

LOWER SUNBURY RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

2023 AGM NEWSLETTER



LOSRA

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

www.losra.org

The Annual General Meeting of the Lower Sunbury Residents' Association will take place at The Riverside Arts Centre, Thames Street, Sunbury, on Wednesday 21st June at 8 p.m.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the 2022 Annual General Meeting
3. Chairman's Report
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Election of Officers and Committee
6. Local Plan Update by Ann Biggs, Strategic Planning Manager, Spelthorne Borough Council
7. Presentation by Rebecca Kendrick, Thames Landscape Strategy Project Officer
8. Open Forum
9. Any other business

Please note that we do not circulate the Minutes of the previous AGM or the Association's audited accounts with this notice, because to do so would generate disproportionate printing costs. Copies will be available at the AGM, and will also be posted on our website. If you are unable to visit the website but would like to see the documents in advance of the meeting, please contact Paul Thompson, LOSRA Chairman, whose details are included in this newsletter.

The AGM features a presentation on the Thames Landscape Strategy

The special feature at this year's AGM is a presentation by Rebecca Kendrick, Project Officer with the Thames Landscape Strategy.

This Strategy, which is explained in more detail in an article on Page 2, was drawn up in 1994, and extended to include Sunbury and Walton in 2012, and offers a way of dealing with the problems of potential flooding along the Thames, especially in the light of increasing incidence of extreme weather.

These proposals, which can complement the current flood relief project The River Thames Scheme, and with Sir David Attenborough as the organisation's patron, will be of great interest to anyone potentially affected by flooding and anyone concerned with the environmental well-being of the river, and it will be a fascinating centrepiece for the evening.

In addition, we are hoping that Ann Biggs, Spelthorne Council's Strategic Planning Officer, will be able to find time in her hectic schedule to come along and update us about the progress of the Local Plan through its Examination in Public,

of which the first two sessions will have already taken place by the time of the AGM.

Once again, there is a separate article on page 2 dealing with this subject in more detail, based on what we knew at the time of going to press.

As always, our Annual General Meeting is an opportunity for residents to come along, join the Association if you are not already a member, and have a chance to hear about the activities of LOSRA and to ask questions about local issues.

With the local elections having recently taken place, and with a new cohort of councillors in place, some of whom are familiar faces, we hope that some of them will be able to come to the meeting to make themselves known or re-introduce themselves, and make themselves available to answer questions directly if they can.

We always pride ourselves on being unusual among organisations like ours that we are able to attract a good audience for our AGMs, so we look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at this year's meeting.

Thames Landscape Strategy to be presented at AGM

Many of you will have vivid memories and harrowing experiences from the last big River Thames flood in the winter 2013/4 which badly affected Lower Sunbury. Following the flood, the Government, through the Environment Agency (EA) embarked on a major flood relief project, the River Thames Scheme (RTS).

This is a long term and highly complex project, not due for completion until 2030 and for us will involve the cutting of the new Spelthorne Channel, three new gates on Sunbury Weir and the lowering of Desborough Cut. This means that all the flood water will be channeled towards Lower Sunbury, and although the EA give assurances that this will be an improvement for us, it's still a very scary prospect!

This method of flood control relies to a large extent on containing the river by means of physical barriers whereas Sir David Attenborough, as patron of the Thames Landscape Strategy, believes that certain section of the river should be allowed to naturally flood into historical Arcadian Thames 'flood meadows' especially as with increased climate change, we need to get used to flooding on a more regular basis.

The Thames Landscape Strategy was drawn up in 1994 focusing on the River Thames for the next 100 years. It covers a myriad of matters relating to the river and its journey from outer London through to the estuary. It pays particular attention to the local environments, flood plains, sight lines, flora and fauna etc.

It is made up of 14 partner organisations that have raised over 23 million pounds and committed hundreds of thousands of volunteer hours to working on local areas. The 1994 Strategy was superseded in 2012 by an updated version that extended the scope to include the river through Sunbury and up to Weybridge and Walton. There is no documentation within the 2012 Strategy relating to Sunbury on Thames, and in 2022, the 10 year review noted this serious omission.

It is obviously important that we have input into the updated Strategy regarding Sunbury on Thames, and LOSRA now has representation on the TLS's Community Advisory Group.

We are delighted that Rebecca Kendrick from the TLS will be our keynote speaker at the AGM. She will be showing a new short film presented by Sir David Attenborough that showcases the work already undertaken on natural flood management in the Hampton Court area and discuss what the Strategy's impact is for Lower Sunbury. This will be an opportunity to have a voice going forward on how we manage and interact with the Thames flowing through our village.

