

COMMUNITY TEAM

MEMBER NEWSLETTER



Edition 2 – Summer 2024

WHAT DOES “GOOD” LOOK LIKE?

Welcome to the second edition of our new Dorking Society Community Team newsletter and thank you for the enthusiastic response to the first edition – we really appreciated the support, ideas and energy that it created.

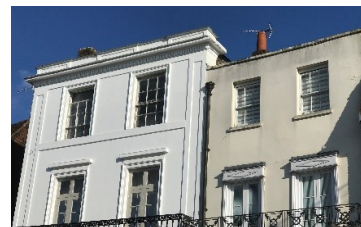
This time around we spotlight the Best Development Awards, how we champion development matters and follow-up the Priorities Survey that we undertook at the end of last year.

In order to represent the views of our community – across our market town and our rural villages – we know that we need to hear from you regularly so that we understand what matters to residents and businesses locally.

As an example, when the Community Team reviews new planning applications, we use the framework of the adopted planning policies to summarise our opinions, including Neighbourhood Development Plans where these exist. Later in this Newsletter edition, you will see that for the Best Development Awards, we have deliberately referred to “Is the Architecture Good?”



Rather than just challenge the expert and / or experienced judges to determine what “Good” means, we would like to understand what “Good Architecture” means to you. We know that people living in or visiting Dorking and the surrounding area value the appearance of the built environment and its patchwork of evolving styles and features. In 100, 200 or 500 years time – will what is built today stand the test of time?



So please get in touch and tell us, what you think makes “Good Architecture” for Dorking and our surrounding communities – with more examples of what you mean (or don’t mean!) and play your part in helping to influence and champion a good built environment for the generations to come.

You can email us via ct@dorkingsociety.org.uk

Very many thanks! **James Friend**

BEST DEVELOPMENT COMPETITION

It is now just over a decade since our last Competition and the winner then – Cleveland Court in Westhumble Street – still looks as innovative, attractive, and well-engineered as it was in 2011 when it won our top accolade.



As Dorking and our local villages have enjoyed a wide variety of renovations and new builds since then, we think it is the right moment to re-introduce our Awards and have pleasure in detailing the conditions for entry.

How to nominate and enter?

If you are the owner, tenant, developer or architect of a new build or re-development, you can self-nominate ... or, as a local resident who feels that a project is 'special', then do please nominate it yourself (and we will contact the owner during our processing).

What are the categories?

Just two – either a '**Domestic residence**' or a '**Commercial unit**' – and of course we would have great regard for any that are in a Conservation Area or which involve Listed properties.

What will the Judges be assessing?

The underlying criterion will be (a) evidence of the 'social benefit' that the project provides to and within the community. But we will also consider (b) sensitivity of design, (c) relevance to surroundings, (d) energy efficiency and (e), in the case of a re-development, positivity of re-use as a value to and in the community. And in all cases, and almost as a tiebreaker ... 'Is the architecture good?'.



How long will the competition last?

Nominations are now open until the closing date of 31st August 2024. You enter by using the form on our website <https://dorkingsociety.org.uk>, or available to collect at Dorking Museum. After this, we would examine the photos you give us, then view the development and, finally, create our short-list for the Judges Panel. We plan to announce the Winner and Runners-up on 30th September 2024.



Who are the Judges?

Our panel will be a mix of significant local professionals (architect, surveyor, estate agent, planner, and conservator) plus the Chair of the Society and the Chair of the Society's Community Team.



What are the Awards?

The Overall Winner will be awarded a plaque, and there are Cups for runners-up in both categories.



CHAMPIONING INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

Many Dorking residents planning holidays involving flying from Gatwick Airport or travelling by train to the West Country or Wales will be only too aware that the most taxing part of the journey may be climbing the 42 steps at Dorking Deepdene station encumbered with heavy suitcases and may decide to make other arrangements. The position is even worse for the disabled, the aged and those with prams or buggies for whom access may actually be impossible.



With the support of the North Downs Line Community Rail Partnership (of which I am Vice-Chairman) and other bodies such as the Dorking Society, Dorking Forum and RailFuture, I have long been trying to attract funding for the installation of lifts, or at least ramps, most recently from the Department for Transport's Access for All scheme. Although Dorking Deepdene was high on the list of possible recipients prepared by Great Western Railway, we were unsuccessful in the first round of applications, and only during the last few days have I heard that we have sadly failed to be chosen in the second round. The Vice-Chairman (London & South East) of RailFuture and I hope to meet a GWR director in June to discuss this outcome, given that many stations with lower footfall were preferred by DfT.

We will continue to press for improvements, in addition to the new "temporary" steps recently installed after pressure by other Dorking residents. Meanwhile, there is some good news. Since last December, Deepdene has enjoyed a regular clock-face half-hourly service to Gatwick Airport and Reading for the first time ever.

Initially, this service did not run on Sundays, but from June this year it is now being delivered seven days a week. It would be even more popular if access to the station were improved and if more Dorking residents appreciated that the airport is only about half-an-hour away by train.

On the bus front, the good news is that funding has been received from the Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Fund for nine additional real-time information displays to be installed at bus stops outside Deepdene station; Pippbrook/Dorking Halls; KFC; Superdrug; The White Horse; Crostinies in Horsham Road; and the former bus station in South Street.

Chris Heaps

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

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



All of you reading this are sitting in your homes mostly within a couple of miles of St Martin's tall spire... yes? If so, all of you over the next few months are going to read, see, and react to the hottest of national political topics – the need for new housing.

Why? Because the Mole Valley Local Plan is now accepted by the examining Inspector and will become an actual building 'invitation' in a few months – which means that about 900 units in and around us will be 'OK' to start, remembering that, because they are still in the Local Plan, they are likely to get planning approval. So, what is our view?

Well, we really – really – do need extra homes, especially at the 'smaller' end of the range and particularly close to town and our villages thus enlarging their communities and supporting their infrastructures. So, we are not likely to object to any of them in principle but only in their detail and how they align to the adopted Development Management policies. And, just so you are aware, Surrey County Council Highways have a high bar to object to accesses onto main roads like the A24 or A25 with a focus mainly on highways safety.

We must all hold a positive view; the need is vital but not to be concluded without diligence, questioning and acceptability – and you all have a role here... keep looking, keep commenting, and always let us know your thoughts. Please do get in touch with the Community Team if you ever see a planning application that you would like us to review (email ct@dorkingsociety.org.uk).

Thank you. **Pierre Tartari**

COMMUNITY TEAM SURVEY

At the end of 2023, members of the Community Team braved the winter weather and held a tabletop event to gather views and priorities from the public on what we should be doing on behalf of our local communities.



A huge thank you to everyone that contributed ideas and thoughts through the survey process. As well as being amazed at the proportion of people in West Street that are visitors to the area, we were able to see a range of priorities to focus on:

	Top Priority or Very Important	Priority or Fairly Important	Not Important
Protect green areas	100%	0%	0%
Work against inappropriate development	83%	0%	17%
Encourage the planting of trees and plants	33%	67%	0%
Encourage the use of brown field sites	17%	83%	0%
Campaign for better public transport	17%	83%	0%
Publish information about the local area	33%	50%	17%
Promote arts in and around the town	0%	83%	17%

The Community Team meet regularly and if you would like to know more or get involved then please email us on ct@dorkingsociety.org.uk

Remember that you can join the Dorking Society and find out more about the work of the Community Team through www.dorkingsociety.org.uk

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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