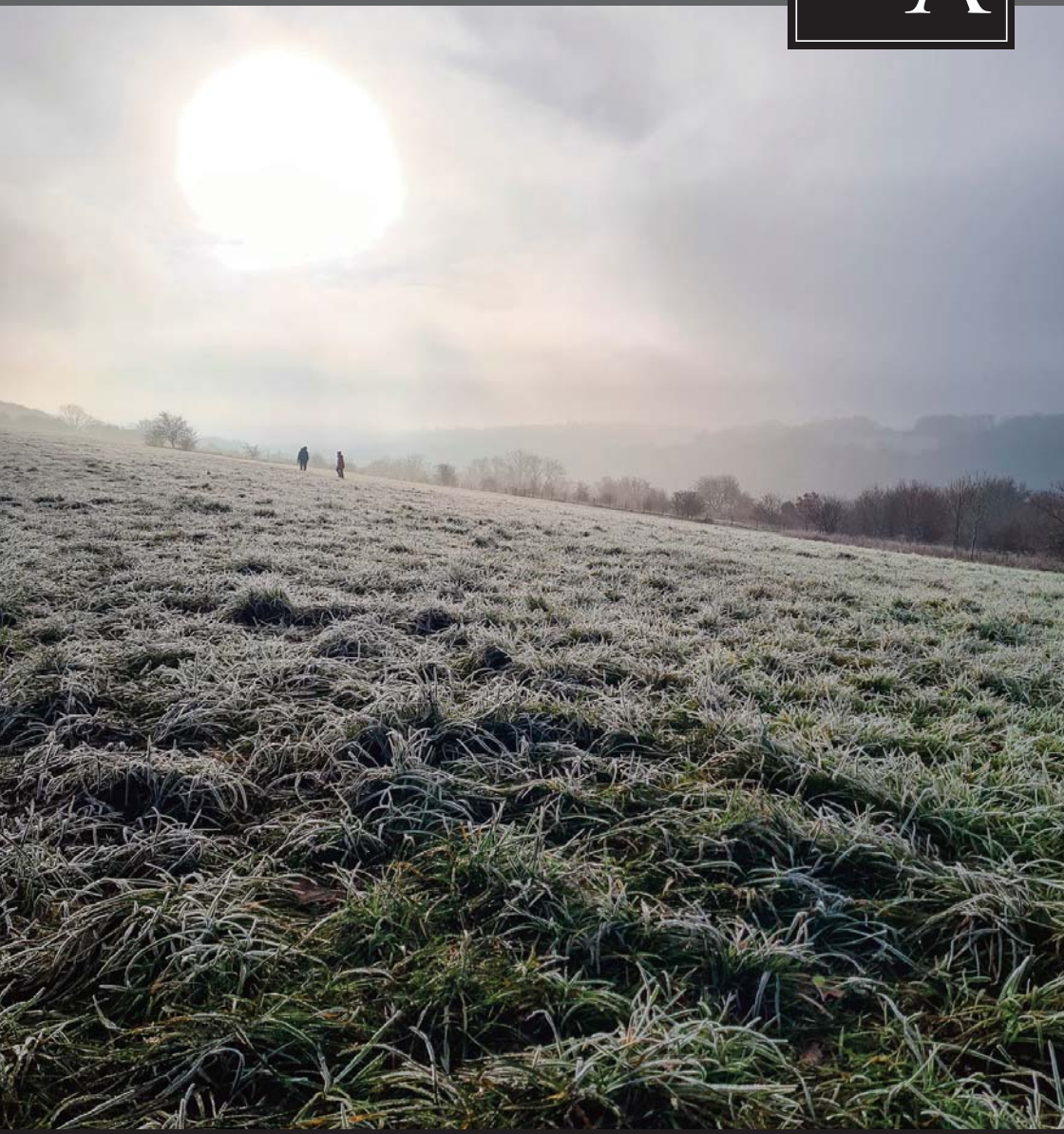
RIDDLESDOWN RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

THE RIDDLESDOWN RECORDER



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Front Cover Photo: "Morning Frost",
by Rachel Tarrant local resident

This is your local Community Magazine – for future issues we welcome your contributions, either directly about Riddlesdown or which are of interest to local residents – send these to editorrra@gmail.com

Further information and past issues of this magazine can be found on our website:

www.riddlesdownresidents.org.uk

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THE RIDDLESDOWN RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Brian Longman
Chairman and Riddlesdown Collegiate Liaison

Phil Thomas
Planning & Environmental; Website Editor
riddlesdownresidents@gmail.com

Linda Bevin
Treasurer

John Rapp
Membership, Road Stewards and Public Transport Concerns

Neil Tarrant
Recorder Editor
e: EditorRRA@gmail.com

Berni Munt
Minutes Secretary

Janice Kedwards

John Placek
Data Protection Officer

Keith Powell

Jan Powell

You may write to the Riddlesdown Residents' Association at any of the following addresses:
Please mark your correspondence with the committee member's name, if applicable. Or you can e-mail any committee member at **RiddlesdownResidents@gmail.com** or at any of the e-mail addresses listed above.
RRA notice boards are situated in Lower Barn Rd by Riddlesdown Pharmacy, on the Green opposite the shops in Lower Barn Rd, on the Green in Lower Barn Rd near St Edmund's Church, on the side wall of St Edmund's Church and by K&K Food & Wine in Mitchley Ave.
Website: www.riddlesdownresidents.org.uk Email RiddlesdownResidents@gmail.com

EDITOR'S NOTES
BY NEIL TARRANT

It is a great pleasure to be able to produce a new Riddlesdown Recorder after a long break caused by the coronavirus pandemic. Throughout this long hiatus, the committee has continued to work on behalf of local residents and continue to communicate digitally through the website, monthly eblast and Facebook page. This issue of the magazine should bring you up to date with many of the local planning, environment and transport issues in which the committee has been involved over the last two years. As we emerge from the pandemic, the RRA is also beginning to restart some of its events. By the time you read this, we will have held the first local litter pick since 2019. By next year, we hope to able to run further events such as the Children's Christmas party once more. In order to be able to continue with our activities, we do need to recruit new members. There are many ways to get involved, including acting as a road steward and joining the committee. In his report, the Chairman, Brian Longman, offers further details.

I would like to thank all the contributors to this issue, and Roger Cherrill for his work typesetting the text.

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT
BY BRIAN LONGMAN

Welcome to the 2021 Autumn edition of the RRA's Recorder Magazine.

You will remember back in 2020 we took the difficult decision to suspend production of the Riddlesdown Recorder Magazine. Now, some 18 months later, the Recorder is back and let us hope it remains that way.

For your information, the RRA subscriptions were cancelled for 2020 and will also be cancelled for 2021.

As I said in my last report, the previous six months had been one of the busiest in terms of workload for the RRA, since I took over the Chair some 20 plus years ago. I also said that the good news was that the Association had an excellent team of dedicated committee members who willingly shoulder the ever-growing workload between them. I also went on to mention that since 2014 we have lost more committee members, either moved away or retired, than we have managed to recruit. Well not much has changed, the work load is still growing but the number of committee members we have is falling. Our Treasurer will be stepping down at the next AGM and we are looking for someone to perform this vital role. I apologise for repeating myself, but I believe the Association can be proud of its achievements in helping to make Riddlesdown a better place to live. If this is to continue, we need more people to step forward especially those with energy, enthusiasm and a community spirit. The last time I made this appeal it produced a no response.

If you are not ready to join the committee yet, we are also in desperate need of road stewards for the following roads: Brancaster Lane, Cranford Close, Dalegarth Gardens, Hyde Rd, Ingleboro Drive, Lower Barn Rd, Mitchley Ave, Rectory Park, Rydal Close, Riddlesdown Ave and Riddlesdown Rd. Each road steward has approximately 30 houses in the road to deliver our Recorder magazine. Many of our road stewards, including myself, would also agree it is a good way of getting to know your local neighbours.

Please, if you are interested, e-mail me via the RRA's e-mail address. Your Residents' Association Needs You!

Whilst the Recorder magazine was suspended, getting information out to residents has not be easy. However, I must say a big thank you to Phil Thomas our Planning Officer who has worked extremely hard in keeping our website and Facebook page up to date and relevant.

Phil has also been extremely busy developing the Association's new and fast-growing E-Blast service. The E-Blast system currently sends a monthly newsletter by e-mail, to all residents who are registered. You will need to subscribe to receive the E-Blasts. To sign up, please go to the left side on the homepage of the RRA website.