Local Plan 'Examination in Public' goes ahead amid post-election political machinations

The question of members' subscriptions and how they are used is justifiably raised from time to time. Apart from the annual running costs (printing, website, room hire etc.) we retain a modest fighting fund for legal or expert advice when the occasion demands. An example of such an instance is shown below.

As we go to print, the Spelthorne Local Plan Examination in Public (EIP) is being held in the Council Chamber. Prior to its commencement, the independent Inspector appointed to examine the Plan, Jameson Bridgwater PGDipTP MRTPI, has read through the Plan, all the evidence that supports it; and the representations received from members of the public and other stakeholders. With the examination well underway, Mr Bridgwater is now conducting public hearing sessions that are an important and integral part of the examination.

The sessions are being held in person with arrangements in place for virtual participation where required. Those who made representations will be having (or have had) the opportunity to appear at the hearings and speak directly to the Inspector. The Programme Officer will have been in touch with those parties beforehand. The Inspector produced a schedule for which topics will be discussed at each of the hearing sessions. These can be seen on the examination website.

The first of three sessions (23 May - 25 May) has already taken place with the remaining sessions 13 June - 15 June; and 20th June - 22nd June on schedule.

LOSRA and KKG (Keep Kempton Green) have briefed and

Community Hub proposed on old fire station site

We wonder how many people have heard of the plan to relocate the existing Sunbury Library to a new building called The Sunbury Community Hub located across the road on the old Fire Station site?

Public exhibitions were held at the Adult Education Centre in The Avenue and in the current library back in December last year. Publicity material at the time said:

'The vacant site is an ideal location for a community hub, with strong transport connections and in close proximity to local amenities such as town centre, schools, doctor's surgeries and restaurants. We envision a vibrant and multi-use community hub, which will provide a new and enhanced venue to deliver crucial community services. The scheme will establish a focal point for community activities and provide a range of services.'

The LOSRA Chairman visited the exhibition and was unimpressed, in particular with the poor information about what facilities will be available to local people. In his opinion, whilst difficult to judge the amount of 'spare' space available once the library is installed, it didn't look as if there would be much left over for the other potential occupants, so it is questionable whether any plan to provide adult education would work.

Very recently, a planning application has been submitted – see https://planning.surreycc.gov.uk/Planning/Display/SCC_Ref_2023-0051#. The Design and Access statement (2 parts) is probably the most informative document.

Residents are urged to make their views on this potential development known. What will happen to the existing Library building, and the Adult Education Centre is a matter of speculation – but the latter site has been earmarked for potential future development in the draft Local Plan as submitted to the Planning Inspector for Examination in Public, beginning 23rd May.

will be represented by top planning barrister, Simon Bird KC. It is known that Redrow (in the case of Kempton Park) and Persimmon Homes (in respect of Green Belt at Stratton Road) will be arguing strongly for inclusion in the allocations for development. Mr Bird will be attending for two days during the first week of hearings to argue for their Green Belt retention should such an argument become necessary.

As we go to press we are given to understand that the leaders of the Lib Dem, Labour, Greens and Independents wrote to the Inspectorate questioning if the EIP should go ahead in the context of changes to the Council make-up.

It is no secret that some councillors want the Plan stopped. It is also no secret that no decision of the Council has been taken to do so. Trying to withdraw the Plan without going through the due process in public has no force in law.

Our support for the draft Local Plan has been often publicly stated. It is not perfect but there are huge risks if we do not have a Plan, even for a short period. Our view is that the EIP should go ahead as it is vital that Spelthorne has a valid and approved Local Plan in place to prevent the possibility of predatory planning applications for sites like Kempton Park, as well as sites in Staines, if there is no Plan as context for their consideration.

To withdraw the Plan at this late hour would incur huge costs and inconvenience for the Council. We expect the hearings to begin, and we sincerely hope they are allowed to finish.

Sunbury Health Centre Patient Survey

Some years ago now, the Patient Participation Group (PPG) and Sunbury Health Centre (SHC) made a commitment to end the queue of patients that lined up outside the centre in all weather in order to get an appointment.

That commitment paid off with the introduction of an on-line system and increased telephone lines. This was at a time when many surgeries across the country still relied upon the old queue/phone system, with some practices, including SHC, closing for the lunch hour!

The new on-line appointment system with all day opening was a game changer and many other surgeries followed the same path, but often using different systems. The local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) then paved the way for an area-wide system to improve communications and data transfer leading to joined-up thinking and improved patient experience.

The current on-line system, Footfall, was a major step forward but is not without its faults, both from a patients' perspective but also behind the scenes.

With the Footfall contract coming to an end, a new system is planned to be introduced across the area in the coming months. Of course this means that we will all have to get used to using the new system, but it's good to know that our PPG has been involved in the design of the patient interface, which is reassuring!

