

From your Surrey County Councillor **Keith Witham**



From Cty Cllr Keith Witham - Representing you at Surrey County Council. Email Newsletter - September 2019

As you know, I issue this newsletter/update to residents about quarterly, to keep you informed on SCC/Surrey, Guildford and local village issues. As we may have a General Election soon, I wanted to update you on some important **LOCAL** issues, before all that kicks off!

The big national issues are vital and very important, but so is what happens in our own local area, day to day. I hope you find my newsletter of interest and, as always, if you have any feedback do let me know.

In this e-newsletter

1. Success for local groups - SCC grant applications
2. Less fatalities on our roads, more road safety training, and our local Speed Watch campaigns
3. Improving our bus services
4. Surrey Fire and Rescue update - new firefighters start work

5. Extension of the Blue Badge Disabled parking scheme
6. The Basingstoke Canal - a hidden gem
7. More homes to enable older people to live independently
8. Celebrating Surrey's Carers
9. Schools update - Primary and Secondary - and "SEND" advice
10. Help to create a cleaner, greener Surrey

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1. Small Surrey County Council Grants for local Voluntary Groups

Thank you to all those groups and organisations who responded to my request in my last e-Newsletter regarding the grants to voluntary groups available from Surrey County Council.

I'm delighted to report that as a result I've been able to support **17 local**

groups and projects who have benefitted from a grant in 2019 -
geographically spread across all of our local villages:

FAIRLANDS

- Fairlands Community Association - towards the cost of a “welcome” sign at the entrance to Fairlands
- Fairlands/Normandy Doctors Surgery Patient Liaison Group - supporting a public Diabetes Awareness-raising event held at Normandy

JACOBS WELL

- River of Life Group for sound equipment

NORMANDY

- Normandy Artists “ArtScene” Project
- Normandy Rounders Club - for equipment
- The Therapy Garden - towards a power upgrade
- Orchard Close (off Westwood Lane) Grit Bin renewal

PIRBRIGHT

- St Michaels and All Angels Church, Pirbright Dragon Fair
Publicity Banners
- Pirbright Royal British Legion towards a commemorative seat.
- Knowl Hill School, Pirbright towards playground improvements
- Pirbright Football Club for equipment, line marker
- Pirbright Youth Cricket Club for equipment, practice and match balls

WORPLESDON

- Worplesdon and Burpham Cricket Club towards new mower
(ground at Worplesdon Memorial Hall, Perry Hill)

- 1st Rydes Hill (St Mary's) Scouts for camping equipment
- St Mary's Church (Worplesdon PCC) towards removal of old oil tank

WOOD STREET VILLAGE

- Wood Street Village Association for new gazebos
(Wood Street Village groups had five grants last year!!)

ALL LOCATIONS

- Replacement of 16 wooden signs on local footpaths/bridleways.

This brings to **over 80** the number of our local voluntary groups that I have been able to support through a small grant. The next round of applications will be from April 2020 - as always funds permitting.



2. Less fatalities on our roads - more road safety training - and local Speed Watch Campaigns

There has been a reduction in the number of fatalities on Surrey's roads. The number of people killed on our roads dropped from 36 in 2017 to 27 in 2018 - but there is always more to do. I know from the regular feedback I get from residents that local road safety, speeding, and anti-social driving remain prime concerns of residents.

Surrey County Council, our Fire and Rescue Service and the Police have a safety programmes in schools, and one specially aimed at young new drivers - Safe Drive Stay Alive - see more at

<http://www.safedrive.org.uk/>

CAN YOU SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL SPEED WATCH?

All three of our local Parish Councils - Worplesdon, Normandy and Pirbright - operate Speed Watch schemes, with the support of Volunteers in conjunction with Surrey Police. Can you help. More details via your local Parish Council:

Worplesdon: clerk@worplesdon-pc.gov.uk

Normandy: leslie.clarke@normandyparishcouncil.gov.uk

Pirbright & Fox Corner: pirbrightparishcouncil@yahoo.co.uk



3. Improving our Bus services - Bus route 28 increased to hourly

From 2nd September Bus route 28 was increased to hourly from every 90 minutes. Surrey County Council has been working with local bus operators to offer residents improved services, Route 28 is - Woking, Brookwood, Pirbright, Worplesdon, Guildford. On this occasion the council has worked with Falcon Buses to provide an hourly service, an improvement on the previous service which ran every 90 minutes, having stepped in to save the service when the previous operator discontinued it with

Our buses are a lifeline for many residents, so it's good news news this route is being extended. This services is supported by Surrey County Council who are working hard to meet local demand and improve access to key services. I am pressing SCC to give a higher priority to supporting more buses.



