

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT LoSRA 2017 AGM

As existing members will know, LoSRA publishes 3 newsletters each year, in the Spring, the Autumn and shortly before the AGM, which we distribute by hand to around 4,000 households in the Lower Sunbury area, as well as publishing a regular weekly e-News bulletin - if you haven't yet signed up for this, just go to the website – losra.org - it takes less than 1 minute. We also post items from time to time on the Sunbury Facebook page. We try to keep people up to date with what we, as your resident's association, have been doing on your behalf, to meet our primary objective of “optimising and enhancing the quality of life for Lower Sunbury residents by all appropriate means”. A reminder of LoSRA's Aims was included in the AGM newsletter, as was a summary of some of LoSRA's campaigns and achievements since it's foundation in 1972. It is an impressive list. If anyone hasn't seen the AGM newsletter or would like further information, please contact us through the website. We rely on a network of volunteers to help distribute the newsletter, and could do with some more. It shouldn't take more than 1 hour or so 3 times a year so if you are able to help, we'd really appreciate it. Please give your name to Colleen before you leave this evening.

LoSRA is composed of a management Committee, being a small core of Officers, and up to 9 other members, whom I shall shortly be proposing for your approval to re-elect. These people are volunteers and give freely and generously of their time and talents. They are motivated only by a desire to protect, maintain and preserve for future generations the environment in which we all so much enjoy living. LoSRA's constitution requires that we shall have no political or religious affiliations, and we very strictly abide by that. Wherever appropriate we will work in partnership with Spelthorne Council or other political representatives but this should not be taken as being for any reason other than to meet our stated Aims.

LoSRA's committee meetings are open to observers, and as I announced at last year's AGM, one or more Ward Councillors have since attended all our meetings. LoSRA feel that this has broadened & improved communication between ourselves and our elected representatives. I should like to take this opportunity to particularly record our thanks to Cllr Alfred Friday for a very successful year as Mayor of Spelthorne – he and his wife Kaye certainly achieved their objective of raising substantial sums for their chosen charities and making Spelthorne sparkle along the

way. We continue to welcome all our local councillors whenever they are available.

Looking back over my third year as Chair, it is perhaps not surprising that many of the items on our monthly meeting agenda are much the same as before. These were in no specific order Kempton Park, the Charlton Lane incinerator, Air quality – particularly in the Sunbury Cross area, and the Health Centre.

This time last year, the Jockey Club had indicated their desire to release land forming part of Kempton Park racecourse, currently classified as Green Belt, which would be sufficient to develop 1500-2000 houses. The Jockey Club's preferred developer, Redrow, indicated last year that they would seek to influence the outcome through the Local Plan review process and that they would submit the site when invitations were invited by Spelthorne Council. As part of the Local Plan review process, the Council this year issued a Call for Sites, which is, in effect, an invitation for land owners to submit land for potential development. Prior to that, the Strategic Housing Market Assessment report, approved by Spelthorne in June 2015, contained projected housing demand figures varying between 543 and 725, compared with the figure of 166 in the present 8 year old plan, up to 4 ½ times more. That report forms part of the evidence base to inform the reviewed Local Plan. We were shocked to learn earlier this year that The Jockey Club were proposing to submit the entire racecourse for development, and cease racing altogether. They project a development of 3-3,500 houses, although we believe the final figure could be much higher. This equates to nearly a doubling of homes in Lower Sunbury. Unsurprisingly, the racing community are appalled by the possibility of losing racing there. Our community are similarly appalled at the consequential effect on traffic, air pollution, and infrastructure such as the Health Centre, already one of the biggest in the country, and schools – already oversubscribed.

The next stage in the process is that Spelthorne Council will publish its Green Belt Assessment, which we believe has been completed. This looks at whether existing Green Belt land is meeting its defined purpose and if not, whether it can justifiably be released for development. Clearly, as a first step, it is critical that Kempton Park retains its Green Belt status. This is not a guarantee that it will not be built on, but it will make it much more difficult for a developer to justify and gain the requisite planning permission for any proposed development. Whilst there may well be work going on behind the scenes of which we are not aware, we understand that the Council's Local Plan Working Party has not met this

year, and we know that the revised Local Plan is well behind schedule, which raises a number of concerns about the possible outcome. The process has been delayed partly pending the recruitment of a project leader, which we understand has now happened.

Spelthorne Leader Councillor Harvey's public statement last year, repeated when the proposed sale of Kempton was announced, that Spelthorne Council will apply Local Plan policies to protect Green Belt is to be warmly applauded. As we said at last year's AGM, we will do whatever we can to support them in their intentions to resist the erosion of Green Belt. To that end, we have engaged the services of a top planning QC and have both briefed him formally, and conducted a site visit looking at all the Green Belt sites in Lower Sunbury – for although building on Kempton Park is the biggest perceived threat, there are other sites which must also be defended, if it becomes necessary. QCs do not come cheap. As a guide, in the time it will have taken me to deliver this report, you would be £100 lighter in your pocket. Once we get into the real nitty gritty of examinations in public, the costs will rack up considerably. LoSRA has accumulated reserves over the years against such an eventuality, but the time will come when we will have to ask for additional funding. Working in partnership with the Keep Kempton Green team, we will do as much background work and preparation ourselves as we can to minimise costs. I cannot predict when the appeal for funds will come, but come it will, so forewarned is forearmed.

