



# BURPHAM COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION



## Annual Report May 2022

### Chairman's Statement

The AGM on May 12<sup>th</sup> will be the first public meeting of the BCA since early 2020. Since then Covid 19 has been in the headlines and has prevented us holding public meetings. I would again like to express, on behalf of the BCA, sympathy for anyone who has suffered loss, illness or hardship during the coronavirus outbreak and associated lockdowns. The number of cases in Guildford is higher now than at any time in 2020 or 21 but is falling rapidly and thankfully most cases are now mild. It seems likely that things will return to near normal over the coming few months.

Highlights of the last year include the successful fund raising for provision of defibrillators, the relaunch of the Burpham Flood Forum under Angela Richardson's chairmanship and some improvements to the management of the Wey Navigation and its surroundings.

Other BCA activities have continued throughout the year, including many planning, development and infrastructure matters which have the potential to affect the quality of life in Burpham for the long term.

I have no doubt that the BCA will continue to do its best for the community, but I will remind you that the committee is a small group of volunteers. We often find ourselves too stretched to do all that we would like to. In particular, our long-serving secretary retired at the end of 2021 and we have not yet found a replacement. This is putting a strain on the remaining committee members and may result in us having to curtail our activities. Please consider whether **you** could spare some time to help the BCA achieve even more to the benefit of everyone in Burpham.

### Burpham Community Support Group

Our joint support scheme with Burpham Church was wound up last summer. Thank you once more to all our volunteers who helped members of the Burpham Community with shopping and prescription collections. It's good to know that we live in such a supportive community and it was very much appreciated by people that couldn't leave the house during the pandemic.

## **Flood Forum**

Since the last A.G.M there have been two Flood Forum meetings chaired by Angela Richardson M.P in Burpham Village Hall. The first took place on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2021 and a subsequent follow up meeting, originally scheduled for 21<sup>st</sup> January 2022 was postponed until 25 March due to high Covid-19 infection rates. In addition to local residents and BCA members, the attendees engaged representatives from various agencies including Surrey County Council (SCC), Thames Water (TW), the National Trust (NT) and Guildford Borough Council (GBC). The focus of these gatherings is intended to identify issues of concern relating to surface water management in the village and arrive at mutually agreeable strategies to ameliorate its worst effects.

To take the discussions forward minutes of the meetings were recorded by Senior Caseworker Diana Brown, while an Action Plan was routinely updated by the Flood Action Group, a small working party from the BCA. The main areas of current concern relate to:

1. The Merrow Common River. This carries water from streams arising on Clandon Park Estate under Merrow Lane and Gosden Hill Road, along the southern edge of Great Oaks Park to the London Road and thence on to the Wey.
2. The Wey Navigation Canal between Old Bucks Weir and Bowers Lane and also the Riverside Nature Reserve.

### **1. Merrow Common River.**

Any impediment to water flow in this conduit could lead to a repeat of flooding which occurred in the autumn and winter of 2013/14, when three houses in Gosden Hill were inundated. While the height and maintenance of the protective sleeper wall opposite Merrow Lane is still in contention, residents were appreciative of assistance given by a GBC engineer on the night of 21<sup>st</sup> October last when the stream for the second time in three weeks reached very high levels. The condition of the brickwork of the Gosden Hill culvert is still of concern but GBC have been removing silt and overhanging vegetation.

There are currently outstanding issues regarding general riverside maintenance, bank erosion and the proper easy egress of water downstream, which need to be addressed. Due to the absence of key personnel at the second meeting a further site visit is intended later in the year to review these concerns. SCC have prepared a fact sheet as guidance for landowners when maintain a watercourse on or next to their property and this will be circulated to all residents currently "living on the edge."

The EA has assisted key householders in being able to monitor water levels at critical times. It is also intended emergency stickers with phone numbers will be attached at relevant locations so residents can make contact and report issues appropriately. The responsibility for maintenance of the London Road culvert has also been clarified, something which has eluded interested parties for many years. It was reported the gullies and grilles in New Inn Lane are checked 4-6 times a year and prior to any expected rain.