4. Surrey Fire and Rescue - update

Surrey County Council **exempted** Surrey Fire and Rescue from making any financial savings in 2019, and allocated an extra £900,000 for new fire engines, recruitment of new staff and their training, and for changing its services. That investment is now coming to fruition.

In August - **24 new full-time firefighters** graduated from the Surrey Fire and Rescue Service. The recruits showcased their skills at a 'passing out parade'

after completing 13 weeks of training. A series of demonstrations including tackling a fire, performing a rescue from a third floor window and dealing with a road traffic collision took place while friends, family and others looked on.

Surrey's new firefighters have now started work. Additional training courses for more On-Call and full-time firefighters are planned.

Congratulations to our new firefighters on their significant achievement in completing this testing and intensive and challenging firefighter training. This latest training course is part of SCC's ongoing recruitment drive for more full-time and On-Call firefighters. We should all be very proud of all of our dedicated and highly skilled firefighters who help keep Surrey safe 24/7, 365 days a year, both by responding to emergencies and by helping the public to prevent emergencies from happening in the first place. I wish our newest firefighters a very long and happy career.



5. Extension of the “Blue Badge” Disabled parking scheme.

I can report on recent changes to the Blue Badge (disabled parking)

scheme. Legislation has expanded the eligibility for “Blue Badges”, previously only available for people with physical walking difficulties, to now include people who have “hidden” disabilities.

There are many disabilities/conditions which fall into the new category. But it's not automatic. Just because someone has a non-visible (hidden) disability e.g. Autism or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), does not mean that they will automatically qualify for a Blue Badge. Government regulations have eligibility criteria in place and applications will have to be supported by evidence from relevant professionals to show that the criteria have been met. The regulations refer to an applicant when undertaking a journey experiencing “very considerable psychological distress” or who are at risk of “serious harm” to themselves, or to those supporting them or around them.

For more information on eligibility, or to apply online, please visit Surrey County Council's website: www.surreycc.gov.uk/bluebadges This is the quickest and easiest way to find out information, or to apply for a Blue Badge. Or if you need to speak to someone, call Surrey County Council on [0300 200 1003](tel:03002001003).



6. The Basingstoke Canal - a “hidden gem”

One of the subjects that I scrutinise at Surrey County Council are environmental matters. That of course covers a very wide range of subjects, but one topic which I and a group of Councillors looked into recently was the Basingstoke Canal. The canal is owned jointly by Surrey County Council and Hampshire County Council. We met at the Basingstoke Canal Centre, Mytchett Place Road, Mytchett, Surrey GU16 6DD to see the facilities for ourselves and meet staff and volunteers. There is a very active Basingstoke Canal Society.

It's a beautiful, fantastic environment for visitors and families, and in my view is not as well known as it should be. And for anyone who lives in Pirbright, Normandy or one of the Worplesdon villages, it's literally only about 15 minutes away from our area. Do try and visit - it's a real “hidden gem”. For

more information have a look

at: www.hants.gov.uk/thingstodo/countryparks/basingstokecanal/



7. More homes to enable older people to live independently

Up to 725 affordable homes specially designed to help older people live independently will be provided within 10 years under plans outlined by Surrey County Council. The plans will also involve expanding the provision of supported housing for people with learning disabilities or autism to help them exercise choice and control over their daily lives.

The new housing schemes will comprise self-contained homes and are designed to enable vulnerable people to live independently knowing that care and support are on hand.

The plans will enable residents to enjoy the benefits of independence and privacy in a home of their own, with their own front door. They will also be able to enjoy living in a vibrant and active community, often with facilities such as cafes and hairdressers, safe in the knowledge that care and support are close at hand.

