



The Guildford Society
Notice of 85th Annual General Meeting
and
Annual Report 2020
www.guildfordsociety.org.uk



**A challenge for the Town -
Empty Shops in Town Centre**

Contents

Notice of Annual General Meeting.....	4
Agenda	7
Chairman’s Report 2020.....	8
Minutes of 84th AGM	12
Local Economy Group:	14
Design and Heritage:.....	18
Planning Group:	20
Transport Group:.....	25
Membership Secretary’s Report:.....	28
Summary Accounts:.....	29
Guildford Society - Contacts List	31

Page Intentionally Left Blank

Notice of Annual General Meeting

Notice of: 85th Annual General Meeting of The Guildford Society

On: Tuesday 6th October at 19.00 for 19.15 start

Via: Zoom Internet Video Conferencing

The Covid 19 social distancing requirements and a limitation on numbers permitted to attend public gatherings have made it increasingly difficult to hold face-to-face meetings such as the Society's AGM. We therefore announce our intention to hold the 85th AGM virtually despite there being no current clause within our constitution to do so. This decision was undertaken in order to demonstrate good governance of the charity.

We trust that our members understand our reasoning for this exceptional (and hopefully one time) force majeure action; which has been agreed and recorded in the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on 23 June 2020. The appropriate digital links to partake in the meeting will be sent out in good time to our members via email together with instructions on how to join the meeting. At that time links will also be included for copies of the Chairman's, Treasurer's, and Membership Secretary's reports together with those of our working groups

In accordance with the Society's Constitution, a third of the Trustees must retire each year, but may stand for re-election. This year Michael Jeffery and Rosemary Napp are retiring, Michael permanently. Rosemary, however, is willing to stand for re-election. Barry Williams and Nic Allen were co-opted during the year and are now standing for election. John Baylis is also willing to stand for election.

- Rosemary Napp Secretary to Design and Heritage Group
- John Baylis Secretary to Planning Group and former Society Chairman
- Nic Allen Member of Design and Heritage Group, architect by profession

- Barry Williams Member of Transport Group, past member of Social & Communications Group & former Vice Chairman

Nominations for additional Trustees should be sent to the Hon. Secretary at the address below, to be received at least fourteen days before the AGM, signed by a proposer and seconder. The Nomination form follows this page. Signed & seconded forms can be returned by post or, if preferred due to Covid social distance restrictions, may be scanned to obtain both signatures and returned via email to the Hon Secretary.

The Society urgently needs to fill several positions including:

- Hon. Treasurer or an experienced Bookkeeper to handle our accounts
- Communications Secretary or those with journalistic experience to handle press releases, PR, website text, etc.
- Pro bono – Legal advisor

We welcome any enquiry. The sub-groups are always happy to hear from those interested in joining one of them of them. Don't be shy – we would appreciate help, especially from those having expertise in areas of planning or transport. Contact should be made via the Hon. Secretary Mrs Gillian Cameron.



Alistair Smith - Chair

September 2020

Mrs. Gillian Cameron, Honorary Secretary. 92 Wodeland Avenue,
Guildford GU2 4LD

Tel: 01483 503172 / Email: **secretary@guildfordsociety.org.uk**

*The Guildford Society. C.I.O reg. Number 1174395. Registered Office
24 Bury Fields, Guildford GU2 4AZ*

Agenda

85th Annual General Meeting Tuesday 6th October 2020

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the AGM held 5th June 2019
3. Matters arising
4. Chairman's and Vice-Chairmen's reports
5. Honorary Treasurer's report
6. Election of Trustees
7. Any other business

Meeting due to Covid-19 restrictions is being held via Zoom
Conference Call

Chairman's Report 2020

In many respects we have had a quiet year after the debate caused by the local Plan. It has given the Society time to take stock and implement changes that I hope you will see in evidence over the coming months.

Executive and Group Changes

Sadly, the Executive had to accept Michael Jeffries resignation from the executive and chairmanship of the D&H group. Michael has been a highly active member of the society for many decades. His wise council and enthusiasm will be badly missed.

The Executive welcomed back Barry Williams as an member. Barry has been an executive member before, and his experience is much welcomed.

We also welcome Nic Allen to the executive. Nic has been an active member of the D&H group over the past year, using his experience as Architect very effectively.