Following the pandemic, and with predominately face-to-face appointments the norm again at SHC, the PPG have reintroduced their annual Patient Survey to gain your views. It runs from the 9th May to 6th June, and you can add your comments by pointing your phone at the QR code below:



Changes to LOSRA's newsletter distribution

Since LOSRA started publishing a newsletter 50 years ago, they have been distributed to local households by Committee members and by a large network of volunteer distributors. Through people's commitments, people moving away or reasons of ill-health that network is getting increasing hard to maintain.

For that reason, we have reached an agreement with Monica Jones, editor and publisher of Sunbury Matters, for most of the LOSRA newsletters to be distributed by her network of delivery people on the three occasions during the year when it is published.

Needless to say, we are immensely grateful to all our distributors, past and present, who have so loyally and diligently supported our Association by delivering out newsletters over the years.

They have been an invaluable asset in keeping the show on the road in helping to make sure we have been able to get our message out to the community since our inception in 1972.

Thanks also, of course, to Monica for accommodating us by delivering the newsletters - yet another example of the community working together.

Apps Court Farm licensing application for more and bigger events refused

Residents who live along or close to Thames Street/River Mount/Lower Hampton Road or Rivermead Island may be aware that, back in March, WoW Factor Entertainment Ltd, based at Apps Court Farm across the river, applied to Elmbridge Borough Council for a new 'premises' licence to permit them to increase the number and size of events they can hold each year. In the past local residents, especially where the event lasted throughout the weekend.

At the Licensing Hearings, which were attended by a LOSRA representative and Officers from Spelthorne Borough Council as well as residents from Elmbridge, strong representations were made that, due to past performance failures where permitted noise levels were exceeded and proper follow up reporting of remedial action was not taken, the licence application should not be granted.

We are therefore pleased to report the following decision received from Elmbridge Licensing, Planning & Environmental Health:
Licensing Act 2003 - Hearing decision notice

I am writing to inform you of the outcome of the licensing sub-committee hearing held on Weds 26 April 2023. The hearing was held to determine the premises licence application made on 14 March 2023 in respect of WoW Factor Entertainment Ltd, Apps Court Farm, Hurst Road, KT12 2EG. I would advise that the application is refused in full, as set out in the attached decision notice which gives detailed reasons.

We intend to make the Decision Notice accessible in full on the LOSRA website. This refusal does not mean that all events will cease, as the existing licence remains in force until it comes up for renewal or is rescinded, and it is, of course, possible that the applicant will appeal. However, for the time being, no increase in the number and size of events will be permitted.

Residents wishing to report noise disturbance from future events can contact Spelthorne's Out of Hours on the night of the noise or contact Environmental Health the following working day either by email or phone - see <https://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/noiseservice> - or by contacting Apps Court direct.

LOSRA secures grant for kits to survey Thames water quality on regular basis

The River Thames is a magnificent asset for Lower Sunbury that is enjoyed in so many different ways by residents and visitors alike.

While some are content to enjoy its views and wild life from the bank, others prefer to enter the water for boating or swimming. For them the quality of the water is all-important, but we know it can vary widely depending on the extent of the many pollutants that are discharged into the river.

LOSRA has recently been successful in securing a modest grant from the Surrey Climate Commission (www.surreyclimate.org.uk), an independent organisation dedicated to supporting and guiding the transition of the county of Surrey towards a carbon neutral future.

We are using the grant to buy two testing kits that will allow us to measure the levels of phosphates and ammonia in the river. We are proposing to do this on a monthly basis at the same location - Rivermead Island - and to publish the results on the LOSRA website.

We intend to build up a picture of how these levels vary according to time of year, weather and river conditions, particularly after storms have triggered discharges into the Thames from the drainage systems and agricultural run-off upstream.

Our aim is to contribute to the wider aim of increasing community awareness of the changing condition and health of our natural environment. We also hope to liaise with groups who are undertaking water quality testing on other rivers in Surrey, such as the Wey and the Mole.

LOSRA needs more Committee Members

LOSRA, the Lower Sunbury Residents' Association, has been active for over 50 years, and represents the 4,000+ households in the Lower Sunbury area. All members of the Committee are volunteers. There are 5 officers – President, Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary. In addition there are up to 10 other full members. The Committee meets monthly on the 2nd Tuesday evening except during August.

Current Committee members come from a variety of ages and backgrounds and all are residents – it is a condition of membership of the Association that members are resident.