In March 2020, Croydon Council commissioned a multi-disciplinary team to develop the Purley Strategic Regeneration Framework. To ensure community involvement, the Purley Panel was formed on which I represented RRA. The Panel includes representatives from local businesses; Purley BID, Purley Youth Project, Purley, Woodcote Residents' Association, Purley & Coulsdon

Centre for the Elderly, Purley Masjid Mosque, Churches Together and the RRA. The Panel assisted in developing and distributing a survey to the wider area that had 423 responses, which helped to create a plan that could be used to shape the future of Purley Town.

I am sure some of you will be aware of the "High Streets for All Challenge". The Greater London Authority (GLA) will support the development of an exemplary high street, partnership, strategy and related proposals in every London borough with a package of funding, resources and programme support. I am pleased to report that the panel has received confirmation that our Purley bid has been selected as one of the exemplar projects to proceed to Stage 2 of the Challenge. This includes seed funding of £20,000 to help develop and grow our high street partnership, engage locally, build capacity and co-design the spatial brief for our high street strategy. Should we be successful at the next stage, additional and much larger funding will be available.

If you have any ideas on how to improve Purley town centre, please let us know via our RRA email address. Purley is on our doorstep and should be a natural hub for many Riddlesdown residents, a destination of choice with a vibrant local town centre for all. Please let us know what you think.

A quick update on our two Safer Neighbourhood Teams, Sanderstead, and Purley Oaks & Riddlesdown. With the Covid rules changing, both teams are now beginning to return to face-to-face panel meetings. Dates and venues are published on our website. Burglary, motor vehicle crime and engagement with both the young and the old, remains a priority for both our local Safer Neighbourhood Teams.

On a more general note, an E-Scooter Operation has now been set up in Croydon. The purpose of the operation is to warn and to educate members of the public who are using E-Scooters on roads and pavements, that it is illegal and also to warn them of the danger. We understand that some E-Scooters have been seized.

I am sure many of you would agree that the last 18 months living with Covid has been difficult. However, one constant throughout this difficult period has been our local shops, our Pharmacy, our Post Office and our two convenience stores. Everyday they have been open, on the front line and judging by the queues outside, working flat out to provide the services that we all needed.

I think if we did not understand the value of our local shops to the local community before, we do now. Our local shops and their staff have supported us during our difficult time, and we now need to make sure that in the coming months, as shopping habits change, we continue to support them.

I was disappointed to see our local cash machine removed from the Post Office. This was a well-used facility and will be missed by many. Our local Postmaster was also disappointed to see the ATM taken away, but wants to remind customers that they can still withdraw cash over the counter. With banks closing at an alarming rate, safe, easy and free access to a cash machines is becoming even more important. We now have the Post Office cutting a third of its cash machines by March 2022. The location of the cash machine in the Post Office helped to increase the footfall in our local shopping parade, which is so vital for the future of all the local shops. If you have a view on bank branches and free-to-use ATMs disappearing across the UK, especially how it might affect the more vulnerable in our

society, then you might be interested in a save our cash campaign currently running on the main Post Office website.

Finally, I would like to say a few words about Bill Whitmarsh who has recently retired from the committee after some 45 years.

Bill came to Riddlesdown in 1976 and was quickly recognised and recruited to the committee by the then secretary Gerry Swailes, who also did so much for the community. He told Bill they were all too old ("look at us, a cold snap and the committee will be gone").

Since then Bill has been a long-standing stalwart of the RRA committee for 45 years but has now decided to stand down from the committee. Bill's expertise and experience has been invaluable for all the years he has been a committee member and his knowledge and history of the area will be greatly missed. Bill was instrumental in starting and running the monthly dustcart collection service on a Saturday for those residents who didn't have a car and were unable to get to the local Purley Oaks 'tip'. Bill has for the last few years taken on the role of Father Christmas at the annual RRA Children's Christmas party although sadly the party had to be cancelled last year due to the Covid restrictions. Bill is also a keen litter picker and can often be seen in the vicinity of the Riddlesdown Open Space litter picking.

Bill's advice and knowledge will be greatly missed and we all wish him well for the future and his 'retirement' from the RRA committee.

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PLANNING MATTERS
BY PHIL THOMAS

Well it seems a long time since I have written a Planning and Environmental report for the Recorder – my last was at the end of October 2019 in fact!

A lot has happened since then on the planning front, so I will briefly summarise some of these previous planning issues. If you want to refresh your memory on a specific case then please look at our website and the old Recorders on our website (the link is top left side on the home page).

48 Mitchley Hill

Aventier who were granted planning permission for the "Demolition of single-family dwelling and erection of one 3-storey block, containing 6x2-bedroom apartments, 2x4-bedroom houses and 1x3 bedroom house with associated access, 10 parking spaces" subsequently sold the site to another developer.

Demolition of the property took place many months ago and a lot of the debris is still on site. Very little progress has been made on construction. The new developers have submitted a new application to modify the original application (20/06615/CONR) with changes to the roof design. At the time of writing, this application has not been approved.

Purley Town Centre – 17 storey tower and associated Purley Baptist Church and flats developments

As many of you will be aware, this application was approved by Croydon Council in December 2016. This decision was then "Called-In" by the Secretary of State and a Public Inquiry took place in January 2018. The Planning Inspector recommended that the Council's decision be upheld but this recommendation was in turn overruled by a different Secretary of State. The developer, Thornsett, then took the matter to the High Court Court on 1 April 2019, and the High Court quashed the decision of the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State then decided that a second Public Inquiry should be held.

This second Public Inquiry was held from Monday 3 December 2019. The second Planning Inspector subsequently recommended that the application should be approved. Another new Secretary of State accepted this second Inspector's conclusions and agreed with his recommendation. He decided that the application should be approved and planning permission was granted on 9 July 2020.

Preliminary building works are now taking place on the south site and the Council have just granted approval to the Construction Logistics Plan (20/06514/DISC). The RRA as the lead RA for the Rule 6 Party (the 7 local RAs) did raise an objection on 26 January 2021 regarding this application, principally relating to traffic disruption through Purley and on the A23 and A22. It is anticipated that the works will be undertaken in 3 phases (the 17-storey tower construction will be phase 2) and all the work will take about 4 years to complete. We believe it is inevitable there will be some traffic disruption in Purley on the A23 and A22, with lanes closed off and connections made for services. The RAs are also concerned that

these works will also have an effect on the proposed SES Water works (postponed from May 2020) on the Godstone Rd near Tesco up to the Downs Court Rd junction, which probably means the A22 on this section will have to be closed for about 6 weeks. It is not clear when these SES works will take place and how they will be co-ordinated with the Tower works.

Proposed 20-metre mobile phone mast in Mitchley Avenue adjoining 152 Riddlesdown Rd; a 20-metre high mast adjoining Riddleah Court in Lower Barn Road; and a 20-meter high mast in Mitchley Avenue by St Edmund's Church

As I reported in Autumn 2019, EE & 3 submitted an application to erect a 20m high mast near to the existing 9.7m high green phone mast in Mitchley Ave, close to and beside 152 Riddlesdown Rd. This application was refused by the Council on 8 April 2020.

In February 2021 an application was submitted on behalf of Vodafone and O2 to remove the existing 15m high mast in the grounds of the flats of Riddleah Court (120 Lower Barn Rd) and replace it with a 20m high mast in a slightly different part of the grounds nearer to the flats. Despite an objection from the RRA and some residents in the flats, the Council granted this application in April 2021. The RRA had asked for a referral of this application to the Planning Committee, as is our right to do so as a registered Residents Association, but this was overlooked (or ignored) by the relevant senior Council Officers. We have subsequently followed this up with two formal complaints to the Council. They admit that mistakes were made but have stated that are not prepared to overturn the decision. They say that "this matter has been discussed in detail amongst management and all Officers have been reminded of the triggers for planning applications which need to be presented to Planning Committee for decision. I can only offer an apology once more and assure you that this was an unfortunate but isolated incident." This mast, which was originally located on the pavement in front of woodland (before Riddleah Court was built), was erected by default in 2003, because the Council did not respond to the application within the statutory 56 day time period. So this phone mast has a history of errors by the Planning Department!

In April 2021 an application was submitted on behalf of EE & 3 for a 20m high mast on the highway grass verge near to St Edmund's Church and fronting Mitchley Avenue, directly opposite the “up road” of Buttermere Gardens. This mast and all the control boxes would have been situated right in the area where the whole road floods in heavy rain. The RRA objected and the Council did refuse the application in June 2021 - primarily because it would hinder the Council's flood alleviation works, but also due to the effect on the neighbourhood. I quote from the Officer's report "the proposed scale and design of the new mast in a highly visible location near to residential properties is considered insensitive and harmful to the appearance of the site and wider area. The mast will also result in a negative impact to the visual amenity of the street scene due to its prominent location."

