

BOOKHAM RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Company Limited by Guarantee, Number 10053863

DIRECTORS' MEETING

Minutes of a Meeting held on Wednesday 8th October 2025

Held at Maddox Cottage, Little Bookham

In Attendance: Simon Edge (Chair), Geoff Tranter, Carolyn Elson, John Dowman, David Armstrong.

Apologies: Les Huett, Neil McDowall, Keith Whale, C Cllr Clare Curran, Cllr Andrew Matthews.

1. Minutes of Last Meeting: Accepted with no changes.

2. Chairmans Introduction: Meeting to discuss Agenda as written.

3. Local Government Re-Organisation: The Chairman reminded the meeting that the combined Residents Associations in this area (namely Ashted, Bookham, Fetcham and Leatherhead) had written a statement addressed to all residents advising them of the major changes being planned by HMG calling for the abolition of the Surrey CC and its subsidiary Borough and District Councils and their replacement by 2 or 3 Unitary Authorities ('UA'), reporting to an elected Mayor covering the Police and other responsibilities. It has yet to be decided whether an expanded layer of local representation such as Parish and Town Councils could be of benefit, in addition to that existing already. As part of the re-structuring a major matter to be resolved is how the combined current Surrey debt of £5.5bn, accrued primarily by three councils, was to be dealt with and, further to this, how the current assets owned by the existing councils might be distributed, do they all transfer to the new UA or might some assets be transferred to local community organisations.

The Residents Associations are concerned residents may not respond to the Community Governance Review which could result in the establishment of new Parish Councils without a majority democratic vote and a lack of understanding by residents of the precept. , Which ever form of Local Representation was accepted it was likely that residents would be faced with increased costs.

In a discussion which followed, John Dowman stated that the options to overcome the £5,5bn deficit might be any or a combination of cutting services, raising the Council Tax or disposal of assets *inter alia*. It was understood that MVDC appeared to favour the Introduction of Parish and Town Councils, in which case residents could face increased charges through the new Precept without a concomitant reduction in the existing Council Tax from the UA.

John Dowman stated that a further matter to be considered was the transfer of Community Assets currently owned by the existing local authorities. He circulated a paper showing that such transfer was a non-statutory process in which assets could be transferred to local community/voluntary organisations or to Parish or Town Councils.

This paper is attached to these minutes and shows in detail how some Surrey District Councils are proposing to deal with asset transfers and shows in detail the MVDC assets in Bookham.

It was considered vital that the residents should be made aware of the different types of local representation, potential costs, the benefits or otherwise of their implementation and the future role of BRA.

4. Environment: The Chairman advised that a number of BRA members had been nominated for MVDC Sustainability Awards. These were Diane Poole for Blue Hearts, Margaret Lawson for Litter Picking, Frances Fancourt for Trees and Julia Dickinson for Water Courses.

5. Projects. Although Geoff Tranter had no further news on Bump Tracks or Benches, progress was being made on Christmas Lights. To date, a number of shops had donated £50 and £100 already and it was hoped a grant would be forthcoming from MVDC. He estimated that the total cost would be £6k, of which £4.5k would cover the High Street and £1.5k Lower Shott. However, he was doubtful if the shopkeepers in Lower Shott would be willing to contribute.

6, Finance. Although the Treasurer was absent, it was reported that the finances remained in good shape.

7. Management Group. Les Huett had submitted a report to be read in his absence. This stated that the annual report had been submitted but some tax was due to be paid in December, the validity of which was being questioned and investigated. Also, the November Newsletter was on schedule and the number of residents reading our web page was about 1,300. All the Directors, BRA Committee and Planning Meetings had been cleared for the St Nicolas Church Room, and the AGM /Centenary Celebrations booked at the Old Barn Hall for the 16th July 2026.

Although the recruitment of Road Stewards remains a challenge, it was hoped that total membership would be the same as the previous year.

8. Planning. John Dowman advised that sale of Preston Farm to the developer was delayed pending the removal of a restrictive covenant, under discussion between all affected parties. Pursuant to this, residents in the Saddlery are concerned over access to the site through their development, the exact nature of which (if proposed) is uncertain.

It was noted that the development at Hunter's Moon is being marketed as 4 self-build plots notwithstanding it being in the Local Plan with an indicative capacity of 5 plots.

9. BRA Centenary. The Yehudi Menuhin School had expressed interest to perform at the BRA Centenary Meeting on 16th July 2026.

10. AOB. Cllr Andrew Matthews had sent a note saying that speeding signs were to be sought on the A246 as a result of excessive speeding, MVDC was supporting improved links to Heathrow Airport and MVDC had decided to make a further grant to improve the Dorking Halls rather considering other uses for the funds, such as a new foot/ cycle crossing of the River Mole in Leatherhead.