The LOSRA Committee has several vacancies. There are no formal qualifications for Committee membership; a keen interest in local affairs, a willingness to get involved, commitment to the monthly meetings, and a lack of personal axes to grind! This is an opportunity to join and contribute to our wide-ranging committee to further empower our community.

We work very closely and have excellent relationships with Spelthorne Borough Council and local groups and businesses. We know many are interested in helping within Lower Sunbury and making the community a better place, and being part of the residents' association is a fantastic opportunity to do so. We learn from each other in our various areas of interest and are looking to bolster our knowledge and skills base.

We are looking for people whose background involves IT/Communications and also Administration and Social Media skills. There are no age limits, but younger people are particularly encouraged to apply who are interested in sustainability and school travel and making Lower Sunbury a better place for future generations, so a wider representation of residents' views is possible, and continuity can be achieved as existing members retire/leave the area.

Prospective members are encouraged to attend a committee meeting before committing themselves to gain first-hand experience of how meetings are conducted. If they then decide they would like to join us, they can be co-opted by the committee to join until the next AGM in June.

If you are interested to get more information, in the first instance, please apply to Colleen Cuthbert, Secretary.

Friends of Sunbury Park Cattle grazing resumes in Sunbury Park

It's a sure sign of spring when the cows arrive in Sunbury Park for a summer of grazing on what this year, with some weather that's been both very wet and occasionally quite warm, is some very lush and plentiful pasture. So much so that the bovine population increased from eight to ten after a couple of weeks, as the grazer felt there was plenty for them to feed on.

They are heifers this year - i.e. females who have not yet calved. Last year we had steers, which are neutered males, as we were advised that certain bacteria in dog faeces can cause cows to abort when calving, but we understand that some tests have been done on the grassland in the Park and it seems that the levels of bacteria are not as high as had been suspected, and the risk to the cows is less than had been feared.

However, it would obviously be very helpful if dog walkers could be extra diligent in picking up their dog's poo, so that traces of it left in the grass are kept to an absolute minimum, and none of the cows get infected.

As usual, they are a very docile and amenable bunch this year, and not much bothered by people or dogs, and a lot of the time when not grazing keep themselves out of the way chewing the cud somewhere under trees. Your continued co-operation in avoiding the cows being troubled by dogs is much appreciated.

THE LOSRA COMMITTEE

| | | |
|---|------------------------------|--------------|
| Jyoti Banerjee | 8 Harfield Road | 07973 323440 |
| Colleen Cuthbert (Secretary & Membership Secretary) | 8 Maryland Way, TW16 6HR | 01932 783606 |
| Iain Findlay (Treasurer) | 58 Thames Street | 01932 783739 |
| John Hirsh (Vice-Chairman) | 21 School Walk | 07515 637474 |
| Neil Huntingford | Summer House, Wheatleys Ait | 01932 783761 |
| Oliver Parr | Orchard House, Thames Street | 01932 765229 |
| Stacey Pinto | 37 Sutherland Avenue | 07894 834277 |
| Nigel Spooner | 36 Kingsmead Avenue | 07887 898874 |
| Paul Thompson (Chairman) | 12 Brackenwood | 07788 107500 |
| Sebastian Usher | 1 The Avenue | 07879 624108 |
| Paul Watts (President) | 87 The Avenue | 01932 788449 |

LOSRA MEMBERSHIP FOR 2023 PAYMENT OPTIONS

By Standing Order

You may pay by setting up a standing order with your bank. Please make payments to Lower Sunbury Residents Association at Barclays Bank, Account number: 90581194 Sort Code: 20 46 73. Subsequent payments to be made on 1st January each year. Please use LOSRA with your house number and post code as a reference.

By cheque or cash

The annual subscription is still just £5 per household and voluntary donations are always welcome. For payment by cheque or cash, please use the form below and deliver to Colleen Cuthbert, Membership Secretary, 8 Maryland Way TW16 6HR or any other committee member as listed. Alternatively drop your payment into Skinners Newsagents/Post Office in Avenue Parade, or The Good Estate Agent/Twirltour Travel in Green Street. Please make cheques payable to Lower Sunbury Residents Association .

Via PayPal

This can be done on the website at www.LOSRA.org

Life Membership

There is also the option of Life Membership of £100 with a one-off payment.

If you are not sure that you are up to date with your payments or you need more information about membership, please contact Colleen Cuthbert, Membership Secretary, on 01932 783606 or by email colleen.cuthbert@btinternet.com

Thank you very much for your continued support.

Membership payment slip 2023 for CHEQUES OR CASH

I wish to pay the annual subscription to LOSRA for £5.00 per household and a donation for £..... (please enter amount, if you would like to make a voluntary donation)

Name/s.

Address

..... Post Code.....

email

Telephone..... Date

AGM2023