

ANNUAL REVIEW 2025

2025 was an extremely busy and eventful time for the Society. As always, we have been regularly responding on behalf of residents about local matters including the delivery of Borough and County Council services at a time of limited public resources. Throughout the year we have supported our three Ward Councillors each of whom are incredibly committed to the Ward and to delivering for local people.

Particular highlights have included:

- Responding to the Regulation 19 Local Plan consultation.

Our comments focussed on the four sections of the plan which we considered were unacceptable: 1. site allocation guidance being too prescriptive, 2. inadequate residential amenity standards, 3. lack of detailed guidance on design quality and standards and 4. omission of protection for some valued local open spaces in our ward.

- Making representations on a number of significant planning applications in the ward including:

Residential development at Bucknills Close, off Whitehorse Drive, a proposed HMO in Rosebery Road, Langley Vale, the proposed residential redevelopment of Ashted Park Garden Centre, the proposed Sainsbury's Local and the former Lava Lounge on Dorking Road.

Our main focus though was on organising and running a campaign against the proposed major residential development on fields adjacent to Langley Vale village. We established an Action Group with residents, set up a fund-raising campaign which raised £4,780 to enable planning and transport consultants to be commissioned to submit evidence on behalf of residents. We also organised a residents infrastructure survey and engaged with local and County media to publicise our campaign.

- Preparing for the forthcoming Local Government Reorganisation.

At last year's AGM Council Leader Hannah Dalton explained the process whereby EEBC and the other Surrey boroughs and the County Council would be replaced by 2 or 3 new unitary councils in 2027. Since then, following a public consultation exercise the Government in October decided that there should be the 2 unitary councils: East Surrey replacing Epsom & Ewell, Tandridge, Reigate & Banstead, Mole Valley and Elmbridge borough councils; and West Surrey replacing the other existing boroughs.

WERS has been preparing for May's election for the new shadow East Surrey Unitary Council with the new authority expected to become operational in April 2027. This has involved working closely with College and Town ward RAs as the new constituency will be based on the existing Epsom Town & Downs County Council division. We are delighted that this has resulted in our existing Borough

and County Councillor Steve McCormick together with Kim Spickett, a Borough Councillor currently for Cuddington, being selected as our RA candidates.

To bolster our membership we produced at the beginning of the year an updated promotional leaflet for the Society including a bespoke invitation flyer to join and pay the £5 annual membership subscription. Whilst this did generate some additional member subscriptions it has not been sufficient to allow the Society to publish printed newsletters as it has done in the past. Information has been provided via e-newsletters and on our web site and Facebook pages.

Meeting and talking to you is key to us being able to represent you and voice your concerns and priorities. In addition to the three meetings that were held over the summer in Langley Vale Village Hall for residents concerned the Fairfax housing proposal there were held leading up to the 2025 Derby Festival to ensure that there was no repeat of the anti-social behaviour experienced in 2024.

Our County Councillor Steve McCormick has responded to resident requests by ensuring that important maintenance and road safety improvements have been undertaken in the ward notwithstanding limited resources. These included resurfacing part of Woodcote Road and pressing Network Rail for the restoration of the Castle Road pedestrian bridge.

Our Borough Councillors have played prominent roles during 2025. Councillor Liz Frost as Chair of the Council's Environment Committee led on delivering its second Climate Change Action Plan (2025–2029). Updated annually, the plan sets out the steps being taken toward the council's goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2035. In addition to energy savings at Council venues one tangible benefit is the Green Your Home Guide offering residents practical, easy-to-follow advice on how to make homes and gardens more environmentally friendly.

Councillor Bernice Froud, in addition to her role as Vice-Chair of the Council's Community and Wellbeing Committee, was actively involved in the Action Group campaign against the planning application for housing next to Langley Vale village and was monitoring and reporting anti-social behaviour on the Downs.

This year the Society gained Suzanne Morris as a Committee member but regrettably lost Bob Tranter who had been invaluable in providing project management advice and organising public meetings. We would very much welcome any offers of help to join our committee, especially at this pivotal moment when the Borough Council will be transitioning into the new East Surrey Unitary Council.