The RRA are not anti-mobile phone masts. We just believe that they need to be in the right location.

Threat to the Green Belt in Riddlesdown

At we reported in the last issue of the Recorder, the Council is considering the option of de-designating areas of Green Belt, that is, removing Green Belt status so that the land can be developed for housing.

Three areas are being considered and these are;

Land at Borrowdale Drive/Mitchley Hill/Rectory Park

Land at Gravel Hill (behind Monks Hill)

Land at Lodge Lane, near New Addington.

The consultation for amendments to the Croydon Local Plan 2018 started in November 2019 and ran until January 2020. For Riddlesdown, the suggestion is to de-designate the Green Belt farmland on Rectory Park/Mitchley Hill and build between circa 350 and 750 new homes on the sloping farmland. The RRA submitted our objections and the revision to the Local Plan was due to be published by the Council in April 2021. Because of Covid this did not happen but the latest information we have is that the Council will publish their proposals in a report to go to the Council's Cabinet in October 2021. I understand the timetable as follows: a further consultation will take place in early 2022 and then a submission will be made to the Planning Inspectorate in late 2022, and the new plan adopted in early 2023.

Recent Planning Applications and Decisions

There follows a summary of recent main cases in Riddlesdown since Autumn 2019 (in no particular date order), at the time of writing this report. Full details can be found on the RRA's website - some cases and decisions may be out of date when you read this report, so please check our website.

27 Westfield Ave - 20/0120/FUL validated on 27 March 2020 - "Demolition of the existing single storey 2 bedroom dwelling and construction of a pair of 3 storey 4 bed semi-detached dwellings." No decision as yet by the Council.

36 Oakwood Ave - 20/01658/FUL validated on 15 April 2020 - "Demolition of a single-family dwelling house and erection of 4x two-storey semi-detached houses with accommodation in the roof, and 4 x one-storey semi-detached houses with accommodation in the roof, with associated access, car parking, cycle and refuse storage." This application is in the Purley & Woodcote RA area but backs onto properties in Riddlesdown Road and in particular the Purley Cattery (in the RRA area). The Council refused this application on 18 December 2020 but an appeal has now been lodged with the Planning Inspectorate (PINS).

14 Oakwood Ave - 20/01625/FUL validated on 05 May 2020 - "Demolition of 1 no. detached family house and erection of 1 no. apartment blocks, comprising of 20 new apartments, with associated hard and soft landscaping etc." This application was to be presented to the Planning Committee on 25 February 2021 with Officers recommending approval. However, it was withdrawn for a second time just before the committee met. This was due to the presence of a listed beech tree on the adjoining property, the roots of which could be damaged from some of the proposed works. This application site is in the Purley & Woodcote RA area, but backs onto properties in Riddlesdown Rd and Coxley

Rise. A revised application for 18 flats was submitted at the end of August with a new date for further consultation. At the time of writing, the application has not been determined.

88 Riddlesdown Road – 19/04371/FUL - validated on 20 Sept 2019 - "Demolition of existing house and erection of a block of flats comprising of 21 No. units with parking, landscaping and other associated works." The Council refused this application on 20 December 2019 but an appeal has been lodged with the Planning Inspectorate (PINS). The appeal will be by a Local Inquiry.

11 Coombe Wood Hill - 21/00002/OUT validated on 4 January 2021 - "an outline planning application for the redevelopment and sub-division of site to provide 2x two-storey semi detached dwelling houses (2 x 4-bed), involving associated parking, cycle parking, refuse storage and landscaping." The Council have not determined this application within the statutory time period, so an appeal has been lodged by the applicant with PINS.

11 Coombe Wood Hill - 21/00024/FUL - validated on 5 January 2021 - "Redevelopment and sub-division of site to provide 2x two-storey semi detached dwelling houses (2 x 4-bed), involving associated parking, cycle parking, refuse storage and landscaping." This is a full planning application and is in addition to 21/00002/OUT (above). The Council have not determined this application.

Land Rear of 15 Rectory Park/Hyde Road - 21/01871/FUL validated on 12 April 2021 - "Demolition of existing wall and gate, division of existing garden to No.15, alterations to land levels, erection of a pair of three storey semi-detached 3 bedroom houses, formation of vehicular accesses with associated car parking (including parking space for host house) fronting Hyde Road, associated hard and soft landscaping and a new pedestrian access from Hyde Road for No.15 Rectory Park." The Council refused this application on 28 July.

77 Mitchley Avenue (one of Paul Meakin's shops) - 21/01043/FUL validated on 2 March 2021 - "Change of use from retail (class E(c)) to mixed use cafe/restaurant (class E(b)) & Takeaways (Sui Generis). Installation of an extraction flue to the rear elevation." The Council granted permission on 9 June 2021 for a change of use.

77-79 Mitchley Ave (both Paul Meakin's shops) - 21/02891/FUL validated on 30 May 2021 - "Installation of new shop fronts and new advertisement in centre of 2 premises as one business." The Council have not determined this application.

77-79 Mitchley Ave - 21/02892/ADV validated on 30 May 2021 - "Individually cut lettering backlit directly on facade." The Council have not determined this application.

Riddlesdown Car Park, (the 'Common' carpark) Riddlesdown Road - 21/00274/FUL validated on 1 February 2021 - "Installation of 2 x 500mm x 500mm x 500mm concrete plinths for the erection of 2 x Hectronic Citea car park ticketing machines Erection of 1 x pole for the sighting of an ANPR camera (retrospective)." The RRA objected to this application primarily relating to the on-street parking now taking place to nearby streets since the commencement of parking charges on 25 January 2021 and the effect of all the equipment on the Green Belt land. It is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The Council have not determined this application.

75A Riddlesdown Road - 21/01421/FUL validated on 19 March 2021 - "Demolition of existing buildings; erection of a residential apartment building of three storeys plus roofspace comprising 8 units; provision of associated car and cycle parking, refuse storage and landscaping works." The applicant submitted new drawings on 17 June 2021 to reduce this application from 8 to 7 flats. The RRA have objected to this application on both proposals. The Council have not determined this application.

125 Mitchley Ave - 20/03842/FUL validated on 25 August 2020 - "Conversion of the existing 4 bedroom house into 1 x 2 and 1 x 3 bedroom flats with associated landscaping (changes to land levels) and vehicular parking." The Council refused this application on 20 October 2020. The applicant has now lodged an appeal to PINS. The appeal will by a written representation and a site visit.

89 Hyde Road - 20/00108/FUL validated on 10 February 2020 - "Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of a four / five storey building comprising of 2 x 1 bedroom, 6 x 2 bedroom and 1 x 3 bedroom flats together with undercroft and external car parking, internal refuse store, internal bike store and landscaping." Planning permission was granted and a legal agreement was completed on 22 February 2021. Demolition works have been completed and building works have started.

98 Hyde Road - 21/01672/NMA validated on 1 April 2021 - "Non-material amendment to planning permission ref. 18/03682/CONR for the variation of condition 1 (in accordance with approved plans) attached to planning permission 17/03542/FUL for the Demolition of existing building, erection of two storey building with basement and accommodation in roof space comprising of 2 x one bedroom and 6 x two bedroom flats. Formation of vehicular access and 8 parking spaces, cycle and refuse storage." This application is to vary conditions attached to the original approved planning application. The developer is now progressing on a second attempt to build this block of flats (at their risk) but the Council have not determined this particular application.

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ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES
BY PHIL THOMAS

Litter Picks in Riddlesdown

Unfortunately because of the Covid restrictions we had to cancel the planned litter picks in 2020 and early 2021. By the time you read this, we should have successfully run our first post-pandemic litter pick on 16 October.

42 Riddlesdown Ave – Dropped kerb to front of the property

In early 2017, the RRA received complaints from local residents about a dropped kerb/crossover proposed to the front of 42 Riddlesdown Avenue, that the Council Highway's Department intended to construct to this property. The front garden to this property is raised about 900mm above the carriageway and fronts a steep grass bank. The footway was previously level.

This crossover was constructed in October 2017 despite the RRA's objections. Before construction, we pointed out to the Highways Department that the crossover/footway should be of acceptable standards for the disabled in particular, in relation to falls and crossfall, to comply with current highways standards and the Equalities Act 2010 (formerly the Disability Discrimination Act 1995).

As a result of this approval and construction of the crossover by the Highways Department, the Planning Department subsequently approved a planning application for the formation of an off street parking area to front the house with associated retaining walls and landscaping. This planning decision was made after the Highways Department had constructed the crossover!

In late 2018, following the RRA's comments and more complaints from residents, the Council returned to the street and carried out further works to try and make the crossover safer for pedestrians and to try to improve the gradients and crossfall. This did make the crossfall less steep but was still not acceptable in our view.

