



Minutes of the meeting on Monday 15 SEPTEMBER 2025 at Pippbrook

The Meeting was conducted by Cllr Margaret Cooksey – with 17 attendees, who were; Cllr Nick Wright, Cllr Stephen Cooksey, Cllr David Draper, Cllr Paula Keay, Cllr Elsie Rosam, Cllr Hazel Watson, Rev Anthony Rustell, Margaret Brett, Chris Heaps, Jo McGowan, John Meudell, Pat Smith, Andy Tanner, Pierre Tartari, David Tobbit, and Guest, Jacqui Marsden.

(1) APOLOGIES for ABSENCE; Basil Doha.

(2) MINUTES of JULY Meeting and MATTERS ARISING:

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

(3) POLICE UPDATE; *None available.*

(7) TRAFFIC ISSUES; *at the request of Chris, this item was moved up...* and he opened with his concern that, seemingly, **(a)** we were not being involved in any form of consultation or meetings on the current topics of the **Masterplan** and the Deepdene re-furbishment, especially in view of the Petition from Chalkpit/Ashcombe residents to delete the options of traffic control in West/High Sts proposed in the Masterplan. He extended this concern to **(b)** the news of the proposed **new rail service** Brighton/Newcastle via Redhill/Reading supposedly with no stop at Deepdene, and queried the knowledge and understanding of those involved. He then **(c)** gave the good news that, probably, MVDC were able to allocate >£14m to, finally, create **lift access** while repairing platforms/stairways. John then expressed a similar concern on the capabilities of those deciding on the Deepdene renewal. Hazel then took up the **traffic issue** by saying that there had been discussion on the Masterplan – and also that SCC H/Ways had measured route volumes. DavidD highlighted that the Petition displayed the concern of residents in D/North for the safety of some 400 children at the two schools on/close to the route – to which Stephen, in assessing the general feeling, said that both options had to be measured but neither was likely to be a good solution. Pierre then concluded by advising that a **counter-Petition** had been framed by the Dorking Society for the purpose of balancing the debate, and urged members to sign when he circulated the link.

Hazel reported that the new **zebra crossing** at the Triangle is nearing completion.

John ended with the saga of the **crumbling pavement** over the railway (close to Denbies), saying that after both GWR/NR and SCC H/Ways had denied responsibility for the problem, both had now sent in teams to repair it!

(4) UNITARY DEVOLUTION; Stephen again summarised the interim state of the **Unitary Devolution** plan in that we all waited for 15 October when the Government would publish its findings/decisions and then all queries about the 'lower tiers' (TCs/PCs and CBs) would



be debated as community groupings sought to establish themselves – and the main concern would centre on how assets could be protected and services continued. Margaret then said she would invite the relevant officer to our next meeting.

Pat then announced the formation of '**Dorking Community**' by their small group (herself, with Sally Elias, Jacqui Marsden, Wendy Saunders) with the sole aim of feeding public awareness and stimulating discussion on all these issues/decisions – and they were hoping to take the empty 'Dubai' shop (opp Downs) for a couple of weeks – but were harassed by MVDC to pay the proportionate Business Rate to which they very strongly objected.

(5) BID update; Jo highlighted; the **(a) retail 'churn'** which was at the usual level, and agreed with DavidD that the couple of boarded fronts were very unattractive but, having tried, they could do nothing about them; **(b) the new 'Walking Festival'** of a variety of 20 local walks would start on 20 September and some were already fully-booked; **(c) the revised 'Food&Drink' week** which opened with a pop-up cafe event in St Martin's on 9 August had been a great success for all - even with the rain; **(d) there was to be a 'Wedding' event** at Burford Bridge; **(e) the planters** were being constructed now the money was in, and **(f) our 'Christmas Festival' day** will be Sunday 30 November, and with all the new events/participants, they would be producing a booklet.

(6) TOWN Report; Paula started by saying; **(a) the work on Dorking Halls** was on schedule; as was **(b) the planning and approval for the design of the Foundry project** – with 5 residential and 2 commercial units, and building expected to start next spring; **(c) retail footfall** was 10% up, and though some closures were obvious, the vacancy rate of between 11/13% was still below the national average; but **(d) the increase in graffiti** was a concern – 24 tags having been removed – and DavidD asked who would be responsible for removing those on the Meadowbank stadium fencing – and MargaretB asked if the Police were involved, to which Nick confirmed they were; **(e) the Arts Alive programme** would run 27sep-31oct, and 'Heritage Open Days' events were current (12/21sep).

(8) MEMBER GROUPS Reports;

Dorking Society/Museum; Pierre detailed their 'Upper Stories' photo identification competition in the 'HOD' programme, and outlined their on-going problem with the Foundry project layout depriving them of vehicular access/space.

Helping the Aged; Elsie had attended ADHD and Alzheimer's meetings to add to her ability, as Council Champion for Disability, to assist those in need of such assistance.

ClimateX/Circular Dorking; Pat announced; **(a) the sponsoring of 'North by Northwest'** to be shown in the Green Room - and that 'UN World Peace Day' was on Sunday, and they would be gathering at the Memorial from 2/4pm for meditation; Andy advised significant



uptake for their free domestic energy surveys - using thermal cameras - and asked all to spread the word.

Friends of Dorking; MargaretB said **(a)** they have their 'Halloween Hunt' ready, and **(b)** the **Food Float** had the outline of co-operation by the developers of Barclays to enable them to function during the anticipated works on the front of the building.

TOWN-TWINNING; Margaret said a group will be visiting Gouvieux this weekend, and another group would be heading for Guglingen the week after.

(9) OTHER ITEMS; *There were none*

(10) Margaret then introduced our Guest – Jacqui Marsden, founder and organiser of the 'South Street Memorial Gardens' project, to outline her purpose and work, which she did, recalling her original request to MVDC to create a 'rubbish' sculpture, to which they responded with an invite to her to take on the entire renewal – which with their grant-aid and her assembly of volunteers, was now in hand and progressing. Margaret thanked her on behalf of the Forum, and led the appropriate applause.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING - Monday 6 October

The meeting started at 17:30 and concluded at 19:45

PjTsep25