

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT LoSRA 2022 AGM

As most residents will be aware, LoSRA usually publishes 3 newsletters each year, in the early Spring, the Autumn and shortly before the AGM in June, which we distribute by hand to over 4,000 households in the Lower Sunbury community. If you haven't seen the AGM newsletter you can view it, or contact us for further information, through the website. About 600 residents subscribe to our 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 pages, and we have a regular feature in Sunbury Matters. We are delighted to be able to resume our stand at the Sunbury Regatta in August, and last December, we again took a stand at the Lower Sunbury Business Community Christmas fair. We try to keep people up to date with what we 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 is available on the website, together with a summary of some of LoSRA's campaigns and achievements since it's foundation in 1972. We rely on a network of volunteers to help distribute the newsletter and could always do with a few more. It doesn't take more than 1 hour or so, just 3 times a year, so if you are willing to help, we'd really appreciate it. Please give your contact details 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, some of whom I shall be proposing for your approval to re-elect, shortly. We are all volunteers and give generously of such time and talents as we have on your behalf. Our principal motivation is a desire to help, as far as possible, protect, maintain and preserve for future generations the environment in which we all so much enjoy living. Our constitution requires that we shall have no political or religious affiliations, and we strictly abide by that. We do however work in partnership with Spelthorne Council or other political representatives wherever appropriate but for no other reason than to meet our stated Aims. We currently have some vacancies for new members, so if anyone is interested in finding out more about what being a Committee member involves, please have a chat with me afterwards or come along to our next meeting.

LoSRA's committee meetings are open to observers, and we have continued our practice of inviting, when possible, a representative from our Sunbury Ward Councillors, or our County Councillor to our monthly

meetings. We believe this has broadened & improved communication between ourselves and our elected representatives. Earlier this year, we also welcomed Daniel Mouawad, Spelthorne's Chief Executive, who gave us a valuable insight into the current issues and challenges facing our Borough.

Like so many other organisations, whilst Covid was active in the community, we suspended regular 'in person' meetings from March 2020, and continued to meet virtually, or in person, when circumstances allowed. Over the last 2 years, we have been involved in one way or another with a wide range of local issues, including opposing the covering up of the Lendy memorial in the Walled Garden, working with Spelthorne Neighbourhood Services on cleaning and redecoration of the Sunbury Cross underpass, opposing the proposed 5G telephone mast in the conservation area in Thames St, contributing to the call for Local Green Spaces, making representations at the Apps Court planning hearing in Elmbridge, responding to the Surrey Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan consultation, supporting the enforcement of Tree Preservation Orders, objecting to proposed developments where we believe they would be overbearing or out of character with the surrounding street-scene, providing advice to individual residents and groups on various planning issues, discussions with developers regarding prospective sites, liaison with Hazelwood London Irish on residents' concerns, representation on the River Users Group, to name a few. I'd like to mention 4 specifically:

Sunbury Ferry

I hope that by now, many of you will have had the pleasure of taking a trip across the river on the Sunbury Ferry? If not, you have a treat in store!

LoSRA has long championed the idea of a new river crossing in Lower Sunbury, and whilst the idea of a footbridge is still a long-term objective, this initiative from Spelthorne Council, through its River Thames Task Group, saw the new ferry service begin operation from Lower Sunbury in June last year.

As part of the ferry project, two local residents, Neil Huntingford (a LoSRA Committee Member), and Simon Harris set up Sunbury Ferry Ltd. Formed as a not-for-profit community company, they recruited over two dozen local volunteers to operate the ferry service at weekends and public holidays throughout the summer months. Many of the volunteers are already experienced boaters whilst others have taken advantage of the opportunity to gain a qualification through training at Queen Mary's Reservoir.

The Council generously provided the initial funding to get this community initiative up and running, with LoSRA funding the ferry website and other local organisations adding their support as the project has developed.

Keen to be 'green', the new pontoon-style ferry is powered by a whisper-quiet electric engine and crosses from the Lower Sunbury bank opposite the Riverside Arts Centre, over to the Walton bank downstream of Sunbury Lock.