The RRA also involved Disability Croydon, who give advice about the needs and requirement of the disabled in Croydon. One of their visits was after the first set of works were carried out and the second visit after the Council's subsequent "repairs"! Their two reports (sent to the Council) were scathing about the works that the Council had carried without any due consideration for disabled, blind and visually impaired pedestrians.

The RRA also believe very little consideration has been given by the Council to pedestrian safety on the formation of this crossover/footway. In particular for other elderly and parents with buggies. The footway is especially dangerous for these users (as well as the able members of the public), for slipping sideways especially in snow, ice, and heavy frosts.

The RRA subsequently made two formal complaints to the Council. We were not happy with their responses to these complaints and we took the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman in June 2020. After many delays by the Ombudsman due to Covid, we were advised in May 2021 that the Ombudsman could not take to the case forward and that if the RRA and residents wanted to take any further action we should pursue matter via the Magistrates' Court. This is not a particularly satisfactory response in our view, but there is little we can do about it now.

However, it is interesting to note that the Council have now changed their requirements

on future highway crossovers! We are aware there are a few other crossovers in this street with steep crossfalls but they were constructed prior to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Flood Alleviation Works in Riddlesdown

Following the heavy rain earlier in the summer which caused more flooding in Mitchley Ave near to St Edmund's Church and in Lower Barn Rd under the railway bridge, Cllr Helen Redfern and I met with Steve Iles, the Council's Director for Public Realm by a video call at the beginning of June. We were given a start date of 26 July 2021 for works to try and alleviate these surface water flooding issues at these two locations. The works by the Council will continue until completed around mid-September. The contractor FM Conway started on the main A2022 (Mitchley Ave) first, during the school summer holidays and will then move onto Lower Barn Rd by the Station

The RRA pointed out to the Director that extensive cleaning of gullies and soakaways on the many streets further away that flow to these two low points also needs to be done, and this will be looked at as well by the Council. Because of the chalk sub-strata there are no surface water sewers in Riddlesdown.

Hopefully, by the time you read this report, the work on Mitchley Ave will be completed!

Grass Verges

As you will have noticed, many grass verges are very long and are not being cut regularly. I am also concerned that when the verges are cut, the long grass cuttings will end up in the gutters and then ultimately block the gully grids, causing more flooding issues as mentioned above. Basal growth to trees is also causing issues and blocking footways in places. I have taken this up with the relevant Council Officer and this is the response received back:

"*Unfortunately due to the Councils current financial position and budget cuts we have had no choice but to alter the way in which grounds maintenance in Croydon is carried out and we are not able to offer the service that we have in the past. There has been a serious reduction in staffing levels which is having a knock on effect on all the work we carry out including grass cutting and legging up of trees.*

Due to the current financial position we expect there to be up to a 10 week gap between grass cuts but we are cutting as quickly as we can weather permitting and with the staff available.

Unfortunately the time taken between cuts will inevitably mean that there will be substantially more grass arisings left than has been the case in the past. I will pass on to the area supervisor the need to keep drains clear. Historically there are many residents who have cut grass verges outside or near to their properties for years. If this is something that anyone wishes to carry out themselves, we would have no objection."

Website, the E-Blast and Facebook

The RRA Facebook page continues to be successful and a lot of useful information is posted and shared on there. If you are on Facebook why not give us a 'like' or 'follow' us! If you are not on Facebook, we have now set up a monthly E-Blast newsletter which will be sent to residents by e-mail, who register with us. The E-Blast may be sent out more often if important information needs to be made available to residents, for example, important planning applications or unexpected road closures. You will need to subscribe to receive the E-Blasts and the sign up is on our website: riddlesdownresidents.org.uk. Scroll down the home page and registration is on the bottom left side of the page where is says: "subscribe to our mailing list". Planning applications and decisions in our area are usually updated every Saturday on our website.

MEMBERSHIP
BY JOHN RAPP

Without the usual doorstep contact, between Road Stewards and members, since 2019, I have been looking at other social contact during the pandemic and seen many good things.

A lot of the free time released by not having to travel to work has been used to practise social distancing on Riddlesdown Common taking an opportunity to enhance mental wellbeing by talking to others. To maintain a good work life balance when working from home – so that work is not the sole driver of each day – many residents have ensured that they have additional non-work responsibilities.

Parents will know that a baby is a source of sleepness nights leading to future joy. Sometimes older children benefit from increased responsibility, and many Riddlesdown parents are enjoying the calming influence of a puppy – ideal for telling work that you are not available, providing a shared task for parents and growing children, and being an icebreaker during walks.

Since March 2020, the concept of the NHS being a slumbering potential source of medical help when needed has ceased to exist, and all of us are aware of how good the NHS is when both preventing and curing problems. I am sure that we have all given individual encouragement to NHS staff who have helped us to maintain personal health.

Like many organisations, Riddlesdown Residents' Association has been partly dormant during the pandemic. Doorstep contact between road stewards and members has not taken place and subscriptions have not been collected. However the RRA has been contacting those who provide services to our community, and getting good results.

We are currently planning to deliver a 2021 Riddlesdown Recorder (our magazine) through all letterboxes. We also agreed at the AGM to raise our subscription to £5 from 2022 when we resume door-step collection. This is one part of our waking from slumber.

Over the last two years, many of us have given thought to our lifestyles. I am contacting all our road stewards, checking on health and for moves away from Riddlesdown. I know that I will identify roads that need a new road steward – perhaps it could be you.

Our accounts are published on our website. A higher amount collected, at £5.00 per home, reported in RRA accounts will give greater support to our committee members (more viewpoints give a greater knowledge of what is important to our community and you are welcome to join the Committee) when they speak on behalf of our area.

I end by wishing you all safety and good health in the coming months.

TRANSPORT
BY JOHN RAPP

We have been leaving our homes less during the pandemic and it is expected that public transport will be matched to a slowly increasing demand for services. Nationally there has been a discouragement of travel, with opportunities taken for doing major works on important roads, and reducing bus and train services.

The combination of this and almost empty roads could lead to conflict with drivers possibly determined to maintain lockdown journey times on local roads. Having to drive to various hospitals, at different times for family reasons, I have experienced flash jams, social distancing effects, and unexpectedly clear roads. This is the daily experience of our bus drivers, many of whom find themselves challenged by running against timetable specification of no more than five minutes late or two minutes early. Driving a bus slowly in London could be considered an Olympic Sport, and certainly an art form, with drivers happy to talk about time keeping. Please take care on the roads whether in a vehicle or on foot.

The pandemic has resulted in less income for transport operators, with both the railways and Transport for London coming under greater Government control and focus on spending taxpayers' money wisely. There will be building from the current reduced services and Keith and I will be making suggestions.

I do not expect a great increase in 403 and 412 services from the present level. I know the Principal of Riddlesdown Collegiate is aware that more pupils touching in will demonstrate a need for greater bus provision. Hopefully, other head teachers will also recognise that relationship.

On the railways, we have a reduced Monday to Friday timetable (including one direct train to London Bridge in the morning with a matching evening return) at peak times and an hourly service during the rest of the day.

One of the Covid slogans mentions space and I would suggest trips to the Bluebell Railway (currently pre-booking needed) to confirm to GTR that giving us a half hourly Saturday and Sunday service is justified. Current railway-thinking is that travel growth towards pre-pandemic levels has to be leisure travel led. I leave all my readers to have leisure time adventures.

The spending of the Passenger Benefit Fund at Riddlesdown is almost complete, with a makeover of the waiting room and toilets (now with heater), plus extra open air platform seats, plus a new shelter. The Passenger Benefit Fund resulted from a poorly introduced Thameslink Timetable change. GTR provided a compensation fund of £15,000,000, with Thameslink stations receiving either thirty, fifty or eighty thousand pounds. Riddlesdown received £80,000. Members of the East Surrey Transport Committee, including Keith and I were able to steer Govia Thameslink Railway thoughts towards the new shelters and seating now installed on Riddlesdown station's platforms. The GTR project manager, Max Kenna, summarises the changes below.

The Passenger Benefit Fund was established to provide tangible improvements for passengers across the GTR network. More than 4,200 surveys were completed by passengers, rail user groups, councillors and other interested parties. The Passenger Benefit Fund Survey Feedback from Riddlesdown Station users with additional input from Transport for London and the East Surrey Trans-port Committee suggested that the station could benefit from the following improvements:

1. Additional seating
2. Station Refurb
3. Improved toilets
4. Waiting Shelter

The very narrow platforms at Riddlesdown meant that installing normal bench seating along the platforms would not be possible. Enough room needs to be left between new bench installs and the edge of the platform so that people walking along the platform have plenty of room to pass. The solution was to provide a combination of narrow (but very useable) perch benches, which can now be seen on Platform 1 and a new shelter. These are mainly on the London Bound Platform which gets most footfall with people waiting for trains (rather than getting off trains and leaving the station immediately).