We also say farewell to several members who have supported our groups magnificently over the years, Maurice Barham Secretary of the Transport Group and, John Wood and Martin Taplin who have done sterling work on the Planning Group over the years.

New Scope

The Executive looked hard at the objectives of the Society last summer and circulated members on our proposals. We have now adopted our new objectives which you can find on our website.

Working Groups

Much thanks are given to the members of our working groups who have as usual been fully engaged in looking at their various areas of interest as you will see from their respective reports. It is worth highlighting two developments, the D&H group has been revised under the new chairmanship of Peter Coleman, and that we are currently restructuring the Local Economy Group with new members to form a Local Strategy and Economy Group.

Why the Society is still relevant and important

It could be argued that Guildford is at the centre of a 'perfect storm' with the town and surroundings at risk from:

Firstly, a newly adopted Local Plan that is based on assumptions related to a pre-Coronavirus world. Basic Infrastructure e.g. A3 upgrades appear to have been delayed which impacts the ability to build on Strategic Sites thus impacting the fulfilment of housing targets in the Local Plan.

Secondly, sectors of the local economy were suffering before the Covid-19 pandemic, local economy badly hit e.g. Retail. Development proposals coming forward at an increasing rate which have issues related to Design and Sustainability.

Thirdly, the government is proposing the biggest shake-up of Planning Law for several generations in the form of the Planning for the Future White Paper plus associated proposals for Design Codes and centralised determination of Housing Numbers.

Fourthly, we are due to see proposals next month from Robert Jenrick, Minister of Housing Communities and Local Government which are likely to see Surrey become one (or more) unitary authority. This will no doubt have a major impact on how Heritage and Planning matters are governed.

Finally, Guildford is still dealing now, and for some time to come, with the Covid-19 impacts both on health and the economy.

As the local Civic Society we need to provide effective and informed input into the necessary debates to ensure Guildford optimises the balance between Economic Vibrancy, protecting our Heritage and Environment, and providing well designed spaces to live, work and play.

The next few months could be pivotal for the future of Guildford and as a Society we need to respond pro-actively to the issues arising.

Future of the Society

Ensuring the Society continues to thrive and respond to the needs of Guildford is a challenge. We need to ensure that the Society:

➤ **Builds our Membership**

Sadly, the Society like a lot of other local societies is losing membership. We need to recognise that like others we have benefited from an era where many retired relatively early and had many active years to get involved. The segment of the population in their 30-40's are difficult to engage with partly as they are busy at the peak of their working and family lives.

➤ **Funding**

The Society does have costs to cover, operational Website, E-Mail printing, and to support activities e.g. Public Meetings, Professional Advice. We need to keep our funds at a reasonable level via subscriptions, donations, and paid for activities.

➤ **Expertise**

We are incredibly lucky to have access to members who have a wide variety of expertise often gained in their working careers or gathered after engagement with our working groups. We need to be careful to keep this expertise current and in sufficient depth for the future. We are thus always pleased to have members agree to join our working groups and also value members who have links to other groups within the area.

Our new Brand, Website and Communications

After considerable debate, the Executive has decided to refresh and re-invigorate our website. Electronic communication is becoming the de-facto method of communication particularly for the younger generations. Covid-19 has made this change even more apparent e.g. all Society meetings being conducted on Zoom for the past few months.

The Website, which will be launched shortly, will work far more efficiently on Mobile Devices and allow us to post news items more efficiently. The website will have limited use of colour so it will be simpler in appearance and easier to print from. It will be a cornerstone of our evolving communications strategy for the future.

The Executive has decided upon a new logo which is crisper in appearance and more suited to appearing electronic devices such as mobile phones.

Thanks

Finally, thanks to all of you for your continued support. We could not operate the society without you.

I would ask you all for one action to support the society in 2020, please try to recruit a new member or subscriber to our newsletter. We are making it easier to become a supporter on the new website.

Alistair Smith September 2020

Minutes of 84th AGM

Minutes of the 84th Annual General Meeting of The Guildford Society held on 5th June 2019 at National Trust Visitors' Centre, Dapdune Wharf, Guildford

The Chairman, Alistair Smith, welcomed the 55 members who attended and thanked John Gibson, National Trust Manager of Dapdune Wharf and Wey Navigations, for hosting the meeting and for the talk which he was to give later.

