



# BURPHAM COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

## Annual Report May 2023

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### **Flood Forum**

A Flood Forum meeting, chaired by Angela Richardson MP was held on 9 December 2022. In addition to local residents and BCA members, the attendees included representatives from various agencies including Surrey County Council (SCC), Thames Water (TW), the National Trust (NT), Guildford Borough Council (GBC) and the



Environment Agency (EA). 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.

This meeting subsequently led to an inspection of the waterway at the upper reaches of Merrow Common River including the roads and associated properties on 21 April 2023.

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 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.

The height and maintenance of the protective sleeper wall opposite Merrow Lane is still in contention.

There was general agreement that a balancing pond on Gosden Hill Farm was a practical solution to control the amount of water in the stream itself and cut down the risk of flooding.

The condition of the brickwork of the Gosden Hill culvert is still of concern to residents but GBC have been monitoring the silt levels and recognise the need to remove overhanging vegetation.

There are currently outstanding issues regarding general riverside and tree maintenance, bank erosion and the proper egress of water downstream, which still need to be addressed. SCC have prepared a fact sheet as guidance for landowners when maintaining a watercourse on or next to their property. This was circulated to all residents currently 'living on the edge' by the Flood Action Group.

The grille and culvert at New Inn Lane, just before the railway bridge and sited in the woodlands, needs to be monitored. Its ownership is unclear, but it is on GBC's list of grilles to be cleared and any blockages reported to them.

The EA has assisted key householders in being able to monitor water levels at critical times. The responsibility for maintenance of the London Road culvert has now been clarified and the relevant parties need to be informed accordingly. Residents have observed that the walls of the culvert appear to still be moving inward.

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

It was agreed another visit to inspect these section of the waterways would take place later in 2023.

An erosion update has been provided on Old Bucks Weir.

While there are plans to start repairing the central sluice gates this year and concrete structures inserted, there was concern over the substantial loss of trees, considered by local residents to be the result of erosion due to flow rates permitted in the Wey Navigation. Burpham councillors have agreed to discuss maintenance ideas with active support from the local MP, who wished to see the correct infrastructure projects go forward as speedily as possible.

Concerns have been expressed over water levels in the Nature Reserve being too high and that ditches not being adequately maintained. GBC states that it is attempting to prioritise and regularly carry out work to control water levels, including regular maintenance of the ditches. However, the drainage ditch is hardly flowing and a large area of stagnant water is apparent.

There are also concerns that the recent sewage leak may be causing contamination. The BCA is continuing to lobby for more action.

## **Planning and Infrastructure**

The BCA and the Burpham Neighbourhood Forum (BNF) continue to monitor all planning applications in the Ward. The BCA does not normally comment on individual applications for single properties unless the wider neighbourhood is likely to be affected.

The most significant items this year relate to

- a) Surrey County Council Plans for London Road (see below under Roads and Parking
- b) Guildford Borough Council plan for Gosden Hill.

### **Gosden Hill**

Although it is expected to be some years before any physical development takes place, it is clear that the developers are hoping to proceed.

The BCA has several concerns including:

- Provision of water and sewage capacity,
- Electricity
- Safe and effective access for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians.
- The impact of increased traffic on Burpham and surrounding areas.

Martin Grant Homes (site owner and developer) has submitted a planning application requesting opinions on the scoping of its Environmental Impact Assessment. The BCA alongside the BNF will be studying this in detail and making comments where necessary.

The developer has requested a meeting with the BCA, stating:

*“Over the summer, we will be holding briefings, workshops and consultation events on the proposal and we look forward to meeting elected members, community groups, local residents and businesses.”*

As this progresses, the BCA may well need to ask for additional volunteers and additional funding to help ensure that any development includes the necessary infrastructure and limit the adverse impact on Burpham.

## **Roads and Parking**

### London Road Active Travel Scheme

Surrey County Council (SCC) announced in November 2022 that they proposed to carry out roadworks along the A3100 that will involve

- Installing one-way segregated cycle paths on both sides of London Road
- Upgrading the existing roundabouts to provide safer crossings for cyclists and pedestrians.
- New crossing points
- Improvements to existing junctions
- Upgrading bus stops

This is intended to improve safety for cyclists and was going to involve the closure of London Road northbound in Burpham for 7 months, subsequently reduced to 5 months, commencing January 9th.

Concerns about the lack of consultation and the congestion and disruption which this would have caused led to the BCA getting together with local councillors and Abbotswold Residents Associations to form the London Road Action Group (LRAG). This group arranged a public meeting with representatives of SCC which was held at George Abbot School on January 5<sup>th</sup>.

