

# COMMUNITY TEAM

## MEMBER NEWSLETTER



Edition 1 – Autumn 2023

### NEW START – FOUR THEMES

Over the last year, Dorking Society's Community Conservation and Planning group has refocused into the Community Team. Through talking to Society members, trustees and other stakeholders – as well as understanding more about how the Dorking Society can work in partnership with groups like the Dorking Business Improvement District, Residents Associations, Parish Councils and others with specific mandates, four new priority themes have emerged:



- ❖ Ensuring Conservation Area Management Plans are complied with and renewed.



- ❖ Encouraging appropriate brownfield regeneration to bring people to the town and surrounding area (including vacant spaces above the shops and offices).



- ❖ Championing Infrastructure development and improvement (including highways, parking etc).



- ❖ Reshaping Built Retail Provision for the internet age.

*A critical issue for the Community Team is how members can know what the team are up to and more importantly how members can contribute to and drive the Team's ideas and actions.*

*This new newsletter is a first step in meeting that challenge and includes more detail on some of the priority themes as well as opportunities for you to let the Team know what you think or to get involved.*

*At the end of the newsletter, you will find a copy of a survey the Team will be using widely in Dorking, and across the surrounding area that the Society serves, to collect ideas for what should be worked on. Please do complete the survey to let us know what you think.*

## PEOPLE IN THE TEAM

Dorking Society's Community Team brings together people with specific skills to support and advise local individuals and groups to help them champion issues but also to focus on the four identified priority actions.



The Community Team is now led by **James Friend**, an experienced local councillor who has led Mole Valley District, chaired its Development Management Committee, driven a Neighbourhood Development Plan, built an expanded local school and is churchwarden of Grade I listed building St John the Evangelist Church Wotton.

Small working groups have been created around each of the four actions:



**Ben Lee**, a local architect, leads on the team's thinking around what the future of Dorking's built retail environment might look like to meet the needs of the generations to come. Ben, and colleagues, have begun to research the data available to support understanding of current and future demands and want to actively support the team at Dorking Business Improvement District (Dorking BID) in raising the profile and economy of our town centre, alongside village shops to serve our rural communities.



**Frank Pemberton**, a distinguished local archaeologist, is championing the preservation of local listed buildings and ensuring that Conservation Area Management Plans are actively complied with and appropriate to the historic value of the area.



**James Poke**, who has sympathetically restored and brought back into use for housing a number of rural buildings, is leading on identifying brownfield sites for potential redevelopment locally to provide homes for people who will then contribute to the local economy.



**Chris Heaps** has been actively campaigning for capital investment in Dorking's public infrastructure for many years, including accessibility improvements to Dorking Deepdene station.

Chris is leading the Team's focus on infrastructure needs including public transport, highways and traffic flow and changes in demand for existing facilities and built services.

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**Pierre Tartari** was previously Secretary to the Museum as it prepared to open in 2010, and, recently, chair of this team. As a Trustee, Pierre represents the Society on both Town Forum and the Heritage Open Days committees alongside leading the Community Team's responses to planning applications, submitting policy-based concerns or messages of support on major development management requests to the local planning authority, Mole Valley District Council.

In addition to all of the above, **Andrew Lovett** leads on identifying specific environmental local improvement projects and capturing the views of local people.

*If you are interested in contributing to one or more of the working groups then please email [ct@dorkingsociety.org.uk](mailto:ct@dorkingsociety.org.uk) – the Team are also actively looking for help in social media to raise the profile of their work – if you think that you might be up for helping with that in particular then we would really appreciate you getting in touch with us.*

*Remember that you can join the Dorking Society and find out more about the work of the Community Team through [www.dorkingsociety.org.uk](http://www.dorkingsociety.org.uk).*

## DEVELOPMENT AWARDS

In addition to these working groups, the Community Team are looking at restarting the previous awards scheme to recognise the best new developments in the Area of Benefit.



Potential categories might recognise the best new home(s), best re-use of a brownfield site, best commercial building or best new community development. In coming months the team will

1. Agree the categories
2. Identify and recruit judges
3. Agree criteria with the judges
4. Advertise for nominations
5. Shortlisting (as required)
6. Judging
7. Hold an event to celebrate the successes and encourage high quality developments in the future.

## PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Community Team also comment on major planning applications to Mole Valley District Council as the local planning authority.



In recent months, amongst other things, the Community Team have objected to the application for new housing at Sondes Place Farm, as the site is currently designated as greenbelt, and supported the Museum team in improving the Old Foundry building for better displaying items of historic interest.

*If you see an application for Development Management that you would like the Community Team to review and potentially comment on to Mole Valley, then please email the team on [ct@dorkingsociety.org.uk](mailto:ct@dorkingsociety.org.uk).*

## SURVEY

The four priority areas, and current responses to planning applications, are being informed by discussions amongst the team members but it is crucial that the members of the society as a whole contribute to shaping these views.

To start to assist in that challenge, the Community Team has created a short survey. The chart lists some of the things that the Dorking Society could do more of. Please tell us which you think are important by ticking the boxes and emailing back to the Dorking Society Community Team at [ct@dorkingsociety.org.uk](mailto:ct@dorkingsociety.org.uk) when you can also give more information about your answers or to mention other things that you would like the Community Team to do.

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In the autumn, the Community Team will be out and about in the town to collect ideas from local residents as to which projects would best enhance the area. If you see them, please say hello!

		Very important	Fairly important	Not important
1	Work against inappropriate development			
2	Encourage the use of brown field sites			
3	Protect green areas			
4	Promote arts in and around the town			
5	Campaign for better public transport			
6	Publish information about the local area			
7	Encourage the planting of trees and plants			

### Caring for Dorking and the villages – Past, Present & Future

Abinger Beare Green Betchworth Box Hill Broadmoor Brockham Capel Coldharbour Forest Green Friday Street Holmbury St Mary Holmwood  
Leigh Mickleham Newdigate Oakwoodhill Ockley Walliswood Westcott Westhumble Wotton

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