The installation of a shelter presented its own fairly major challenges. The steep embankments at the Country end of the platform meant that a shelter could not be installed there without significant and very costly bank stabilisation. The London end of the platform also presented a challenge due to the very narrow platform along with the steep drop away but a solution was found which utilised the wedge of land in between the platform and the footpath. The decision was discussed with the user group before work started and after fairly substantial engineering works the base and the specially designed asymmetric shelter were installed. The user group specifically asked for wooden benches and so these were put into the shelter rather than the normal steel ones. The result is a very large and comfortable shelter that can fit over 20 people. The shelter has a fully glazed side aspect to provide full visibility from the ticket office and on the approach to the shelter and to add to the safety aspect, the shelter it has been fitted with CCTV.

Both the waiting room and the toilets were refurbished with a lot of work done in the toilets to modernise them. The waiting room was repainted and the old steel benches were replaced with new paded wooden benches.

One thing that had been requested was for the toilets to be left open when the station is unstaffed. This was looked into but due to the very likely occurrence of anti-social behaviour and vandalism it was agreed that this could not be done. This was discussed with and explained to the user group.

Defibrillators have been rolled out across the network under the Passenger Benefit Fund and we are pushing to get one installed at Riddlesdown as soon as possible.

The feedback on the work from users of the station both while we have been working there and in e-mail responses has been really positive and we would like to thank everyone who uses the station for your help and your patience while these works have been carried out.

YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS & ARTICLES

Thank you to all the RRA Committee for their contributions – we now have your contributions, information, articles, letters and photographs on the following pages.

Councillor's Report

Helen Redfern

Croydon Council's recent financial problems mean that many of our local services have been at risk and projects that have been promised have subsequently been cancelled. Therefore, I am really happy to be able to write that we have a number of local successes in Purley Oaks & Riddlesdown. After many years of asking, and several false starts, we finally have the first phase of flood alleviation work underway in the Lower Barn Road area. We managed to push our project to the top of a long queue of projects and hopefully we will see far less flooding as a result. I am also delighted to report that the combined efforts of local parents and carers, staff and children managed to save the Best Start Children's Centre off Brighton Road.

Earlier this year, the Council proposed cutting the Best Start budget by £1 million (46% of the total) which would involve reducing the number of sites that provide a provision from 22 to just 9. We already knew that these children's centres were providing an amazing service but were tremendously oversubscribed; what we really needed to serve Croydon's young families was to expand the service, not to drastically cut it. My greatest concern was that this service would no longer be provided at the Purley Oaks centre whilst the Sanderstead Access Point would be closed meaning that a whole swathe of the south of the Borough would have no provision.

I spent a day at the Purley Oaks site – speaking with the amazing staff, parents and carers who had very often seen the facility as a lifeline of support. I also met the Year 5s at the primary school, many of whom had visited the children's centre themselves as babies and toddlers and could see the unfairness of the centre closing – not just because they could see the centre's value but that the proposed closure came as their local libraries were threatened and Purley Pool is destined to never be reopened by Croydon Council; how could it be fair that the services in their part of the Borough were disappearing before their eyes – didn't they deserve access to the same facilities that children elsewhere in the Borough were able to access? I was delighted that each of the 90 children wrote a letter to detail their concerns which six of them hand-delivered to the Council that week. After speaking with so many local people, I was able to submit my own 3,000 word objection to the plans and I hope it contributed to a rethink.

When the decision paper was finally published for consideration at Cabinet, I was surprised but delighted that the children's centre at Purley Oaks had been saved. It is rare for consultations to result in a change of mind but it is difficult to ignore 1,365 survey responses and 90 letters from school children. Well done everyone who put pen to paper or went online to have their say - obviously some strong arguments were made.

However, I would sound a note of caution. What we have left is a much reduced service.

Those who watched the Cabinet meeting would be excused for thinking that the Cabinet had saved Croydon's Best Start service from an external threat. What has actually happened is that the Cabinet has bust the Council's budget and therefore there are still a lot of cuts to the service still to go. The use of 11 buildings (out of 22) has been saved but there will be fewer staff and fewer sessions available. Parents and carers had already told me that they struggled to find a place at the sessions being provided, and there will be even fewer available going forward. Ultimately fewer people will benefit and some families, who need time to build up trusting relationships with staff, will be missed. However, we have secured some service in our local area.

Congratulations to all those who worked so hard to save our local services. Both the flood alleviation work and saving of the Best Start centre have happened because we as a community have demonstrated why our local services are so important. Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to speak up to help us keep some of our local services.

Councillor's Report

Simon Hoar

Residents will have seen a lot recently about contentious planning and the willingness of the Council to bow to the whims of developers in allowing new schemes of flats. Areas like Sanderstead, Riddlesdown, Selsdon and Purley have taken more than their fair share of flatted developments replacing valuable family homes. These schemes range from nine flats (to avoid affordable housing) to a 17-story tower and the conversion of Capella Court on the Purley Downs roundabout into flats. In fact, the two wards that form Purley and Woodcote and Purley Oaks and Riddlesdown have had approximately 50% of all the approvals in the whole Borough over the last two years.

Local residents are rightly concerned about this intensification of southern Croydon by developers via a complicit Council administration seemingly ideologically hell bent on concreting our area. One of the knock-on effects though of all these extra schemes and the bankruptcy of the Council is a new weakness in planning enforcement when developers build outside of their permissions. The enforcement officers themselves are generally excellent, but they are so under pressure due to lack of people that they have upwards of 150 open case files at any one time! That pressure has only been exacerbated by the Council's bankruptcy and the loss and redundancies of many staff.

In theory, when a builder goes beyond their permission the Council can force them to correct their error, apply for retrospective planning permission or even order demolition. This latter option is, of course, an extreme course, but even significant issues are being passed despite breaching the original planning permission because the local plan is so loose and developer friendly. Retrospective permission has become almost easier than the initial application and (allegedly) minor variations are being waved through as inconsequential on their impact on neighbours.

Two local examples of planning no longer working in Purley Oaks and Riddlesdown come from one block of flats that was built too close to the neighbour than was permitted but has been allowed through as a supposedly non-material (i.e., not significant) amendment. In

another road the developer has fenced over part of a neighbour's land to build their scheme and are simply carrying on like they own the place. Too many of these developers think they do as they have been allowed free rein over the last few years.

I know my Council colleagues could detail other failures of planning but the reality for us in the south is that the Council policies are anti our area's best interests in terms of development and failing to protect us when the developers go rogue.

Riddlesdown Collegiate

Soumick Dey, Principal Riddlesdown Collegiate

When I last wrote an article for the Riddlesdown Recorder in early March 2020, I concluded by commenting that "we share the nation's concerns about the potential impact of the Coronavirus" but that "hopefully, things will pass without significant impact on our schools or our communities" – I am not sure whether those comments ever made it to print, but little did we know then what challenges were lying ahead!

Schools were informed on Wednesday 18th March 2020 that at the end of that week, they would close to all except the most vulnerable students and the children of key workers. When students and staff left the site on that Friday, I think many assumed that the arrangement would go on till Easter and then all would return to normal for the summer term. On Monday, however, the country went into its first lockdown and so began a long period of remote learning and a huge change to our day-to-day lives. It was nearly six months before all students were able to return in September 2020 and the school they returned to was now operating in a very different way. Students had been grouped into separate "bubbles" and huge efforts were made to minimise mixing, including the introduction of staggered timings, multiple access points and separate dining arrangements. Whilst we were fortunate not to have any positive cases early in the term, as we approached Christmas, a number of students and staff were affected and many more were being required to self-isolate as we began to implement contact tracing. We were soon teaching and learning in face masks and doing all that we could to reduce the risk of transmission. As schools closed again in January 2021, we resumed remote learning and then established our own test centre in March 2021, administering 4500+ lateral flow tests as students returned from the last lockdown. For the first time since public exams began, they were cancelled in 2020 and then again in 2021, with students being awarded Centre Assessment Grades instead. We missed our shows, concerts, assemblies, sporting events and school trips. But, in spite of the difficulties, students have continued to make great progress and enjoy huge success at the Collegiate, where our clear focus has remained on PEOPLE and LEARNING. It has been the strength of our community, the relationships we have with our students and their families and our determination to adapt as necessary that have enabled us to continue to deliver an outstanding education. Of course, there have been compromises and restrictions, but we have not lost sight of what makes Riddlesdown Collegiate a special place and we are looking forward with confidence and optimism as we work to restore our exceptional normality.