LoSRA is proud to be an active supporter of this new service for the local community which should also help attract visitors to the area to enjoy the many amenities on offer in Lower Sunbury as well as giving access to Walton.

Patient Participation Group

Two members of the LoSRA Committee serve on the Patient Participation Group at Sunbury Health Centre - indeed LoSRA was instrumental in setting up and developing the PPG, of which every patient is an automatic member, and Neil Huntingford continues to chair it, supported by a Core group of 6 or so patients who work closely with the Health Centre in the role of 'critical friend' to represent patients' opinions, and drive forward beneficial changes. Periodic updates are published in LoSRA's Newsletters and e-bulletins and the PPG has its own website which gets nearly 8,000 hits a year, representing around 40% of the patient population. The Practice also has a regular slot in Sunbury Matters.

We are proud that, whilst many surgeries and Health Centres around the country closed their doors during the pandemic, Sunbury Health Centre stayed open and continued to provide a service, despite themselves suffering staff shortages from Covid, and having to follow restrictions imposed by the NHS and Government. 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 for a couple of hours, 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.

Charlton Lane

At the time of our last AGM, the construction of the Charlton Lane community recycling centre, or 'Eco Park' waste gasifier as they prefer to call it, was pretty well advanced and in the testing & commissioning stage. As I said then, only when the plant is finally in operation will we

know for certain whether it will work as intended. Well - as our late Committee member Peter Francis long predicted, it hasn't - and the last we heard Surrey County Council were taking action against Suez, the contractor, for non-performance. We await the outcome of the legal case with great interest.

Local Plan

We have been engaged on this for a very long time.[Local Plans cover a period of 15 years, and the previous one expired several years ago, so it is critical that a new Plan is approved as soon as possible, as without one, the Council is exposed to opportunistic developers submitting planning applications which it would be very difficult to defend. Happily, the Council voted last month to let the latest draft Plan go forward for final consultation, and that is what our presentation this evening will focus on.

In order to achieve a consensus on the draft plan, it was necessary for .7% of Green Belt land in Spelthorne to be released for housing. Some of that land is in Lower Sunbury and the presentation will clarify where these sites are. Whilst it is a matter of great regret that any Green Belt land must be released, it is the only way Spelthorne can realistically reach the Housing Need target imposed by Central Government, so the pain must be shared between loss of Green Belt land, and building on brownfield – previously developed – land, much of which is in Staines. Since 2017 we have used the services of a top planning QC when appropriate to advise us on the best way to use the Local Plan process to protect and defend Green Belt, most notably Kempton Park. As the process proceeds, culminating in the real nitty gritty of an examination in public before a Planning Inspector, it is likely that the cost of professional advice will rack up considerably. As you will see from the Treasurer's report and accounts which follow my report, through prudent management of costs, LoSRA has accumulated reserves over the years against such an eventuality, but the time is approaching when we may well have to ask for additional funding. Working in partnership with the Keep Kempton Green team, we have done and will do as much background work and preparation ourselves as we can to minimise costs.

As well as the main items I have mentioned, individual committee members have been involved with a variety of issues where LoSRA's expertise has been helpful to residents and others in Lower Sunbury. 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 want to express my sincere thanks to the other Committee members for their continued help and support, and to Shirley Agar, Alan Lacey and Rashpal Gill who stood down since our last AGM in 2019. We also welcomed John Carey, Stacey Capewell, and Chris Hyde. Thanks also to Kevin Welling & Nesli Ziler for the sound, lighting & technical assistance. I also want to thank you, our members, and also our Corporate Sponsors from the Lower Sunbury Business Community, for your ongoing financial support.

Finally, I'd just like to mark the fact that 2022 is the 50th anniversary of LoSRA's formation. I hope that we may continue to serve the community for a long time – but to do so, we need some fresh, young, blood, so if you feel youthful, keen and energetic, please do seriously consider putting your name forward for the Committee!