

## Annual Review of 2023

We had a busy start to 2023 with our focus on supporting our three Ward Councillors to get re-elected which thanks to many of you we were successful in doing. We are very lucky to have three Councillors incredibly committed to the Ward and to delivering for local people.

Over the year high inflation has affected all of us and since the pandemic fundamentally altered the way we live and work. We now pay for most things on-line and look to social media for news and to communicate with each other. As an organisation we have also felt these effects and had to think hard about how we adapt or risk decline. For example, we have put in place new ways to collect our annual membership subscriptions; shifted communications to our website; and developed email circulation and social media channels.

Nevertheless, meeting and talking with you is key to being able to represent you and voice your concerns and priorities. We were delighted to be able to hold our first face-to-face meeting with residents since the pandemic in July in Langley Vale and it was great to have so many local residents give up their evening to attend. We will prioritise another meeting in 2024, this time in the Woodcote side of the ward.

Planning matters remained a key focus for the Committee locally and on appeal. It continued to track what is happening with some of the long-running cases including: the 'Guild Living' site at Epsom Hospital. As usual, the Society has been busy responding to planning applications and meeting residents who contacted us with planning concerns. The year's planning decisions brought mixed results but there were real successes for residents in: stopping the telecoms mast in Langley Vale; the residential re-development between Whitehorse Drive and Bucknills Close; and the proposed housing scheme to replace Ashted Park Nursery; the refusal of the application to develop Green Gables for student accommodation; and preventing the unnecessary felling of an old established yew tree in the Chalk Lane Conservation Area. Our objections and Cllr Frost's presentation at a recent Planning Committee meeting also successfully secured a rejection of a proposed downgrading of the design of the previously permitted housing units at Langley Bottom Farm. We have also raised construction problems and planning enforcement issues relating to the Woodcote Grove residential development; closely monitored the temporary closure of the Castle Road footbridge and communicated developments with the engineering works to residents. The Society submitted representations to the Consultation Draft Local Plan on behalf of ward residents highlighting threats to the Green Belt around Langley Vale and the need to safeguard residential character and amenity with any new development.

The Society also submitted proposals for extending the Surrey Hills Area of Natural Beauty northwards to Langley Vale Road but this was not taken forward by the Surrey Hills Boundary Review.

This year the Society has welcomed three new committee members: Kristine Gronemann Damberg, John Steward and Bob Tranter. Kristine will be leading for us on sustainability issues whilst John and Bob will lend support on our communication and planning work. Many thanks as always to Cherrill Auton, our Treasurer and to Beavis and Co who have generously acted as our Honorary Auditors for many years now.

Thanks also to our road representatives and all our volunteers who lend a hand throughout the year for being our eyes and ears on the ground and for playing a vital role in identifying alongside our Councillors what problems or issues are concerning or affecting residents in the ward.