Apologies had been received from 13 members.

Minutes of the 83rd AGM held on 7th June, 2018 were approved and signed.

Matter's arising: There were none.

Chairman's and Group Reports: These were incorporated into the Annual Report which was sent to all members, either by post or electronically to those for whom the Society holds email addresses. The previous year's Minutes were also included.

Chairman's Address:

The Chairman spoke about the Local Plan and Student Quarter.

He praised the work of his predecessor, Julian Lyon, particularly on Solum and the Local Plan, for both of which Julian presented the cases against them at the respective Public Hearings.

He thanked all members of the Executive and Groups, particularly Colin Selvin and Chris Blow, who were stepping down from their roles as Minutes Secretary and Chair of the Transport Group.

Alistair also paid tribute to Peter Clifford for his work as Hon.Treasurer for the past year and for his assistance in handing over to the

Chairman and Hon Secretary, who will manage the Society's finances until a new Treasurer is appointed.

Honorary Treasurer's Report and Accounts: These were available at the meeting and subsequently on the Society's website. They had been independently verified by Mr Keith McPherson, an accredited Independent Examiner. There were no questions arising.

Election of Trustees: No nominations for new trustees had been received, but Maurice Barham proposed Alistair Smith continue as Chairman. This was seconded by Julian Lyon and agreed unanimously by the members.

Any other business: No other matters were raised, so the meeting was closed at 8pm.

Group Reports

Local Economy Group:

The group has had a quiet year, but we have been advancing plans to relaunch the group with new members shortly. The Coronavirus has made it impossible to have face to face meetings that are desirable with new members.

It is difficult to make predictions in the middle of an event of the magnitude of Coronavirus, but it is probably safe to assume some of the trends in economic activity will be accelerated.

Guildford has had a prosperous few decades and has successfully developed a mixed economy based on Professional Services (Legal, Accountancy), Education (University etc.), Retail, and a group of Hi Tech industries fostered by the Research Park and Pirbright. One of the most vibrant of which has been the Games industry. It should not be forgotten that many in Guildford also commute to jobs in London and elsewhere (e.g. Heathrow) using the reasonable rail links to London and a creaking road network.

Recently, there have been signs of issues emerging:

- a) Several Large Companies have relocated citing Congestion and Cost reasons.
- b) Retail has had a difficult decade and Guildford's dependence on Chain outlets has made it more vulnerable to changes
- c) New businesses have often elected to expand in locations other than Guildford for cost and infrastructure reasons.
- d) Some business sectors have found accommodation difficult to find to the quality and cost they require e.g. Why does Reading major on 5G when Surrey University is the home of 5G in the UK!!.
- e) Lack of affordable housing and traffic congestion has impacted growth plans.
- f) The Town Centre outside the High Street and Castle area has few attractions and large parts are vacant land. Other centres e.g. Woking are rapidly overtaking Guildford as a destination (whatever your views on the tall buildings)

- g) Local industry and manufacturing has been discouraged, the rise of an industrial estate at Dunsfold employing 2000 workers is an example of what can be done (some of the businesses at Dunsfold have relocated from Guildford)

The impact from Coronavirus is likely to accelerate some trends, and foster new trends.

1/ Retail is likely to decline further with major sites falling vacant in the town centre, the recent local plan was predicated on a major new retail development. A recent survey (4/2020) indicates that at a conservative estimate one in five shops may not re-open. The rising use of Internet Shopping will continue, with potentially shops becoming show rooms with goods ordered on-line.

2/ Work patterns are likely to see an accelerated change to home working, but our housing stock is not built to accommodate home working. This could lead to greater demand for shared workspaces, new developments with workspaces, and demand for local transport that is not car dependent.

3/ There could be demand to create work environments in the local villages, with a better communications network, physical and technical between centres.

4/ University of Surrey has been a great success, fostering successful businesses in the local area especially on the R&D park. University budgets are likely to come under extreme pressure in the future, maintaining a pipeline of businesses in the Hi-Tech sector could prove difficult.

