



## Minutes of the meeting on Monday 10 November 2025 at Pippbrook

*The Meeting was conducted by Cllr Margaret Cooksey – with 15 attendees, who were; Cllr Nick Wright, Cllr Stephen Cooksey, Cllr Rosemary Hobbs, Cllr Paula Keay, Cllr Hazel Watson, PC Steve Grout, Rev Anthony Rustell, Micheala Afford, Margaret Brett, Andrew Fuller, Chris Heaps, Jacqui Marsden, Andy Tanner, Pierre Tartari.*

**(1) APOLOGIES for ABSENCE;** Cllr David Draper\*, Rev Nelson Porter, Pat Smith, Basil Doha, John Meudell, David Tobitt. (\*Likely occasional absence due to timings of his 'mentoring' responsibilities).

**(2) MINUTES of OCTOBER Meeting and MATTERS ARISING:**

The Minutes were accepted as a true record and signed, with no matters arising.

**(3) POLICE UPDATE;** *We were delighted to welcome...* **PC Steve Grout**, who updated us... by saying that **(a)** his area is 'Dorking', and in it they have been **(b)** very active on **drug stop&search** resulting in 2 arrests; **(c)** their other priority being aimed at anti-social behaviour and **shop-lifting** – with more successes aided by improved CCTV and positive reporting; **(d)** MV was now a 'hot-spot' for **concentrated policing** – part of a national plan also targeting knife crime and linked with school visits. Stephen asked about current **graffiti** tagging – and Steve said they are watching one likely suspect. Rosemary asked if they were watching for **drug exchange/usage areas**, and he confirmed they were monitoring a few local spots. Margaret thanked him for attending.

**(4) UNITARY DEVOLUTION;** Stephen started by advising **(a)** that the news last week was the Government's decision to have **two Unitaries** in Surrey – the East/West pairing - that MVDC had supported – but there were to be only 2 Councillors per 'ward' (not the 3 they preferred) meaning that there would be 72 on the new Unitary; and **(b)** one of the first 'next stages' would be the formation of an '**Implementation Committee**' consisting of 2 members from each of the existing councils, and then, hopefully by February, the **(c) secondary levels** suggested by the consultation responses would be clarified and ready for debate. Margaret then spoke on the '**Dorking Community**' summary by Pat of their time in the High Street shop talking to the public – with their questions highlighting how so many knew so little of the process – proving that DC's initiative was as excellent as was its visibility. MargaretB asked what **funding** was going to be available for the secondary levels... to which Stephen replied that there was no detail yet. Margaret then reminded members that we had responded via the consultation process asking for the establishment of a '**DTC**' – at which Nick queried whether we were properly representative and regulated by voting regs or constitutional restraints - and Chris suggested the '*deja vu*' re-kindling of the 'Town Council-or-not' debate of years ago, and if we were to, then a Referendum would be best suited to decide?

**(5) BID update;** Andrew highlighted; **(a)** the **new planters** were in position – with general approval at the artistry (4 locals) aided by the Men's Shed; **(b)** the **Halloween event** including the 'Craft Capers' in the Library (with 150 there) had been very successful; **(c)** the **graffiti** on Barclays/Sainsburys would be cleaned off encouraging other owners to do likewise; **(d)** the residual '**gum**' on pavements was in negotiation for a re-do or a re-bate; **(e)** the new **cigarette bin** in Chequers Yard was being used; **(f)** they now had approval for the road closures for the **Xmas festival** – and there is to be a 'Gingerbread and Sleigh Trail – all details in the Guide just published; and on **(g) Retail**, there was to be a '**Late night Shop**' on thu11dec til 8pm, and that Holm Stores was to be succeeded by Monte Forte Pizza (in Reigate, Horsham) – Tikka Nation had also closed, but a Pet Spa was arriving in South Street! Pierre then asked a question (from JohnM) about the obstruction caused by A-boards (examples; Rush and Costa next to each other, and tables/chairs at Cozy Moose by the crossing)... to which Andrew replied that they were a vital element for the shops' benefit.



