous spindle berries – something like a seductive lipstick not yet marketed. Jays and fellow crows sense possibilities. Early golfers woolled up against the cold but it reaches their hands anyway. Fat sheep nearby have no such problem.

### Thursday DECEMBER 12th

#### DUE SOUTH OF SEALE

Stretching acres of potato fields have been ploughed up. Sandy soil rich, dark red – despite the huge yield, not a single spud remains. What will the next crop be? Mist hangs in patches over infinite small earth ridges stretching to the horizon. Gradually a shuddering reverberation fills the ear, fills the universe: can it be an earthquake? Huge Chinook helicopter looms above the trees, banks in an enormous circle, departs just as suddenly. Did they spy me? I feel at one with the cowed wildlife, though a local barn owl seems not put out. Promising sunset colours the western sky.

## 2014

### Wednesday JANUARY 1st

#### HOG'S BACK and LOSELEY AREA

The weather seems to have made a New Year's resolution to outdo December's theme of wind and deluge. Trees along the high chalk ridge emit an ominous roar. A tempest from the south drives straight at the flank of the hill penetrating the slightest chink. Water pouring off the Hog's Back has scrubbed the path past Conduit Farm down to shards of brick and tile poking out of the chalk. Their scrubbed pink shows like exotic fish through the distorting currents, which form deep pools round the stems of elders and thorns. Near Loseley lake iron gates dangle above a foot of water. Not a soul or a soul's dog to be seen anywhere. The entire

population remains in its warm, lit and well supplied dwellings, and badgers, foxes and rabbits in their flood-threatened holes.

### Sunday FEBRUARY 2nd

#### COMPTON and WATTS GALLERY AREAS

At last an unexpected bonus of better weather! Little wind, no rain, mostly sunny. (Do not say it too loudly!) Valiant joggers and runners in the two-day Pilgrim's Way event (about 66 miles) make their painful way along the path from Watts Gallery westwards. They will have to negotiate yet more trees recently fallen; their roots, levered by upper limbs heavy with ivy, can no longer hold in the sodden soil. But the day offers hints of spring: great tits forage through the woodland calling boldly to each other. The sheep in Graham's Farm on the slopes look decidedly expectant.

### Sunday MARCH 9th

#### BURITON and THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

The beautifully set village pond has ghost carp already active in the sunlit, shallow water. On its north side a little lane leads up to Queen Elizabeth Country Park, past old chalk pit excavations and gulleys clothed with gigantic hart's tongue ferns. Tall beech and conifers stand thick across the steep gradients. Two buzzards wheel constantly above the ridge under a blue heaven. You could go on for miles east or west like the optimistic joggers and cyclists who cannot resist the invitation. Sprays of blackthorn blossom and clumps of glistening celandine grace the narrow roads glimpsed in the valleys below.



### Thursday APRIL 3rd

#### THE CHANTRIES and PEWLEY DOWN

Tranquil and sunny mid-afternoon. Woodpigeon and blackbirds dominate the birdsong against a background of smaller birds. Recently planted birch and hazel have burst into a bright greenness on the north-facing slope. Wood anemones still sprinkle mossy banks; dandelions boldly draw the eye to sunny patches. Young barley sheens south-facing chalk slopes. On Pewley Down an isolated clump

of cowslips seem a brave symbol of the courage, beauty and vulnerability of youth. Even more than November poppies, they remind me of that great host of country lads from English, German, French villages, left to lie on the battle fields of Europe down the sad centuries.



**Saturday MAY 3rd**  
**ALONG THE WEY SOUTHWARDS then WEST**

Morning 6.30 to 8.45 – frost rather surprisingly on car roofs. A hot air balloon exploits the cold sky, rising spookily out of Shalford to make its silent way westwards. Rabbits, large ones, graze in areas of shorter grass. Others are thumping in warrens along the sandier parts of the North Downs Way. Through binoculars I watch a kestrel holding itself stationary above the edge of the A31. Its wings move rapidly. A bulldozer has left scrapes in the thin downland soil to encourage kidney vetch which, in turn, will invite the small blue butterfly. In the early evening belatedly see my first swallow preening itself on a T.V. aerial. Bluebells abundant everywhere. Most trees already in good leaf.