As we begin a new academic year, we are

celebrating students' outstanding A Level, BTEC & GCSE results which have allowed the vast majority to move onto their preferred destinations at university or College VI. We are also looking forward to the completion of the College VI extension, which will include a brand new, modern Fitness Suite, and to further enhancements including refurbished student toilets and digital screens in all classrooms.

After a year without visitors, we shall be opening our doors again in the autumn with a series of Open Mornings and our Open Evening on 30th September 2021. Our busy programme of lettings has already recommenced and we are pleased to see so many local groups keen to benefit from our superb facilities.

Over the last 18 months, it has been clear that in so many ways, schools keep communities together. At Riddlesdown Collegiate, we are proud of the role we play in our community and grateful for the support that our community provides to us. Strong partnerships have helped us through tough times and together, we shall continue to thrive.

19th Purley (Riddlesdown) Scout Group

Liz O'Brien, Group Scout Leader

Since our last report, Covid-19 has hit scouting in a big way. We have had to learn to adapt to running scouting activities over Zoom which was a real challenge for so many reasons. All children were home-learning in the day, so having to sit again in front of a screen didn't appeal to some, the challenge of parents working from home and not having enough equipment to share, finding activities that were exciting enough to keep children engaged, the list went on. I am pleased to report that we retained virtually all our members and somehow even managed to recruit more during lockdown! This meant that when we were able to return this was the first time that some of our members had seen our amazing grounds and understood how scouting actually worked.

We are incredibly fortunate to have a team who work on our grounds twice a week completely voluntary. They are ex leaders/scouters of the 19th Purley and -- they won't mind me saying -- all retired. What they have done over lockdown and will be carrying on for the foreseeable is amazing. We have been on our Dunmail Drive site for around 65 years and nothing major has ever been done to the grounds. To make it more useable for us, and to make it more safe and secure, they have a very long list of jobs, which they are working through. Unfortunately we lost one of our dear friends, John Taylor recently. It was his wish to have his ashes scattered at our HQ, so we have done this among the 300+ saplings we have planted over lockdown to replace the brambles and undergrowth that we have dug up. We are also in the process of building an out shed/hut which we can use for so many events and activities which is thanks to the generosity of his family and friends in their donations to us again as he wished.

Our site is covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO), which I know flagged up a number of calls to various people about the sound of chainsaws and the smell of bonfires during these works. We welcomed the Council representative's visit and all further works due to take place over the coming months are all agreed. We also had a visit from

the local fire crew which turned out to be a blessing as they were unable to gain access to our headquarters which has prompted us to clear a lot from the path up. Our young people and the local community that use our grounds are our number one priority so the place must be safe for all and accessible in the event of an emergency or we are simply unable to meet.

Due to Covid restrictions, we have been very limited what activities we could run for our young people but they have just enjoyed being back and being in the great outdoors. Thankfully our last few weeks before we broke for the summer restrictions were lifted so we were able to do canoeing at Pinewood and South Norwood Lakes and send off our oldest Scouts in true 19th Purley style. All sections had lots of fun with our annual water fight with added fun for the Scouts.

We are looking forward to returning in September and are keeping everything crossed that everyone stays safe and well to allow us to run our usual fun autumn activities including our annual fireworks display, which we have missed so much.

Refurbishment project

Our ongoing refurbishment project continues at the 19th Purley. We have had a fire alarm system and fire exit signs installed. Our last big project is to get our floor resanded, marked up and varnished. We were fortunate over lockdown to get business rates relief grants from Croydon Council which helped us greately with the loss of subs, fundraising and hut hire so we hope this project is now achieveable. If anyone can help us in anyway, we are always looking for funding, materials, expertise, etc so please do contact me.

Upcoming events:-

Monday 8th November '21 Fireworks and bonfire all welcome

Monday 13th December '21 Carol singing at train stations fundraiser (TBC)

To find out more about our Group, my scout email address is GSL@19thpurley.org.uk or visit our website https://19thpurleyscoutgroup.org/

Nature's Year on Riddlesdown: A Personal Perspective

Nicola Hunt

Walking the open space of Riddlesdown has been an important to many people's well being in the last year and it is a huge asset to our community. I have lived in this area all my life but never visited Riddlesdown Open space as often nor seen it change on a daily basis as I have in the last year. I have always loved wildlife and I do regular bird surveys on Riddlesdown. However, the various restrictions of the last year gave me an opportunity to watch the unfolding of nature's calendar in a way I have never experienced before. In Spring, walking on the common most days, I could observe the daily changes of the blossom and tree leaves emerging. The succession of blackthorn, hawthorn, cow parsley and elder blossom was an indicator that nature was marching on as usual. Their various distinctive fragrances scenting the air on warm days. The tree leaves emerging so fresh, a pale green and then quickly toughening up to protect against onslaught of pests; beautiful just looking up under an oak or beech and seeing the leaves spread out against the sun and sky.

Then the migratory birds gradually began coming back- chiffchaff, blackcap, common whitethroat – all come here to breed on Riddlesdown then fly back to southern Europe or Africa in the Autumn. Each has their own distinctive song: the chiffchaff singing its name, the blackcap's rich warble and the whitethroat's scratchy serenade. Skylarks are with us on Riddlesdown all year and in Spring their joyful, waterfall-like song of rapid notes brightened up many days. The less obvious but equally delightful meadow pipit sings and floats like a parachute back to the ground. Early morning walks in Spring through the woods and fields of Riddlesdown were accompanied by the songs of blackbirds, dunnocks, wrens, robins, song thrushes, blue tits, great tits and the drumming of the black and white great spotted woodpecker or the laughing yaffle of the green woodpecker.

As Spring became summer, my attention turned to the butterflies and flowers which fill the fields and I spent each walk trying to identify and learn the names of the flowers. The yellows, purples, pinks and blues created a stunning mosaic of colour. Meantime the green woodpeckers had bred successfully and I saw them in nearly every field, their lovely green/ yellow colours acting as camouflage against the grass. As Autumn approached, the jays flew busily to and fro burying acorns as a cache for the winter and harder times. There were spider webs all over the grasses and the summer visitors were now leaving to go south. Then the winter thrushes arrived, with speckled breasts like the song thrush - fieldfare the largest thrush and redwing the smallest. The redwing came in large numbers last winter, quite noisy and talkative. Hidden in the woods feeding on berries they are shy and fly off if you get too close.

Then it was winter and I still walked on the common most days, although the mud became hard work. In this season, I tried to identify and learn the trees by looking at buds and bark and really notice the variety of bark patterns. I bought myself some crayons and made bark rubbings, something I had not done since I was a child. The winter really shows up the lichen growing on the branches and trunks of trees - pale greens and greys, lobed and feathery they are remarkable, some trees are covered in them- why had I not noticed before?

The birds still accompanied me on my walks, the small birds often in flocks, moving through the trees, feeding as quickly as possible to build up enough food reserve to see them through the night. Then just as we got to Christmas, the song thrush starts singing and the cycle begins again.

Croydon Ramblers: Outside Croydon

John Tickner

During the past eighteen months or so we have been locked up, locked down, told not to go out, told we cannot go to the gym, have a swim, do group exercises or partake of team games. What we have been allowed to do, and indeed encouraged to do, however, is take at least 30 minutes exercise each day by going for a walk. This is exactly what many people have been doing and they have discovered that walking is actually a very enjoyable form of exercise. Not only are we re-connecting with our local area and discovering little nooks and

crannies and footpaths that we didn't realise were there but we have also been able to admire the flora and fauna that change with the seasons throughout the year. Walking is a most natural form of exercise and if you want to get the heart and lungs pumping then a brisk walk up a steep hill would do the trick but if you prefer something more leisurely, whereby you can stop to admire the surroundings or perhaps take a photo, then I'm with you!

The London Borough of Croydon is blessed with many open spaces and parks: Lloyd Park, Shirley Hills, Croham Hurst, Wandle Park and Riddlesdown to name just a few. Your local rambling group, Croydon Ramblers have been walking out for over 70 years and they know where they are going! We have over 700 members who are keen not just to walk but also to belong to an organisation that endeavours to look after our precious footpath network. The good news is that they don't all go for the same walk on the same day!

To dispel a few common misconceptions about the "Ramblers" I need to say that you don't have to live in the London Borough of Croydon to come out walking with us. Secondly, you don't have to join the "Ramblers" first to join us on a walk. We expect you to try before you buy come by taking a few walks with us first, for there is a very small possibility that you may not enjoy your experience! We have walks on virtually every day of the year except Christmas Day, so it should be easy to find one that you fancy doing. If you haven't walked much lately and you are worried about keeping up, then perhaps choose a shorter walk that may be advertised as "at a leisurely pace". The Ramblers is an organisation that is open to all.

