

## **Report from Cllr Bernice Froud for W(E)RS 14 January 2026**

Wishing you all a very Happy New Year.

It has been a very uncertain time since the announcement of LGR and much of what the council is doing at present seems quite open-ended as nobody knows exactly what our new unitary council will look like from next year. Indeed, with a new Shadow Authority coming in May this year, many are wondering how it will work and how our work will be impacted. Watch this space.....

### **Community & Wellbeing Committee**

The October meeting was postponed and instead held in November.

Decisions from that meeting were:

Agreed new up-to-date policies for the operation of Bourne Hall Museum. This was to comply with the museum's re-accreditation review due to take place in early 2026;

Adopted the council's updated Rent Arrears Policy and procedures for temporary accommodation. This applies to temporary accommodation and interim tenancies controlled by the council and was to reflect current legislation, government guidance and best practice.

Agreed to renew the agreement the council have with Reigate & Banstead Council for anti-fraud checks on housing applications; this service has saved the council a substantial amount of money since it entered into this partnership.

C&W met for our first meeting of 2026 last night. Interesting items on the Agenda included:

Discussing the options for improvements to Bourne Hall Museum which has featured in two reviews recently – the council's Service Review and the CPC review. Both reviews were aligned with suggested ways to take the museum forward and committee were unanimous in support of investing in the museum to improve the offering and bring more people in. The ultimate

aim is to make the museum more accessible to all and to create many more opportunities for it to generate an income through grants and charges.

Discussion around the level of continued support that should be offered to the various voluntary organisations that the council have partnered with for many years. Committee were unanimous in their support of these organisations and agreed that as much financial certainty as possible should be given to them as the work they do with our most vulnerable residents actually prevents the council from having to consider more ways to assist residents in difficulty.

Committee have agreed that it should be recommended to Full Council next month that the Chief Executive be granted permission to sign the “End Poverty Pledge.” Many councils and other organisations have already signed this. It does not hold the council to state exactly what they will do but instead has three strands: Leadership, Culture & Accountability and the council can decide what it will commit to under each of those themes to fulfil the Pledge.

In December I attended the Graduation Ceremony for the Young Legends. This programme is the replacement for the Surrey Youth Games and offers a much more local experience for our young people with the focus age group being 9-11 years. It was a lovely evening seeing so many young people feeling proud of what they had achieved. The council had 80+ young people sign up to attend one or more activities such as theatre skills run by staff from Laines, Rugby, Arts & Crafts and more. It is planned to offer the same programme this year taking on board the feedback from the parents, coaches and the young people themselves. The feedback I received from parents and young people at the event was very positive and all wish to participate in the next programme.

Towards the end of this month, I shall be attending the Ukrainian Celebration week. This is an opportunity for our Ukrainian guests to showcase their art skills, culinary skills and put on a general celebration featuring Ukrainian music and dance. It has been found that holding this

type of event really lifts the morale of our Ukrainians in what is still a very stressful time for many of them.

### **Health Liaison Panel**

As there was no business to discuss, the Chair agreed to cancel the last meeting. Panel will now meet next Wednesday but, unfortunately I have had to send apologies.

### **Human Resources Panel**

I attended the meeting in December to receive an update to the staffing position in the council. A matter I raised was the amount of times that the garden waste service seems to be cancelled (and often in the same Wards). I was given an explanation and was reassured that the council are doing much to retain and train staff who operate this service.

### **Casework**

There are ongoing problems with the condition of trees in the Warren Wood (and indeed the woods at the top of the village) and I have sent quite a few photographs to the council of trees that require attention. The problem as I see it, is that there used to be regular inspection and maintenance of the trees in this wood but as that is no longer happening, many of the trees look in poor condition and are completely overgrown leading to many falling and large branches snapping off blocking the woodland paths which are widely used by residents from across the Borough. I have been informed that the council tree officer has been asked to inspect the fallen trees so I will be chasing this item up if no action is taken soon.

We have an ongoing problem with dog mess in the alleyway next to the school. One resident has actually purchased new signs and put them up herself as the ones the council provided only lasted a few months as they peeled off the concrete posts they were stuck to! When these signs asking residents to clear up after their dog are visible, it does have an impact and we see much less mess.

Other questions from residents have largely been around LGR /CGR and of course the planning application at Langley Bottom Farm. A few residents are also concerned about the continued closure of a bridal path due to the building of the 20 houses at the farm location that were approved on Appeal in 2021. There has been no further work happening on these houses for months and Surrey County Council are being pressured to re-open this bridal way as soon as possible. My understanding is that an officer is investigating the possibility of re-opening so we will see.

Residents are very unhappy with the service that SCC Highways run. There seem to be repeated road closures in and around the village (often with no notice given) and residents see no work happening for days. With 600 houses now in Langley Vale, any road closure is a huge disruption.

BF

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