**Sunday JUNE 15th**  
**CROOKSBURY COMMON**

Afternoon. Clumps of purple foxgloves. Occasionally and conspicuously, taller, white ones dot slightly higher ground. Woods now an opaque green. Too many walkers with unchecked dogs: no roe deer today. What are the delicately-headed grasses which have established themselves alongside many of the pebbly, sandy paths? 'Velvet bent'? So many possibilities!

**Friday JULY 11th**  
**BETWEEN WATTS GALLERY and PUTTENHAM**

Early evening. After a largely overcast day, still warm. A number of tree and hedge fruits seem well advanced:

wild redcurrant; spindleberries; hazelnuts; blackberries; beech nuts. Ferns and spiteful nettles encroach on woodland paths. Tall parsleys with



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delicate white umbels give a strange foretaste of their appearance in a January hoar frost, when ice crystals imitate the petal formation of the summer flowers. Small rabbits, small foxes everywhere. Thrushes call late into the dusk. At 8.15 wild bees still active at their nest, 10 feet up in an oak.

**Sunday AUGUST 10th**  
**HUEL GOAT in the HIGHLANDS of BRITTANY**

Morning dawns – gusty wind swaying the lofty maize which brandishes leaves and tips – an army with pennants and lances. But the day turns out sunny and hot. Deciduous forest round the astounding grotto of gigantic boulders offers both shade and sunny clearings. You sit in a favoured patch full of butterflies: commas, red admirals, peacocks, painted ladies, meadow browns, an enormous persistent dragonfly. Rushing waters all around.

**Sunday SEPTEMBER 28th**  
**RIVER WEY, WEST BANK**

Bright, silent dawn: blue sky traversed horizon to horizon by a dozen or so rose-tinted con trails rising from the north upwards in perfect arcs which descend to the south. Nature so still at this hour, Man so restless. Yet, with no intention of doing



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so, Man, in conjunction with Nature has produced this awesomely dramatic display. What would John Milton have made of such a sight had he been able to see? Would *Paradise Lost* have been any the better? A mist hangs over the water meadows, another creation by Man – this time, by intention with Nature!

**Thursday OCTOBER 23rd**  
**WEST OF GUILDFORD**

Unusually mild autumn takes over from summer. Cereal and fruit harvests have been phenomenal; blackberries still pickable in places. Fungi already thrust through layers of beech leaves or gleam deep in the hedgerows. White bryony dangles its delicious-looking and totally poisonous fruit; little

yellow apples suddenly litter the ground beneath uncultivated trees. Strange growths resembling mussels on coastal rocks gather along the trunk of a long fallen larch (jelly fungi, I think). Spindle trees continue to display their seductive, lobed seeds. A rich muesli of half crushed beech, chestnut, lime leaves drifts into suburban gutters. Whatever will the coming winter bring?

**Saturday & Sunday NOVEMBER 1st & 2nd**  
**BY WOODLAND PATHS to RODSALL MANOR and SOUTH PUTTENHAM**

"Than these November skies are no skies lovelier" wrote the poet: spot on for the Saturday, but wide of the mark for the Sunday morning. Temperatures reached 21 degrees on the 1st (another record

high?) and fell back to the low teens on the 2nd. It's a wise man who knows what to wear or carry these days. Contrasts not simply in the weather: tranquil woodland byway suddenly becomes a track for snarling motor bikes. Hid like a pheasant or fox in bushes as I heard them coming, invaded by primeval apprehension. Still, youth will respond in youthful ways to stimulus. Late on Sunday discovered what crop had replaced the potatoes of last October – hundreds of acres of maize, stretching as far as the eye can see, like tawny beds of reeds awaiting the scythe. Only two details lacking – flight of wild duck and a frosty, westering sun.