## **2.The Wey Navigation Canal and Nature Reserve.**

Currently the EA and National Trust are looking at level markers which appear to be incorrectly installed. This was the focus of a walkabout in January this year when Angela Richardson MP, representatives from GBC and the National Trust, and two committee members. The speed of the river has led to erosion and the loss of mature trees – over 200 trees over the length of the Wey Navigation from Godalming to the Thames in the past 10 years. There has been a positive result following discussions; the river is now flowing more slowly so we hope that this will stop the erosion from getting any worse – the present extent is around 4 metres.



There is a possibility that the NT and GBC will work together to repair and strengthen the banks – much needed.

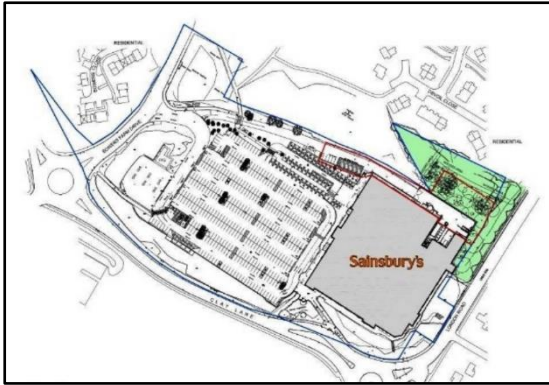


Another positive result is that the ancient ditch has finally been cleaned and prepared for a complete clear out of fallen trees. The Swingbridge Trust was allocated this project. At the time of writing, the ditch is now nearly cleared and the water level across the area has dropped by approximately 30cm. We are amazed that this job had not been done for such an important water course for over 20 years and disappointed at how difficult it was to convince the authorities that it was needed. We are, of course, pleased that it has now been done and hope that the improvements will be maintained.

The EA and OFWAT are doing a country wide investigation of River /Sewage treatment works; this will include Guildford.

## **Planning and Infrastructure**

The BCA and the Burpham Neighbourhood Forum (BNF) monitor all planning applications in the Ward but the BCA does not normally comment on individual applications for single properties unless the wider neighbourhood is likely to be affected. Last year we reported on one such example, the application Sainsburys lodged in 2020 to extend their existing Groceries Online distribution hub which involved an incursion into The Copse, one of Burpham's Local Green Spaces



This would have destroyed much of one of Burpham's Local Green Spaces known locally as The Copse, and affected many residents living close by. The BCA and BNF lodged objections as did many residents – 318 lodged in total. Sainsburys withdrew their application and said they would work with local groups on a revised proposal.

After a number of meetings which gave us the opportunity to explain our objections both to the original and revised proposals, Sainsbury's have not presented any further proposals and appear to be managing without the additional space.

### Roads and Parking

The Riverside Park is a very popular place – so popular that there have been many occasions when the car park is full and people have left their cars in Bower's Lane. This has sometimes led to a complete blockage, with cars unable to get in or out – which also means that emergency vehicles cannot get through.

After negotiation with GBC it was agreed to put double yellow lines at the top and bottom of the slope down from Clay Lane and the stretch that leads to the river. This was done late last year



The side of Bowers Lane adjacent to the allotments has been tidied by the Allotment holders which has provided more on road parking. It is now only occasionally that cars are parked obstructing the junction.

### Public Defibrillators

In January 2021, it was suggested to the BCA Committee that it would be a good idea to have a defibrillator in Burpham. Also known as AEDs, they are medical devices that can help someone suffering cardiac arrest; they do this by passing an electric current across the heart by stopping it, allowing it to reconfigure automatically. If not treated, death from cardiac arrest is about 97% of cases but with the correct treatment – prompt response, CPR and the use of a defibrillator – survival could be raised to around 70%.

The Committee agreed with the suggestion and set up a working party, chaired by Andy Clapham and including Alex Donaldson who made the suggestion. They had their first meeting in February 2021. Just fourteen months later, on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2022, the first defibrillator was unveiled outside Aldi. This could not have happened without the enormous community effort that has raised over £6,000 in a year. We would like to thank all the people and organisations who made this possible, including:

The Community Heartbeat Trust  
Merrow Residents' Association  
Surrey County Councillor George Potter for a generous contribution from the County Community Fund  
The sports clubs who use Sutherland Memorial Park – the Bowling Club, the Junior and Senior Football Clubs, Guildford City Youth Project  
The Rajdoot Restaurant  
The Burpham Women's Institute  
The Guildford Lions  
All the residents who have donated to our fundraising.