5/ The whole education sector in Guildford is important economically with a large student population and private schools supporting economic activity. An economic turn down plus foreign students being less inclined to study in the borough could impact the sector badly.

6/ Guildford needs to be mindful of other towns and their competing offers. Reading, Horsham and Woking are the nearest major centres, and offer good communications (especially Reading which is at the start of the high tech arc running through to Cambridge.)

7/ The tourism industry will be badly affected short term but if flying becomes less acceptable there could be pressure to use the North Downs and Heritage assets to provide leisure offers, which will present challenges and opportunities.

Guildford needs to develop a plan to minimise economic issues for the next decade and work to support growth sectors of the local economy. Potentially Guildford might consider:

A/ Reviewing its employment profile and looking to support those sectors that are growing and in an environment with little public money be conscious that some sectors will fail or become smaller

B/ Be agile to the evolving demand for Housing and Office space to support blended living (Office staff working at home, maybe in local offices and some commuting to corporate centres)

C/ Using vacant buildings in the Town centre as business incubators (Teamed with the University?). An important element of this strategy is flexibly supply space and support what develops.

D/ Ensure new developments in the Local Plan Strategic sites have Workspaces, high quality internet access and good physical and technology communications.

E/ Be aware that London may attract people back to the city as house prices may stagnate and the balance between commuting and living in London may change. There are signs London is already thinking that it may expand pedestrian and cycle space to make the city more attractive.

F/ Guildford requires a major attraction either in terms of Built Environment, Leisure or Business examples could be:

- a. Support the University create new Schools of expertise
- b. Arts Centre
- c. Games Technology Centre
- d. Gateway Interpretation Centre to the AONB (or possible North Downs National Park)
- e. Stunning attractive development on Strategic Sites and Town Centre
- f. Follow Freiburg and become a centre and exemplar for Environmental living and Green businesses.

Guildford is a wealthy borough. Does it need to think of an investment fund or bonds to help provide local investment in local infrastructure, homes etc. Although economic times may be hard it is probable that central government will be looking for good long-term investments.

Gordon Bridger September 2020

Design and Heritage: **Annual Report 2019 – 20**

The Design and Heritage group has experienced a year of 'two halves' with a relatively sedate early part of the year. Initially responding and commenting on GBC documents for the Views Study and Design Guidance which was followed by assisting the Heritage Open Days (HOD's) in a happy and busy atmosphere in the High Street . The time had come to let some of the GSoc stewards 'off the hook', after many years of loyal service, which has been much appreciated. The recruitment net was widened to include friends of GSoc members, particularly from the Arts Society, who very much enjoyed their stewarding sessions, and expressed interest in helping in the future. In the autumn we jointly held with Surrey University the annual Architecture Lecture 'Agile Planning', reported in the Chairman's Christmas Newsletter, which attracted a good audience and was well received.

The second half our year has seen considerable activity with the group being restructured and refocused into a smaller group holding regular monthly meetings. We have reviewed the group's 'Objectives', reinforcing our aim to encourage good design in architecture and to ensure the legacy of the towns heritage. The group has been proactive in establishing closer working relationships with other groups in the Society when reviewing planning applications and has provided design and heritage advice for the letters written by GSoc to the council.

Over the summer this year we have arranged the Guildford Society Design awards, receiving a substantial number of entries reflecting the good quality of projects completed in the borough during the past two years. A panel of judges made up jointly by GSoc members and external individuals, prepared a 'short list' of projects to be visited and judged. The winners have been carefully selected and will be announced at a 'virtual' event in the late autumn. A little later this year, in collaboration with the University, we shall be organising the 'Architecture Lecture' which will focus on the theme of 'The challenge of achieving good design in multiple housing'.

Heritage Open Days (HODs) will be happening this year, but the event will be somewhat circumscribed. It is envisaged that 'virtual' tours of

some buildings will be available on line, but it is hoped that it will be possible to open some of Guildford's heritage gems, possibly utilising pre-booked, timed tickets.

We are keen to establish a more collaborative working relationship with the council and have held early discussions with Councillor's and Officers to explore how we can progress this over the coming months. We are especially interested in being able to comment and advise at the early stages of design for the strategic projects in the borough.