Why don't you have a look at our web-site www.croydonramblers.org.uk, select a walk you fancy doing and get in touch with the walk leader by e-mail who will be delighted to answer any questions you may have and hopefully book you on their walk.

I look forward to meeting you one day soon, Cheers, John Tickner.

P.S Don't forget your banana!

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Croydon's Birds: An Extract from Bird's Eye View

John Birkett, RSPB Croydon Local Group

July 2021 marked the centenary of the passing of the plumage act. The fledgling RSPB had been formed 30 years earlier, in 1891, with the merger of the Society for the Protection of Birds (in Didsbury) and the Fur, Fin and Feather Folk (with strong links to the Croydon area). That act was the culmination of the RSPB's first major campaign, aimed at stopping the slaughter of birds to satisfy the fashion for feathers, and even whole birds, as adornments for hats. Among the species of concern were egrets and great crested grebes. Little egrets were not breeding in Britain at the time, but in the last 30 years they have become well established and we now believe they are breeding very close to Croydon. Great crested grebes had been on the point of extinction in this country, but have recovered well and are breeding regularly in South Norwood.

Trying to predict how birds will fare with changing conditions has never been easy. I have just reread a book, published in 1885, about the birds of the Norwood district. In it the author speculated that the ongoing onslaught of house building linking Norwood to the ever-expanding London suburbs would see a drastic reduction in the birds that would be around in the next decade. He reckoned that the species most likely to survive were house martins and house sparrows. Ultimately, several of the species that he thought would disappear are now thriving in the suburbs; the goldfinch being one of them. On the other hand, his two predicted survivors (along with swifts and starlings), that nest around our eaves, are now declining. And that could be, in part, down to tidying up of our homes and gardens. What does the future hold for our birds? Hand me the crystal ball!

We would appreciate if you could email us (johnbirkett @hotmail.co.uk) with information about what you see and hear in your garden, or about any steps you have taken to help wildlife. Also keep an eye on our website (http://www.rspb.org.uk/groups/croydon/) for information about when our meetings and outings may resume.

House Sparrow by Ted Weston

COMMUNITY PAGES

Short pieces on local associations, events and activities. Submissions should be of around 150-200 words. Each edition we will also offer a 'Featured Group' section, in which an individual group can give a more detailed account of its activities and aims. If you would are interested in submitting an extended feature on your group please contact the editor at editorrra@gmail.com to discuss.

Sanderstead Literary Society

Following the pandemic-caused cancellation of our season last year, we are very pleased that our 2021-22 season will be able to go ahead. This will begin on 6th October 2021, when we will be able to meet together as usual. We have put together a fascinating programme of talks to interest and entertain you!

We can assure you that there will be a warm welcome for everyone, whether you are renewing your membership, becoming a new member or attending as a visitor. We meet I the Main Hall of Sanderstead United Reformed Church at the bottom of Sanderstead Hill (by the library) starting at 8.00pm on alternate Wednesday evenings. The talks normally finish at around 9.00pm.

Recent Talks Have Included:

6th October 2021. The Story of English Freedom – Illustrated talk by Andy Thomas.

We welcome Andy back for a wide-ranging talk about the struggle for freedom, taking in Boudicca's rebellion, the Pesasants' Revolt and the Modern Poll-Tax riots. Revolutionary ideas put forward in Cromwellian times and by visionaries such as the Suffragettes and George Orwell will also be convered.

20th October 2021. Sherlock Holmes Meets Jack the Ripper – Dramatized talk by Tony Harris

We welcome Tony back in the guise of Sherlock Holmes for a lively, interesting and detailed investigation into the Whitechapel Murders.

If you would like any further information please contact the Programme Secretary on:

0208657 3761

The Season will comprise 12 evenings of great entertainment for only £25 per person for the whole season!!

Community Information:

A - Z of organisations in or close to Riddlesdown (more details on the RRA website)

Bourne Society

Their website includes details of local publications, historical information, downloadable leaflets of walks around the area and photographs of Riddlesdown. Member only meetings; membership £10 a year. There is also a specific Sanderstead Local History Group, which holds monthly meetings for a charge of £2 per meeting for Bourne Society members only.
www.bournesoc.org.uk

Cantilena Singers

A long established choir for female voices - we sing light popular songs, folk songs, songs from musicals, and carols at Christmas. There are no auditions and you don't have to read music. Rehearsals are held on Wednesdays at 7.30pm, Methodist Church, 102 Limpsfield Road, Sanderstead,CR2 9EF (between All Saint's Church and Hamsey Green on the 403 bus route; parking available).

COME AND EXPERIENCE THE JOY OF SINGING IN THIS FRIENDLY AND WELCOMING CHOIR. For more information contact Jill on 07957 627783 or at jkcharity@outlook.com
www.cantilenasingerscroydon.org.uk

Croydon Art Society

Holds meetings & exhibitions – information at http://www.croydonartsociety.org.uk/

Croydon Camera Club

Meets at Shirley Methodist Church Hall most Wednesdays of the year & has outings to photogenic locations. Further Information www.croydoncameraclub.org.uk

Croydon Decorative and Fine Arts Society

Lectures take place on the 2nd Thursday of each month except August and December at 10.45 a.m. in All Saints Church Hall, Onslow Gardens, Sanderstead CR2 9AB. Tea/coffee and biscuits from 10.00 a.m. Visitors welcome. Other activities include Special Interest Days, Visits and Study Tours. Membership Secretary; 020 8680 3049.

CNHSS – Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society

Indoor meetings are usually held in the Small Hall of the East Croydon United Reformed Church, Addiscombe Grove, almost opposite East Croydon Station. www.cnhss.co.uk/

Croydon Symphonic Band

An amateur community wind band with 50 or so players that was formed by an ex Riddlesdown resident over 40 years ago. The band is based in Croydon. New members always welcome. www.csb.org.uk

FoFD - Friends of Farthing Downs

Regular talks & walks & meetings & exhibitions. Hold a Sunday Tea on Farthing Downs the last Sunday of each month, May to September. For more information - e-mail; fofd2@btinternet.com or telephone: 01737 554449.

London Mozart Players

For details of concerts some of which take place locally.
www.londonmozartplayers.com/

North Wood Morris Men -Croydon's Own Morris Dancers
They are always looking for new members to dance or play music. They will train dancers and musicians from scratch if need be. All are welcome.
http://www.northwoodmorris.co.uk/

Parkrun; Riddlesdown Common

Free 5km Run Every Saturday at 9am - Further details and to register
www.parkrun.org.uk/riddlesdown/

Purley Bury Sports & Social Club

(Brancaster Lane):
Bowls www.purleyburybc.co.uk/
Croquet www.purleyburycroquet.org.uk/
Tennis www.purleyburytennisclub.net/

Purley and District Townswomen's Guild

Meet in the Lounge, United Reformed Church, 906 Brighton Road, Purley CR8 2LN (next to Purley Hospital). First Tuesday every month, 2 – 4pm. Hold regular talks, lunches, etc. Try before you buy! First meeting free. www.purley-guild.webplus.net/ or email admin@purley-guild.com

Purley Literary Society

Meetings run from October to March. Talks are in the hall of the Purley URC Church, 906 Brighton Road – next to Purley Hospital, at 8pm. Visitors pay £5 at the door or season ticket; £22 for eleven talks or 6 talks £12. More information: www.purley-literary-society.com

Ramblers (Croydon) -

www.croydonramblers.org.uk

Ramblers (Surrey) –

www.surreyramblers.org.uk

Riddlesdown Lawn Tennis Club,

Lower Barn Rd
A small friendly club where everyone is welcome - regardless of age, experience or skill. Junior section with full coaching sessions organised by MDL Coaching on Sat mornings throughout year. Further details – Dave Kerr - 07773 818443. www.riddlesdownltc.com/

RSPB Croydon Local Group

Monthly Illustrated Wildlife Talks in South Croydon at Whitgift Sports Club, Croham Manor Road - off Croham Road. South Croydon, CR2 7BG
Second Monday of each month, 2pm and again at 8pm.
Admission £4.00. Everyone is welcome, not just RSPB members.
Free refreshments. A selection of RSPB goods, nuts & seeds are on sale.
Parking limited on site but free in adjacent roads.
64 & 433 buses stop nearby in Croham Road.
Whitgift Sports Club, Croham Manor Road -

Monday Nov. 8, 2021: "Kent Wildlife Trust Barn Owl Project". Lynne and Peter Flower, volunteer for Kent Wildlife Trust and work tirelessly to reverse the downward trend in barn owl numbers in Kent. Hear about their stunning results.