# Dorking Town Forum

Representing community, business groups and local organisations based in and around Dorking

**(6) TOWN Report;** Paula started by; confirming **(a) free Christmas parking** – Saturdays 29nov and 6+13dec; **(b)** that on 16oct there had been the '**MV Sustainability Awards**' – with category winners... Putty Cakes, Circular Dorking, Repair Cafe, and Mid-Surrey Community Fridges; **(c)** the **Cotmandene Public Spaces Renewal Order** consultation was underway; and **(d)** the **Community Assets Transfer Policy** was enacted (to set out a transparent and consistent approach to applications and the decision-making process governing the future transfer of assets to Parish or Town Councils or to qualified community organisations).

Rosemary queried whether those who might need one knew they had to have a **licence** to put tables/chairs out – to which Andrew replied that this was part of the data that Jo dispensed to new arrivals.

Nick updated us on the **Dorking Halls** schedule by advising that it would be closed for the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage ceiling repair from April to November – but the good news was that Pippbrook House was increasingly – and successfully - absorbing sufficient smaller events to reduce the negative effect on the D/H programme.

**(7) TRAFFIC ISSUES;** Chris opened with **(a)** a question on the result of the '**20mph**' proposal, to which Stephen advised that out of a total of 1,930 responses, 1300 or so were from Dorking residents – and of these **70% were against the proposition**. Chris then **(b)** asked for progress detail concerning our **counter-petition on traffic flow** in West/High Streets, on which Pierre confirmed he had been invited to present it to Cabinet (23oct) and had done so – advising our wish that MVDC would continue to study all the alternative solutions and to consult with the whole community on them – and that though there was no vote to accept/decline it, the petition was on record, and it was unlikely that the Council would ignore a request for neutral consideration – which prompted Chris to observe that the **Dorking MasterPlan** had been strategically altered by a mere 500 residents without any consultation with the community. He then touched on an email he had sent to Margaret listing other concerns – which would be circulated.

Hazel then raised the issue of the broken '**Wayfarer**' **finger-signs** at Lincoln Road (and other points close by) – with SCC Highways response saying these were not their responsibility - they removed one because it had been damaged – which left us in limbo... and now needing further research/debate about the next action.

## **(8) MEMBERS GROUPS' UPDATES;**

**Memorial Gardens Project;** Margaret intervened to thank Jacqui on our behalf for her work in improving the areas surrounding the Memorial – which was very evident – and pleasing - to all who had attended yesterday... and Jacqui continued by thanking those who had helped so far and who would continue until the grant funding had been used up.

**Churches Together;** Anthony added his thanks also, and remarked on the great number of people at the Remembrance – he with Nick, estimating in excess of 1,000 being present.

**Friends of Dorking/Food Float;** MargaretB said they had had a very successful 'Halloween Trail' event with 90 entries... and that the Christmas lights were being put up, with the trees to follow. And for the Food Float... they now have informal approval for moving to the South Street Garden area once the scaffolders arrived outside Barclays.

**Circular Dorking;** Andy was happy to report a very successful Enviro competition in the schools with the prize-giving event in the Library. He added that the 'Library of Things' was being added to and being used, and there was now a waiting-list for domestic energy surveys.

**Town-Twinning;** Margaret delightedly reported that an accord had been signed with **Duxbury MA**, and they were discussing how they might meet and when. (*Duxbury is 35 miles south of Boston*)

**Dorking Society/Museum;** Pierre reported that the Museum Volunteers had, again, been recognised and awarded, this time by MVDC and Central Surrey Voluntary Action (in addition to gaining the Queen's Award in 2021) – and that the current Exhibition featured the Dorking Home Guard.

**Mid-Surrey Community Fridges;** (*Micheala Afford had to leave the meeting before we reached this item*)

**(9) OTHER ITEMS;** *There were none. The meeting started at 17:30 and concluded at 19:05 (PjTnov25)*