We are particularly sorry to report that Michael Jeffery who took on the Chairmanship of the D&H Group in 2015, felt it was time to hand over to a new Chair. The Society is fortunate that Peter Coleman was happy to step into the role in the New Year. Michael has been a stalwart of the Society since first being elected to the Executive Committee in 1983 and subsequently leading the Design Group. He was Chairman of GSoc from 2009 - 2014 and we owe him a debt of gratitude and thanks for all his many years of service.

Peter Coleman / Gillian Cameron - September 2020

Planning Group: **Annual Report 2019-20**

At the turn of the year Alistair kindly agreed to take the role of Acting Chairman of the Group. The members of the Group are thus Alistair Smith (Acting Chairman), John Baylis (Secretary), Gordon Bridger, Peter Coleman, John Harrison, Ian Macpherson, Amanda Mullarkey, David Ogilvie, and John Wood. Gordon, Peter, and Ian are 'communicating' members who are welcome to attend meetings. After many years' service Martin Taplin is standing down from the Group. We will miss his very expert advice as a retired Local Authority senior planning officer, and as one of our letter writing team: he has our very best wishes. Peter Coleman is assuming his new role of Chairman of D&H Group, and we are starting to implement a joint procedure to enable D&H to contribute more effectually to our work on planning applications.

Outcomes

John Wood prepares summaries of the outcomes of the letters we have written to GBC about planning applications. Recent summaries have been placed on the Planning section of the G Soc website. They make very interesting reading.

Meetings with Senior Officers

On the initiative of John Harrison, he, Peter and I met with Jan Harwood and Caroline Reeves on 10th July for a wide ranging discussion: we hoped this would lead to further meetings or workshops but nothing has transpired.

Local Plan

The new Local Plan: Strategy and Sites was adopted on 26th April 2019. This will be followed by The Local Plan: Development Management Policies, which is the second part of Guildford's Local Plan. The Council are about to publish a draft for consultation. The document will replace many of the detailed policies in the old 2003 Plan and will be important to us with regard to our response to planning applications. Once adopted it will, together with the Local Plan: Strategy and Sites fully supersede the existing Local Plan 2003 as the Council's Development Plan.

Furthermore, the Council has recently completed consultation on a Strategic Development Framework SPD which provides both general and site-specific design guidance for the strategic sites allocated in the Local Plan. There have not yet been any planning applications for the strategic sites, or indeed any public consultation on them.

Student Housing

Last year's Annual Report drew attention to a succession of commercial planning applications for blocks of student accommodation. This has now halted, but construction work on at least two of the schemes is now well under way (the Guildford College site adjacent to Stoke Park and the Walnut Tree Close site adjacent to the railway line beside Kernel Court)

Greg Melly, the University Senior Vice-President, Advancement and Partnerships, met with four of us including Alistair on 29th April 2019, with Stephen Wells (Director of Estates, Facilities and Commercial Services) and James Newby (Director of Business Improvement) attending. We had a very useful discussion; due to financial constraints the university has no present plan for any more student accommodation.

North Street

As last year, as far as the Planning Group is concerned there is nothing to report on the North Street Redevelopment site. In the new Plan it is still allocated for 41,000 square metres of additional retail and 6,000 square metres of food and drink. It does now include 400 new homes. All this is subject to review, but the outcome it is likely to be a higher proportion of residential. The lack of progress is in sharp contrast to Woking, see below, though we definitely do not want skyscrapers in Guildford.

Guildford Flood Scheme

We have taken part in consultation meetings called by the EA on plans to reduce flood risk along the River Wey. They are moving away from just "walls and barriers" in the town to a more joined up approach including holding back flows much higher upstream.

Letters from the Group

The Group continued to meet every three weeks at the Council offices. During the year the Council withdrew the IT support it has been giving

us and this caused us considerable difficulty: the February meeting had to be abandoned. However, because of Covid 19, our meetings are now conducted using Zoom, very kindly hosted and administered by Alistair. This is proving to be very satisfactory.

May 2019 to April 2020 the Group wrote 66 letters to GBC on a wide range of individual planning applications. Three of us, John Harrison, David Ogilvie and myself take it in turn to draft these letters, which are sent round the Group for comment before being sent. Before each meeting John Wood checks all the recent planning applications to the Borough and makes a short list which functions as the agenda for our meeting. Ian Macpherson does not attend meetings but sends us comprehensive comments on the agenda applications. As remarked above, we are starting to include D&H in this process.