The BCA chairman stressed that we are not against cycling or cycle lanes, we welcome improvements to road safety. We are keen to help make sure we get the best possible scheme while minimising and damage and disruption of the implementation process.

The meeting was chaired by Anne Milton (previously MP for Guildford) and was attended by more than 400 people. SCC explained the proposals and the benefits which could be achieved. Questions from the audience showed that some people were in favour of the scheme but many thought that the disruption which it would cause was unnecessary and unacceptable. There were also concerns about the safety of narrower vehicle carriageways and lengths of path shared by pedestrians and bicycles.

SCC agreed to postpone the scheme and conduct fuller public consultation.

It subsequently announced that they had identified a way of keeping the carriageway wider than previously stated and installing the scheme without a lengthy road closure.

The new consultation process started with an initial meeting in February. The meeting was chaired by Councillor Matt Furniss and facilitated by Andy Mills of The Consultation Institute (a not-for-profit organisation who aim to spread good practice in engagement activities including balance and rigour) and was attended by several stakeholders including residents associations, school representatives, local councillors .

Surrey County Council representatives stated their wish for a fresh start and a constructive engagement process.

They repeated that the scheme will not require lengthy closures and that the carriageway will mostly be wider than the 3 metres previously announced.

Cllr Furniss stated that they hope that a consensus in favour of the revised scheme will be achieved but they won't go ahead if there is total opposition.

The main conclusion of the meeting was that SCC would work out how quickly design and implementation information can be made available before further discussions about how

engagement of the wider public will be carried out, and what questions will be asked.

SCC are now expecting to provide the revised proposals in early June and planning the next consultation meeting in late June or early July.

At each stage the BCA will be involved through LLAG and will keep members informed by email newsletters.

Those who would like to seek more frequent information are encouraged to look at the Surrey CC website which provides information about the London Road Active Travel Scheme on <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/roadworks-and-maintenance/roadworks/burpham-active-travel>

and / or the LLAG website <https://llag.weebly.com> which aims to provide more up-to-date and regular insight than appears on the Surrey CC website.

## **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, these 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, 97% of cardiac arrests result in death. With the correct treatment (prompt response, CPR, use of a defibrillator) survival can be increased to around 70%.

We reported a year ago on the installation of the first unit, outside the Aldi store. The second defibrillator was always intended to be in Sutherland Memorial Park. Negotiations with Guildford Borough Council proved much more difficult than those with Aldi. We obtained the necessary licence and the defibrillator was installed in November 2022. A brief meeting was held to celebrate the occasion and for the BCA to thank some of the major donors.

*Paul Cliff (Burpham Junior FC), Richard Stovold (Seymours), Liz Hyland (Women's Institute), Liz Turner, Andy Clapham, Alex Donaldson, Susan Poole (all BCA), Brian Watts (Guildford Lions), Geoff Sheldon (Burpham Bowling Club), Martin Wing (BCA)*

## **Sutherland Memorial Hall**

The Hall remains closed except for its use by the Peter Rabbit Nursery.

Sutherland Memorial hall is a valued community asset – apart from the oversubscribed Village Hall there are few alternatives for local gatherings.

The BCA has been pursuing this issue vigorously. We have joined forces with Burpham Church and several other local groups to try and get this much needed facility back in use for the community.

This group is in the process of forming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). It has had discussions and submitted an application to GBC to take on the management of the Hall. GBC has recently accepted this application but requires time to get ready to discuss terms. We are hoping to conclude this process and get the Hall back into use over the coming few months.

## **Public Events**

Following last year's AGM we were able to hold a further public meeting in December which included a Christmas quiz, raffle and refreshments.

In 2023 we held a hustings meeting ahead of the May GBC elections with statements from all the candidates and questions from the floor which proved to be lively and entertaining as well as informative.

We are planning a summer event to celebrate the golden jubilee of the BCA. This will include a wine tasting accompanied by a wine-related quiz and other refreshments.

## **Winter Talks and Summer Walks**

The talks were held in January and early February this year.

A wide variety of topics were covered:

Medieval Sex and Marriage,

Surnames (their origins and meanings),

Burpham's Arts and Crafts Housing,

Around the world in 80 churches

and were all well attended and well received.

Many thanks again to all the speakers and to Sue Hackman and Andrew Plumridge who organised them.

The interest which these talks raised led to the idea of Summer Walks. These will be short, informative walks looking at local subjects. The first will be led by Niels Laub at 11am on 1 June 2023 looking at the architecture of Abbotswood.

## **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 subscribes to the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) and the Open Spaces Society which campaigns to protect common land and green spaces.

## **Guildford Community Lottery**

The BCA joined the Guildford community 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 almost certain that we would have to increase subscriptions which have not changed since 2015.