

FEDORA

The Voice for Oxshott

Minutes of the third AGM of FEDORA - the Voice for Oxshott CIC held on
Thursday 9th November 2023 at 7.00pm at the Royal Kent School,
Oakshade Road

1. Present

FEDORA Directors

- Anthony Wolfe (Chair & Treasurer) – meeting chair
- Ian Dilks (Planning)
- Mike Wheeler (Roads)

Local Councillors

- Mark Sugden, Surrey County Councillor for Hinchley Wood, Claygate and Oxshott
- Corinne Sterry, Elmbridge Councillor for Oxshott & Stoke D'Abernon
- Alan Parker, Elmbridge Councillor for Oxshott & Stoke D'Abernon

Royal Kent School

- Katie Hancock, Headmistress, Royal Kent School

61 FEDORA Members and Supporters

2. Introduction- Anthony Wolfe

Anthony Wolfe welcomed the members present, the local councillors and Katie Hancock, Headmistress of Royal Kent School.

It was explained that the formalities of the meeting would be split into four components:

- Formalities (two resolutions)
- The Chairman's Statement
- Overview of Roads – Ian Dilks
- Overview of Planning – Mike Wheeler

3. Apologies for absence received from

- Nix Birrell
- Andrew Burley
- David Cooke
- Peter Fleming
- Peter Hunt
- David Lewis
- Denise Stanczyk
- Hugh Tompkins

4. Quorum

As required in the Articles of Association of FEDORA - the Voice for Oxshott CIC, it was recorded that with some 57 members, and so more than 10 percent of the membership, the meeting was declared quorate.

5. Resolutions

Approval of Accounts

The accounts for FEDORA – the Voice for Oxshott CIC for the year ending 31st December 2022 were unanimously approved.

Re-election of Directors

The re-election of the current directors Ian Dilks, Mike Wheeler and Anthony Wolfe was unanimously approved.

6. Chairman's Statement – Anthony Wolfe

Context

Whilst good progress has been made in the last 2 or 3 years, a lot still remains to be completed, not least with:

- the Local Plan
- the Design Code
- paths along Sandy Lane
- completion of the signage for the 20 mph through the village
- signage for the HGV ban at nights along the A244
- and Junction 10 of the M25 and A3.

Furthermore, it is only realistic to expect some considerable turmoil following the next General Election, whatever your political persuasion.

It is quite conceivable that a lot of the current policies and direction of travel around housing and planning (not least the green belt), may well all go in the bin.

Moreover, there is the very real threat of the development of the large new village at Wisley.

Volunteers

Although FEDORA is very grateful to the teams that distribute the magazine, the litter pickers and the Green Spaces team, FEDORA is still only a small team – currently 7. They are:

- Ian Dilks – Roads
- Mike Wheeler – Planning
- Nicole Birrell – Editor of the magazine
- Deborah Chitty – Membership Secretary
- Sandra Elmes – as the Communications Manager, she has been doing battle with the website. In time, she will be reducing her role to focus on the production and distribution of the magazine
- Simon Harker – Leader of Community Speed Watch.
- Lindy Wheeler- Green Oxshott

Two have been two notable additions to the FEDORA team are:

- Nicole Birrell who has joined us as the Editor of the magazine.
- Simon Harker who has now got the Oxshott Community Speed Watch established.

But, despite these two additions, there is still a shortage of team members:

1. Magazine distributors.
2. An Advertising Manager for the Magazine.
3. A Company Secretary
4. A Website Manager

Website

Apologies were given for the little progress that has been made in the past 24 months with the website. The system needed upgrading through 2 versions and the bottom line was that the software is far too complex for what we need and therefore an evaluation of what is available to meet our relatively simple needs along with properly resourced technical support is in progress.

This will have financial implications, but with a limited outlay the annual running costs are likely to be within FEDORA's annual financial resources.

7. Roads – Ian Dilks

Ian Dilks reported that progress continues to be slow due to the complexity of dealing with the structure of Surrey Highways and recent changes:

- An Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) has now been agreed to bring into effect an overnight HGV ban. Doing this by an ETRO route was quicker but it does mean it is open to consultation before being finalised. Work was delayed due to a potential clash with existing diversion routes but this has now been resolved. Signage should be implemented shortly.
- A new 20mph speed limit for the centre of the village is now in force but the signage is not complete with both static and vehicle activated signs to come. Once in force for a while, speeds will be remeasured to assess the impact.
- High Street parking changes are now being implemented and signage updated.
- Progress has been made to arrange for resurfacing of the railway bridge to be scheduled for the coming year and also clear out the blocked drains to the south of the bridge.
- There has been disappointing progress with footpaths. Working closely with Cllr Sugden and after a year or more of discussions it was disappointing to be told recently by Surrey Highways that a footpath outside Oxshott Lodge is no longer a priority. Options will continue to be pursued.
- It has not been possible to secure funding for a proper crossing to be installed in Steels Lane at the junction with Holtwood and Oakshade Roads. Funding has been secured to employ someone to patrol the crossing at peak times but it has not proved possible to find someone to take on the role.