These schemes will provide a 'home for life' for people whose disabilities, frailty, vulnerability or health needs mean that ordinary housing won't let them remain independent but who don't need to move to residential care.

This ambitious programme by SCC will give our residents choices and ambitions while also making our budgets stretch further. We intend to continue working closely with Surrey's district and borough councils as the plans are developed.

For older people, more extra care housing – homes with support staff on hand – will be created across Surrey. For people with learning disabilities or autism, provision of independent living schemes will be expanded. These give people support for their individual needs such as help with daily life skills.

A mix of approaches is being considered for providing the new homes, including the county council freeing up sites on its own land and striking deals with providers for units in private specialist developments.



8. Celebrating Surrey's Care Workers

Care workers have been recognised for their support and commitment to Surrey residents. They were celebrated at an event held by the SCC Adult Social Care Team held to mark Professional Care Workers Day.

Testimonials from care homes and other care providers were read out highlighting the exceptional dedication of care workers to the vulnerable people they support.

In Surrey, around 22,500 care workers support more than 30,000 residents. Their care and dedication helps keep people safe, well and independent, often enabling them to stay in their homes for longer. Care workers make a positive difference to so many lives and we should thank them for their commitment to Surrey's residents day in, day out.

There are lots of opportunities in Surrey to start a career in care. Visit the Adult Social Care careers webpage to find out

more. <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/jobs/job-sectors/adult-social-care-careers>



9. Schools Update and advice on “SEND”

It's not by chance that in Surrey we have fantastic schools. Last time I reported that parents of **87%** of Surrey children had been offered places at their first choice of primary school - and **97%** of pupils were given one of their top three preferred schools.

This time I would like to update you on the position regarding **Secondary Schools**. This year the number of secondary applications increased by 2% to 12,428.

Extra secondary school places were made Including at the Hoe Valley School in Woking and several schools have been able to offer above their usual Admission Number

Overall, 97.7% (12,141) of secondary applications were received on-line this year. Parents who apply on-line are able to accept or decline their offer of a place on-line, making this a much simpler exercise. Parents can rank up to SIX preferences for secondary schools, in the order they prefer.

- **81.1%** (10,080) of Surrey parents were offered a place at their first preference school

- **92.1%** (11,447) of Surrey parents were offered a place at one of their top three preference schools

- **94%** (11,688) of Surrey parents were been offered a place at one of their six preference schools

This means that just 6% (740) of Surrey applicants were not offered any of their preferred schools. For those applicants SCC offered an alternative school place. In addition, a further 191 pupils have been offered a place at a mainstream Surrey school under their Education Health and Care Plan.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). In August I reported that Surrey County Council is investing over £1million to create a new SEND unit for 21 local pupils at the Worplesdon Primary School, Fairlands. That is now subject to a Planning Application. The intention is to build and open by September 2020. Thank you to the school and parents for use of the above photo.

For parents with “SEND” with concerns or queries:

SEND Advice Surrey is a confidential and impartial service for parents and carers of children and young people with SEND aged 0 to 25

years. Helpline: [01737 737300](tel:01737 737300)

Email: sendadvice@surreycc.gov.uk

www.sendadvicesurrey.org.uk



10. Help to create a cleaner, greener Surrey

Residents are being asked to help shape Surrey's long-term climate strategy by sharing their views with Surrey's Greener Future task force. Community groups are also being asked to put forward ideas for creative, innovative and exciting community projects where groups can work together in Surrey's Future Design Challenge, please view the links and if you can respond by 15th September.

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/surrey-matters/community/could-you-be-part-of-surreys-greener-future>

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www.facebook.com/keithwitham1 for more regular updates.

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But equally, do please feel free to forward this email onto any family, friends or neighbours who don't receive these email updates from me, but might like to do so. I usually send them quarterly, or more often if urgent. They cover SCC/Surrey; Guildford and local/village issues.

To add someone to the email list, all I need is a request ***from them*** to that effect, ***plus their name and postal address with postcode***: Send to: keithwitham1@hotmail.co.uk



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