About half the letters concerned applications for new dwellings, ranging from single houses to small estates, with two larger ones: one for 154 units in Ash and one for Garlicks Arch, see below. This is a higher number than usual and reflects the opportunities opened up by the Local Plan. About a quarter concerned shops or cafés, fewer than usual reflecting the decline in town centre retail activity. Some details of the weightiest applications are given below.

19/P/01974: 1-5 The Quadrant and The Casino Nightclub, Onslow Street

Last year we objected in the strongest possible terms to the previous application 18/P/01668 for an ugly 14 storey building, see last year's Report. The application was refused by the GBC Planning Committee, though without effect because it had already been taken to appeal on grounds of non-determination. Star Oyster withdrew from the appeal halfway through, but last November submitted the above new application, this time for a 10 storey block. It has retail on the ground floor, seven stories of student accommodation and two stories of entertainment on the top. We wrote again to object in the strongest possible terms for a wide range of reasons including massing, height and scale, siting, flood risk, the juxtaposition of student accommodation with night-time leisure and poor student facilities. The application has not yet been decided.

19/P/02223: Land at Garlick's Arch, Send Marsh/Burnt Common

This is a hybrid proposal (part full/part outline) submitted last December and comprising: Full planning permission for 220 residential dwellings and other associated works; and Outline planning permission for up to 300 residential dwellings and Travelling Showpeople plots (Sui Generis). This is the largest housing site in the Local Plan excepting the strategic sites. We wrote a substantial letter of objection to the full application. We had a number of criticisms of the design and layout of the scheme. Much further work remains to be done, especially as regards to increasing the sense of community and exploiting the landscape. There should be a much better social focus with some convenience retail, and there should be some on site provision for educational, health or sports facilities, whichever are most in need in the locality. We also doubted the adequacy of the provision of the new slip road on to the A3 and questioned some aspects of the proposed undergrounding of the massive power line that crosses the site.

20/P/00389: P C World, Woodbridge Road

This was one of a set of applications proposing that PC World be converted into two units the larger of which would be a Lidl store. We wrote a letter which included input from the Transport Group. The letter cast doubt on the findings of the Transport Assessment. It made comparisons with the Aldi store in Burpham and concluded that there is a risk of unacceptably severe congestion and increased danger at the entry to the site. But the most serious objection is the layout. Access to all car parking spaces is from a single line of travel around the building, with few sight-lines ahead, so drivers have no idea when entering the site whether there is any chance of a space.

20/P/00481: Plot 5, Guildford Business Park

We wrote in April 2019 to strongly object to a previous application, 19/P/00407, for 360 student units, see last year's report. The current application sought to demonstrate no demand for commercial office use, but we argued that the applicant's report fails to do so. In our opinion this site should be retained for future commercial use, which granting planning permission for student housing will frustrate.

19/W/00109 and 19/W/00110: Liongate House, Ladymead

These were prior notifications for proposed change of use from offices to 27 or 76 dwelling houses respectively (depending on how much of the building is converted). A GDPO application for prior approval

cannot be controlled by normal planning criteria, however if such planning criteria were to be allowed we wrote that we would object to the loss of employment space and the unsuitability of the site for dwellings due to its proximity to a busy traffic interchange and to the A3.

These applications and 20/P/00481 above, combined with lack of any new application for the Plaza site (see last year's report) indicate the failure of Guildford to attract interest from major employers. Unit 4 on the Business Park at present also stands empty, but M&G has had more success with the refurbished London Square.

19/CON/00023: 81 Commercial Way, Woking (WBC application PLAN/2019/0611)

This was a consultation application for a 39 storey block in the centre of Woking standing apart from the blocks of up to 34 storeys now being built. We noted that the height and bulk of the building proposed will be greater than that of any of the high buildings under construction in Woking. These buildings are in a single cluster and make a distinct and contained intrusion on the skyline as seen from many points near Guildford. We objected to the creation of a second cluster as an unwelcome further intrusion on the skyline. Furthermore no building in Woking should exceed the height of the North Downs ridge near Guildford, which is approximately equal to the height of the highest buildings in the present cluster.