8. Planning – Mike Wheeler

Mike Wheeler covered three areas: the status of the Local Plan, current planning issues and Surrey CC ward boundaries.

Local Plan

- The Local Plan has been submitted by Elmbridge for Inspection. It will be seen as controversial as the housing target is some 25% below government targets.
- It is therefore likely to see challenge from owners of Green Belt land who will argue that the Local Plan is unsound.
- The whole process will take about 12/18 months, assuming the plan is not rejected.
- The best outcome will be if the Local Plan is adopted, leading to retention of Green Belt but also increased housing density.
- The worst outcome will be if the Local Plan is rejected and forces the release of Green Belt as well as increased densification.
- It is likely that any Local Plan will remain vulnerable to changes in housing policy with a new government.
- The Design Code is part of the Local Plan and sets out a framework for judging future planning applications. The good news is that Oxshott is now recognised as a separate settlement, whereas the original proposal was to treat Oxshott as a suburb of Cobham. So, thanks to everyone who responded to the consultation. It shows that making views known actually counts.

Current planning issues

- There has been increased densification apparent with three recent applications for sub-development of plots on the **Crown Estate**.
- There has been a recent well publicised court case for sub-division of a plot on **The Ridgeway** which has shown that sub-division can be prevented where estates have the right form of covenant protection.
- Further good news has been where an application for another care home off **Copsem Lane** has been rejected.
- However, the bad news is that a sub-development for four blocks of semi-detached houses has been approved on **Holtwood Road**.
- There have been various applications for redevelopment of **High Street**, two of which have been approved whilst an application for redevelopment of Heath Buildings is currently being considered by Elmbridge BC.
- There has been an application for an infill scheme of **Blundel Lane** for terraced houses at the bottom of a garden, which can be seen as a precursor to further such applications as part of a drive to make more efficient use of land.
- Thanks are due to our local borough councillors for their continued interest in these contentious applications and their support to the local community.

Surrey boundaries

- There is a proposal from the Boundary Commission to change Surrey CC's ward boundaries.
- At present, the proposal shows most of Oxshott to be within the ward of Hinchley Wood, Claygate & Oxshott with the rest part of Cobham ward.
- The proposal divides Oxshott along the A244 with the area to the west being part of Cobham and the area to the east being part of Esher & Claygate.

- In addition, the identity of Oxshott is lost with the name no longer featuring in either of the two new wards.
- Key considerations of the Boundary Commission include ensuring the reflection of community identity.
- FEDORA has argued that:
 1. Division by reference to the A244 is arbitrary and artificial
 2. Oxshott has a very clear geographic identity
 3. Current proposals sacrifice the concept of community
- The Boundary Commission have been politely but quite forcefully asked to reconsider. It is encouraging that many other parts of Elmbridge have rejected proposals as being ill considered.
- Currently we are waiting to see how the Boundary Commission reacts.

9. QUESTIONS:

- Martin Todd - what is the worst-case scenario if the Local Plan is turned down?
MW advised that some 5 years ago there were discussions about building 15,000 houses on Green Belt between Leatherhead and Oxshott.
- Philip and Catherine Davies – planned Surrey ward boundary changes? Has the time expired to object as individuals?
MW advised that is too late for individuals to object. The key is that the ward boundaries should reflect community identity. However, with the community of Oxshott split into two and losing its identity, what is proposed is arbitrary and artificial. Submissions have been made to retain Oxshott's links with Claygate and Hinchley Wood, with the 3 clearly defined communities linked by the railway.
- Michael Carpenter – what is FEDORA's view of the Heath Buildings development?
MW advised that FEDORA was well aware that the Heath Buildings development was divisive, reflected in the fact that more than 150 submissions had been submitted to Elmbridge planning, which contained a variety of opinions on the proposals.

FEDORA was positive about the concept of developing the village centre, but was concerned, particularly with the height and bulk of the proposed building and that the concerns of Midgarth residents were addressed.
- David Reeves – as a resident of Midgarth he gave his negative view of the proposed development of Heath Buildings. He expressed his support for the redevelopment in principle but had issues with the proposed design.
- David Mattison – is the A3/Junction 10 project running to schedule?
ID advised that there had been no announcement or news about the project's progress.

The meeting closed at 8pm.