**DECEMBER**  
**D.I.Y.**



Part of the 150kW Solar PV installation at Glenleigh Park Primary School

**News from The Schools' Energy Co-operative Limited**

INSTALLATION OF THE 150kW solar panel array at Glenleigh School, Bexhill, was successfully commissioned on (and therefore the Co-op commenced trading on) 2nd September, just before the children returned from their summer holidays. This is one of the largest school installations, and one of the largest community-funded installations, in the country. It looks magnificent, as you can see from the photograph above.

Since installation the Glenleigh array has generated 21,851 kWh. As a result, in September the school's electricity consumption from electricity imported via the grid was 75% less in 2014 than in 2013, even though the school was two classes larger!

As a large system which was necessarily built in a very short time and on short notice we are still working on completing the registration process with Ofgem (which is more complex for systems bigger than 50kW), and on installing powerful export meters, where there is some delay in getting the meter providers and the local grid to arrange the installation.

Exported electricity (which we anticipate will be about half the output) will be sold to Co-operative Energy at an attractive price, not that much less than the price paid

by the school for the electricity they use. There are some further minor post-installation issues to be resolved and we anticipate that everything should be finalised by about the end of this month.

Pure Leapfrog has confirmed that it is willing to lend the Co-op £50,000 to meet the balance of the cost of the Glenleigh installation, and that loan should be available for drawdown once Ofgem register the pv system.

**Installation of solar panels at further schools and second share issue**

It can be a frustratingly slow process to agree terms with schools to install solar panels! Even when the school is willing, long delays can arise at the local authority. We have now agreed terms in principle, and are finalising contracts and detailed terms, with six schools, with scope to install approximately 300kW of solar panels. Early-stage discussions have commenced with a number of other schools. We anticipate we will be issuing our second share issue to raise funds for our next tranche of school installations in about January 2015.

*Mike Smyth*  
*Chair, The Schools' Energy Co-operative Limited*



**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 19 January 2015

Geographical Association of Guildford.  
Donald Macrae, Senior International Consultant in Regulatory Reform, The World Bank:  
**"The World Bank and China"**.  
1730. The Auditorium, Royal Grammar School.

## Tuesday 27 January

Surrey Wildlife Trust presented two new initiatives at their November 2014 AGM, designed to greatly enhance the environment for wildlife. Aimée Clarke, Director of Education and People & Wildlife, will tell us about plans to link Surrey's 20,000 ha of gardens and green spaces with the 9,000 ha they already manage – this to achieve their vision of **Living Landscapes**. And Andrew Jamieson, Countryside Services Manager, will tell a fascinating story of restoring woodlands, and the surveying and monitoring that goes on to assess our woodlands and the emerging **Sustainable Woodland Management Policy**.  
1900. Committee Room 1, GBC Millmead Offices.

## Tuesday 10 February

Geographical Association of Guildford.  
Dr Peter Langdon, Reader in Physical Geography, University of Southampton:  
**"Tipping Points in Natural and Human Systems – How Well Can We Predict Them"**.  
1730. The Auditorium, Royal Grammar School.

## Tuesday 10 March

Geographical Association of Guildford.  
Prof David Petley, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, University of East Anglia, and previously Professor and Co-Director of the Institute of Hazard, Risk and Resilience, Durham University:  
**"Future Trends in Losses from Earthquakes and Landslides"**.  
1730. The Auditorium, Royal Grammar School.

## Saturday 6 June

Transition Guildford with Surrey Wildlife Trust.  
**Scything Course for Beginners and Improvers**  
from 1000 to 1600 at the Rosamund Community Garden, via trackway just off Longdown Road.  
Contact Louise Shorthose on 01372 379509 or John Bannister on 01483 570468.

## GUILDFORD ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

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### Membership – Position vacant

(Adrian Thompson pro tem: see Treasurer details above)

### Newsletter – Clare Windsor

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**Guildford Environmental Forum's newsletter is published in March, June, September and December.**

**Please send contributions for the next issue to Clare Windsor by Monday 9 February.**

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