20/CON/00006: Land to the north and south of Goldsworth Road Woking.

This was another consultation from Woking Borough Council concerning an Environmental Impact Assessment scoping request for proposed buildings up to 41 stories in height, the highest yet, to provide 975 residential units. We expressed concern at the impact this will have on views from the North Downs, including the Hogs Back and Merrow Down, particularly if it becomes the start of a second cluster of tall buildings to the west of the existing cluster. We fully support a letter from Guildford Borough Council and requested that our concerns be embodied in the EIA.

John Baylis, 3rd May 2020

Transport Group: **Annual Report 2019-20:**

Several changes have taken place within the Group during the past year. To begin with, we lost our Chairman, Chris Blow, to GBC as Borough Councillor for Shalford. However, he has still managed to attend our meetings and has been very supportive.

We were very fortunate that in July we were able to welcome two new members: Trevor Jones, with his encyclopaedic knowledge of rail matters, and Rosamond Unwin who reminds us of the social issues.

Dunsfold to Milford link

Following approval of the Dunsfold Park development, and in view of public concern in Waverley Borough about heavy construction traffic using country lanes in the area, we considered it timely to revive our earlier ideas of providing a new route between the A281 in the east and the A3 at Milford in the west. The added benefit would be a Parkway (Park & Rail) facility at Milford which could be attractive for the A3 northbound. The Society submitted our proposal to the Waverley Local Committee which elicited a verbal undertaking for possible investigation by the County Transport Authority.

The difficulty lies in the need for such a route to cross AONB territory, and a later discussion with Jim McAllister, of Dunsfold Park, indicated that it would have little chance of success.

Farnham Road/Rail bridge

As we reported last year, emergency repairs on the bridge took place in the last two Decembers. These are now expected to last for 60 years. We enquired of the Joint Committee whether there would be any increase in capacity and received a negative response. So, after an emergency expenditure by the County (SCC) of £4.5m and works carried out over 2 Christmas breaks, there are no expected improvements in capacity for this serious bottleneck of the Town's traffic.

Shalford Park & Ride?

In July, an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) was declared in Shalford, indicating excessive NO² concentrations on a short section of the A281, which called for an Action Plan to deal with it. Our response was to revive an idea first promoted by Barry Fagg, Guildford Borough Council (GBC), in 2016, to create a Park & Ride (P&R) facility using a landfill site adjacent to the A281 about 1km. south of the village. This

was put firstly to the GBC Parking Manager and then to the Joint Committee. At this latter, while also supported by Shalford Parish Council, one of the SCC officers explained why it had been rejected in 2008. It would now have to be part of SCC 's Transport Strategy, due for presentation in June. Meanwhile the emphasis would be on the proposed Gosden Hill Farm P&R. The final Shalford AQMA Action Plan contained no new action items.

Relocation of the Bus Station

In the past, the Group has put forward ideas on this topic but we were concerned when it emerged that a location for it along Leapale Road was being considered. Our main worry was that this could mean most buses having to approach along North Street, thus removing any possibility of its being fully pedestrianised. One of our members with access to passenger surveys wrote to GBC objecting to any suggested move away from its current location.

Cycling

We were pleased to be kept up to date with the work of the Guildford Bike Users Group (GBug) on the development of dedicated cycle paths and we made use of opportunities to contribute our views to their discussions with officers from both GBC and SCC. These concerned the London Road route from Waterden Road to Boxgrove Road and along the A25 as far as Woodbridge Road. We also reviewed Highways England's proposals for cycling routes within their M25 Junction 10 scheme. Sadly, the Greenway scheme to Godalming mentioned last year is on hold, awaiting funding.

Bridge Street

We noticed that, although Solum's transport specialist had proposed widening the exit from Bridge Street to 2 lanes turning right into Onslow St., as part of Solum's obligations under S106 to contribute to the Town's infrastructure, SCC had not endorsed it. We were able to produce an image of such an arrangement in the 1990s and enquired as to the reasons for the rejection. We were told that it could not be justified on the basis of current traffic studies and that there were more urgent projects in need of the funding.

Consultations

Transport for the South-East, an entity apparently with some influence on the placing of government funding, issued a Draft Strategy to 2050.