As all those who use, and live by the Charlton Lane community recycling centre will be well aware, Surrey County Council are well advanced in building what they have described as a waste gasifier. The original schedule aimed for completion of the project in late 2017 but this appears unlikely to be achieved much before the Spring of next year. A co-located incinerator and gasifier is essentially untried and untested technology, and as a result, modifications to the design have been made as the project has progressed. Our Committee member, Peter Francis, has been closely involved with this issue and sits on the Technical Liaison Group, as well as other resident's representatives. The crunch will come when the plant is completed and commissioning commences. Only at that point will we know for certain whether it will work as intended. Although it looks very impressive (many would say overbearing) the proof of the pudding will be in the cooking.

For some time now, LoSRA has been concerned about the issue of Air Quality, particularly in the vicinity of Sunbury Cross. Spelthorne is a designated Air Quality Management Area (the only Borough in the

County so designated) and the Sunbury Cross area is acknowledged to be an air pollution 'Hot Spot'. As the result of a meeting we had last year with Kwasi Kwarteng, Spelthorne's MP, a commitment to contribute funding for air pollution management measures was reached with Heathrow Airport. NO₂ (Nitrous Oxide) air pollution is currently measured around Sunbury Cross by air diffusion tubes, but they do not give an hourly average, and more importantly, do not measure the really dangerous particulates emitted primarily by diesel cars. We reported in our Spring newsletter that the new air pollution monitor had been installed & was up & running. In the event, there have been teething problems with the power supply, air conditioning and the actual particulate monitor, which have now been fixed. Residents can view the results of this & the other monitoring stations on the Heathrow website www.heathrowairwatch.org.uk We expect that Spelthorne Council will be consulting with LoSRA, amongst others, with their development of a new air quality action plan and look forward to a continuing dialogue with the Council on this issue.

Most people are aware of the difficulties the Sunbury Health Centre have had to address over the last few years, which was covered in great detail at our AGM last year. Whilst there is still some way to go, there is no doubt that the Health Centre has made excellent progress in improving the access to services which so frustrated patients in the past, principally through the introduction of a new appointment booking system. The patient files have been moved to secure storage on-site which will enable the re-modelling of the reception area to start shortly. LoSRA was instrumental in setting up and developing the Patient Participation Group, of which every patient is an automatic member. A Core group of 8-10 patients work closely with the Health Centre in the role of 'critical friend' to represent patients' opinions. Regular updates are published in LoSRA's Newsletters and eNews bulletins and the PPG has its own website which regularly gets 3,000 hits each month, representing around 15% of the patient population. Despite the past difficulties, the annual Patient Survey consistently shows that the general satisfaction level with the clinical service is over 90%. The most recent survey is still being analysed in detail and should be available in September. Incidentally, the PPG is very keen to recruit users of the Health Centre not currently represented on the Core group and are looking particularly for patients from an ethnic minority background and also the younger age group e.g. under 30. The Core group meets around 6 times a year, so it's not an onerous commitment. If you, or anyone you know could be interested,

please encourage them to get in touch either through the PPG website, or with the Health Centre.

In 2015, LoSRA succeeded in securing sufficient funding for a feasibility study into the possibility of building a shared foot/cycle bridge to connect us with the Thames Path National trail on the south bank of the Thames. The results were presented to residents at several exhibitions and it is very encouraging to know that there was a strongly positive response to the subsequent ballot looking at the various proposed sites. According to an analysis by Cycling UK annual funding for cycling in England would be cut to two thirds of its present level by the end of the decade. So, with such pressure on funding, the big question still to be answered is where the money for the actual construction of the bridge will come from, and when. This will be occupying us for some time to come, but at the very least we can demonstrate a high level of support from residents on both sides of the river, and we have an outline plan on the table if and when funding does become available. John Hirsh, our Vice Chair, would be happy to provide more information on this project.

As well as the major projects I have covered, individual committee members have been involved with a wide variety of issues where LoSRA's expertise has been helpful to residents and others in Lower Sunbury. A few examples of these are: making continued representations to Elmbridge Council on the Walton Sports hub development, providing advice to individual residents and groups on various planning issues, discussions with developers regarding prospective brownfield sites, objecting to proposed developments where they would be overbearing or out of character with the surrounding street-scene, and many more. I would encourage members to come to us when issues arise where they think we may be able to help. This might involve LoSRA taking it up on your behalf, or simply signposting you to where you can get the help and answers you need.

In closing, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the other Committee members for their help and support over the last year. I would like to thank Neale Brickwood who is moving away and standing down. I would particularly like to thank and congratulate George Rushbrook, who, despite having been instrumental in getting me to join LoSRA, has recently achieved the magnificent age of 90 and continues to be an active contributor to our meetings. As the Scots are prone to say 'Lang may yer Lum Reek, George! I'd like to thank Alan Doyle and his team from KKG, with whom, as I have said, we continue to collaborate on matters

of mutual concern. Thanks also to Kevin for the sound, lighting & technical assistance. Finally, I'd like to thank you, our members, and also our Corporate Sponsors from the Lower Sunbury Business Community, for your financial support. We revamped our website last year to give the Sponsors more prominence and we hope this has contributed to a mutually beneficial relationship.

I'd now like to invite Iain Findlay to present the Treasurer's report.