We are also very grateful for the co-operation and help that Aldi have given. The unit was fitted free of charge by their maintenance contractors, Dance and Dean Ltd. One of their colleagues had sadly passed away from heart failure and they wanted to help the Community Heartbeat Trust by donating their time and resources to help our project.

### **The first defibrillator is unveiled!**



Pictured from left to right:

*Andy Clapham (BCA Chairman)*  
*Councillor George Potter*  
*Sue Poole (BCA)*  
*Hal Hornsby-King (Aldi Assistant Store Manager)*  
*Lyak Rahman (Rajdoot Restaurant Proprietor)*  
*Alex Donaldson (BCA)*

## **Sutherland Memorial Hall**

The Hall was closed during lockdowns – the last BCA meeting there was in January 2020. At that time, the Hall was run by the Sutherland Memorial Park Amenities Club (SMPAC) which comprised volunteers for all the groups using the Hall. When GBC decided to increase rents and responsibilities for the Hall, every effort was made by the relevant bodies to keep going. In the end, it proved too large a commitment and the running of the Hall was taken over by GBC

We had hoped to start our bi-monthly meetings towards the end of 2022; the nursery school had re-opened so we assumed the Hall was open for business and asked GBC for details of hiring procedure and charges. The response was uncompromising: the nursery has a long term lease for use and holds the keys; GBC stated they “*have no resources to arrange ad hoc use ourselves.*”

Sutherland Memorial hall is a valued community asset – apart from the over-subscribed Village Hall there are few alternatives for local gatherings. The BCA has been pursuing this issue vigorously. We are working with several other local groups to try and get this much needed facility back in use for the community.



## **New Inn Surgery**

Several members have expressed regret about the closure of New Inn Surgery and dissatisfaction with the service now available, particularly from Merrow Park Surgery. The BCA and BNF have held discussions with the landlord of the New Inn Surgery and with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) which is responsible for service provision. We regret to have to report that there is no prospect of the New Inn Surgery reopening or of any other provision in Burpham in the foreseeable future (only major housing developments would change this). There is a commitment from the CCG to increasing resources at Merrow Park, reducing waiting times and improving service and to involve BCA representatives in the improvement process.

## **Public Events**

Pre pandemic, the BCA held public meetings every two months and usually one or two social events each year. Because of Covid restrictions we have had no public gatherings since January 2020. Last year's AGM was held via Zoom and the Annual Report and Financial Report were emailed to members. We had planned a Christmas Social last year but this had to be cancelled because of the spread of Omicron.

Committee meetings were held via Zoom during lockdowns but are now face to face.

## **Links with other organisations**

We continue to work closely with the BNF and also with Merrow Residents' Association and to maintain links with other neighbouring RAs and Parish Councils – Jacobs Well, Sutton Green, Worplesdon and West Clandon.

The BCA is a member of the Guildford Residents' Association and also subscribe to the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE). We wish to offer our thanks to Tim Harrold, the recently retired Guildford chairman, who has been very supportive of the BCA and the BNF, and given a great deal of help in planning matters.

## **Litter Picking**

It's been so good to see individuals litter picking throughout Burpham. Thank you – it doesn't go unnoticed. We have organised a few Saturday morning sessions and will arrange another one in the not too distant future. Please keep an eye on our website, social media accounts and our newsletters for further information. If you're interested in volunteering then please contact our membership secretary, Liz Turner ([membership@burphamca.org.uk](mailto:membership@burphamca.org.uk)).

## **Merrow Lane Gates**

Back in 2019, we reported that the BCA and Merrow Residents' Association combined efforts to get the gates linking Gosden Hill Farm to Merrow Lane removed as there is documentary evidence that they are illegal. The authorities said they were considering the issue. They still are.

## **Guildford Lottery**

The BCA joined the Guildford lottery at inception with the first draw in December 2018. It has become an important source of funds to us. The lottery has yet to pay out the £25,000 jackpot which is available every week, there has been a £2,000 prize and several of £250. Many BCA members have won £25 prizes or extra tickets. We are grateful to all those who have bought tickets to support the BCA and would encourage anyone who can spare £1 per week to join in. Without this income it is likely that we would have to increase subscriptions which have not changed since 2015.

May 2022