We contributed views to the Society's submission on the orbital routes to the south of Guildford, including the Dunsfold effect and the North Downs railway line.

More recently we provided comments on GBC's Strategic Sites draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), in particular to do with walking and cycling access.

Members

Thanks are due for their contributions throughout the year: Hugh Anscombe, Chris Blow, Keith Chesterton, Doug Clare, Trevor Jones, Colin Selvin, now a Corresponding Member, Chris Shaw and Rosamond Unwin.

Maurice Barham (Secretary) 7.5.20

Membership Secretary's Report:

Whilst the United Kingdom is currently in lockdown due to the pandemic, the Guildford Society groups have been busy in maintaining the beauty of Guildford in keeping with the words of Eric Parker who described Guildford as 'a beautiful city and to keep so'.

Work of the Society groups has been publicised in the News bulletins which have been circulated to all Members.

Although reports of the individual working groups have been posted in the News bulletins unfortunately this has not been transmitted into an increased Membership.

We currently have:-

Group	Number	Total
Life Membership (individuals)	48	48
Life Membership (Joint)	27	54
Individual Members (paid by standing order)	81	81
Joint Membership (paid by standing order)	62	124
Individual Members (pay by cheque)	16	16
Joint Membership (pay by cheque)	4	8
Corporate Membership	1	1
		332

New members enrolled during the year but sadly a number did not renew their membership from the previous year. No organisation can sustain itself without new members. This is certainly true for the Guildford Society. It would be appreciated if existing Members would publicise the Society to friends and neighbours in an effort to increase the membership.

John Shorto

5th June 2020

Summary Accounts:

THE GUILDFORD SOCIETY

Statement of Income and Expenditure for the year to 31st March 2020

	2019 - 2020	2018-2019
INCOME		
Subscriptions & Donation	£3,256.00	£3,788.00
Donations	£375.82	£110.00
Architecture Lecture Income	£650.00	-£582.00
Christmas Social	£345.00	£50.53
Town Bridge Market	£2900.00	£0.00
Other	£47.66	£866.00
TOTAL RECEIPTS	7,574.48	4,232.52
EXPENTIDURE		
Postage	£42.70	£84.10
Print & Publicity	£431.34	£491.35
Subscriptions	£409.00	£420.00
Website & e-mail	£337.40	£363.23
Refreshments	£0.00	£49.75
Insurance	£285.36	£271.78
Lectures and Events	£825.00	£0.00
Christmas Social	£157.08	£0.00
Other	£185.93	£476.00
Contribution for Planning Expert		£2,000.00
TOTAL PAYMENTS	2673.81	4.156.21
NET RECEIPTS	£4,900.67	£76.31
Total Assets in Bank	£26,415.26	£21,499.59
Total Liabilities	£243.00	£0.00

Comments on financial Statement

The financial statement has been reviewed by a qualified accountant. This is not an audit, which is not required due to our small size under charity commission rules but is a verification for the executive that accounts have been properly administered and reflect a proper view of the society's affairs.

The Society is processing a claim with HMRC for refund of Gift Aid which is not reflected in the accounts until received.

Alistair Smith
(Chairman & acting Hon. Treasurer)

Guildford Society - Contacts List

Chair

Alistair Smith

chair@guildfordsociety.org.uk

Hon.Secretary

Gillian Cameron

tel. 01483 503172

secretary@guildfordsociety.org.uk

Hon. Treasurer

Position vacant

Contact via The Chairman

Knowledge Groups & Leaders:

Planning Group

Temporary Chairman Alistair Smith

planning@guildfordsociety.org.uk

Transport Group

Position Vacant

transport@guildfordsociety.org.uk

Design & Heritage Group

Peter Coleman

design@guildfordsociety.org.uk

Local Economy Group

Gordon Bridger Contact via the Society Secretary

Membership Secretary

John Shorto

membership@guildfordsociety.org.uk

Website - www.guildfordsociety.org.uk

**Two of the Long-List contenders for the Society Design Awards
2020**



New Houses, East Guildford.



New Student Housing, Surrey University, North Guildford.

***The Guildford Society.
C.I.O reg. Number 1174395.
Registered Office: 24 Bury Fields, Guildford GU2 4AZ***