Monday Dec. 13, 2021: "Birds of Kent". Kent is one of the best counties for birdwatching, with a wide range of habitats. Brian Knobbs shows some of the places you should visit to find the best habitats and birds.

Monday Jan. 10, 2022: "Belarusian Wildlife". Andrew Cleave MBE leads tours for NatureTrek, and will talk about Belarus, a landlocked country in Eastern Europe that has many varied habitats, e.g. hills, forests, marshes.

Monday Feb. 14, 2022: "Unknown Antartica". Chris Collins talk specifically covers the birds of the Ross Sea (Antarctica south of Australia and New Zealand) and New Zealand's subantarctic islands, and includes several species of penguin and albatross.

Monday Mar. 14, 2022: "The Canadian Rainforest". Gordon Small has been to the rainforest to see the bears (grizzly, brown, black and 'Spirit' - a white form of the black bear), bald eagles and humpback whales.

For more information contact John Davis on 020-8640 4578

also see www.rspb.org.uk/groups/croydon

St Edmund's Church & Community Hall, Riddlesdown

St Edmund's Church & Community Hall, Riddlesdown St Edmund's Church & Community Hall, Riddlesdown St Edmund's is a dual-purpose building, used both as a church hall and a Riddlesdown community resource.
Website
www.sanderstead-parish.org.uk/st_edmund .

St Edmund's Caring Group

St Edmund's Caring Group SECG is a voluntary group in Riddlesdown which supports residents in remaining independent and at home when life becomes a little more difficult. We have wonderful volunteers who are happy to help in numerous ways; shopping and being taken to medical appointments are the most popular. Volunteering is such a rewarding experience knowing that you have helped someone to do something that would otherwise have seemed impossible is marvellous. Young or old, if you require support, reassurance or any information, please do give us a call. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please call our new telephone number 020 8651 9442. We are open 10-12 weekday mornings and at all other times there is an answer phone

Scallywags

Scallywags is delighted to offer local children from 0 to school age the chance to play together – and for their parents /grandparents /carers to meet and chat over a cup of coffee! The group meets in St Edmund's Church on Thursdays during term-time from 9.30 to 11.30 am. Lots of exciting equipment to play on, craft activities, singing……

St Edmund's Tuesday Night Badminton Club

Tuesday night badminton takes place between 8 - 9.30pm in St. Edmund's church hall during term time. We are a friendly mixed club with a mix of ability and would encourage new members to join. No absolute beginners please. Contact details: Mrs Christine Whitmarsh on 8660 2178 or just drop in one Tuesday evening.

Scouts and Girl Guiding

19th Purley (Riddlesdown), Dunmail Drive, off Mitchley Hill
www.croydonscouting.org.uk/
11th Purley Scout Group; St James Church Hall, Lower Road, Kenley
Beavers – Fridays; 1630 - 1730;
Cubs – Mondays; 1830 - 2000
Scouts – Tuesdays; 1900 - 2100
Enquiries to Peter Pearce (Group Scout Leader) 07947 889920 or
www.http://11thpurley.org.uk/
16th Purley Scout Group (All Saint's Group, Sanderstead)
www.croydonscouting.org.uk/where-do-we-meet/beavers-cubs-and-scouts/16th-purley-7th-sanderstead-all-saints-group/
18th Purley (United Reform Church). Scout HQ in Farm Fields.
http://www.18thpurley.org.uk/
Beavers – Thursdays; 5.00 – 6.00pm
Cubs – Mondays; 6.30 to 8.00pm
Scouts – Thursdays; 7.30 to 9.00pm

Croydon Girl Guiding

www.girlguidinglaser.org.uk/gdlgallery/croydon

Sanderstead Cricket Club

14 Old Saw Mill, Limpsfield Rd, Sanderstead (entrance opposite The Gruffy). Website; http://sanderstead.play-cricket.com/

Sanderstead Dramatic Club -

Contact Mr John Desbottes - Tel 01883 625656 - http://www.sdclub.org.uk/

Sanderstead Evening Townswomen's Guild

Contact Mrs Doreen Nicholls - Tel 020 8657 2072. Meets 3rd Monday of the month at 7.45pm at Sanderstead Methodist Church Hall. www.the-tg.com/Guild/sanderstead-evening/375.aspx

Sanderstead Horticultural Society

Wettern Tree Garden, Purley Oaks Road. Membership £6 per family. Contact Val Burley 020 8651 5837. Five member lectures a year & Garden Outings to great gardens. Other member benefits including horticultural advice & Knights discount.

Sanderstead Village WI

http://www.sandersteadwi.btck.co.uk/

Selsdon Camera Club

Meet Fridays at 7.30 pm (for a 7.45 pm start) The Methodist Halls 102 Limpsfield Road, Sanderstead.
http://www.selsdoncameraclub.co.uk/

Selsdon Little Leagues Football & Netball

Providing Football and Netball for local children in the Croydon area.

Stagecoach Croydon - Theatre Arts Schools for Children

Fridays at Riddlesdown Collegiate
4.30 - 7.30pm; 6 -18 years; 4.15 - 5.45pm; 4 -6 years.
Saturdays at Croydon High School
10 am - 1pm or 2.30pm - 5.30pm; 6-18 years;
9.30 am - 11am or 11.15am -12.45pm; 4-6 years. Tel 0845 265 7083
www.stagecoach.co.uk/croydon

Storisse

EACH STORY IS UNIQUE. After many months of planning, storisse.com is finally here. Storisse is a website which celebrates worthwhile work carried out by worthwhile charities, in a different way. Being a storyteller by profession, Alex Cuncev tells real life stories that are meaningful, moving and engaging.
Her personal stories are linked to thoughtfully researched charities.
Read storisse.com for weekly updates on amazing work, positive thoughts and heart-rendering stories! You can also submit your own story on the website.
This is what her readers say: 'These stories are like big hugs. Just enjoy a cup of tea and dive into this sweet universe filled with sunshine and kindness.' All on storisse.com

Surrey Wildlife Trust

More Information Tel: 01483 795440 or www.surreywildlifetrust.org

The Jolly Farmers

Live Music & Entertainment several times a week, usually free.
7 Purley Road, Purley CR8 2HA, Tel: 0208 660 2076 or www.jollyfarmers-purley.co.uk

The PROBUS Club of Sanderstead & Riddlesdown

Meet at Whitgift Sports Club, Croham Rd, S Croydon. From noon on first Tuesday of every month. Further details contact:- Chris Babbs email: chrisbabbsuk@waitrose.com

The University of the Third Age (U3A)

The Third Age Trust is the national representative body for the Universities of Third Age (U3As) in the UK. U3As are self-help, self-managed lifelong learning co-operatives for older people no longer in full time work, providing opportunities for their members to share learning experiences in a wide range of interest groups and to pursue learning not for qualifications, but for fun. http://www.u3a.org.uk/

Walk & Cycle Surrey

Further information:
http://www.walkandcycle.co.uk/surreytrails

Warlingham Horticultural Society

Hold Regular flower shows & plant sales in Warlingham & outings
http://warlinghamhorticultural.co.uk

Yoga with Veronica

A mixed ability class suitable for all ages which takes place on Tuesday evenings in St Edmund's Church Hall during term-time between 6.15 - 7.30pm. Yoga will improve your flexibility and strength and help you relax and de-stress after your busy day. Contact: Veronica Moulder; Tel 07803 728868.

Younger Generation Theatre Group

give an opportunity to 9-18's to appear on the professional stage
All auditions and rehearsals in Purley
Www.youngergeneration.co.uk or contact John Blundell 02086573214

DISCLAIMER

Every effort is made to ensure that the above information is factually correct and is made in good faith but accuracy must not be assumed and no responsibility can be taken for any actions arising in the case of error or otherwise. Please bring to the attention of the Editor, any inaccuracies.

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Thank you to these Advertisers, without whose support this magazine could

not have been produced

If you would like to place an Advert, please contact Neil

editorrra@riddlesdown.org

Our MP (Croydon South - Conservative); Mr Chris Philp MP , The House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
Tel; 020 7219 8026
Email; chris.philp.mp@parliament.uk website; www.chrisphilp.com
If you would like an appointment then telephone or e-mail.

Our Ward Councillors: All letters to Councillors should be sent: c/o The Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX.

PURLEY OAKS & RIDDLESDOWN WARD (Conservative)
Helen Redfern
Tel: 07783 152334
Email: helen.redfern@croydon.gov.uk
Simon Hoar
Tel: 07783 152372
Email simon.hoar@croydon.gov.uk

SANDERSTEAD WARD (Conservative)
Yvette Hopley
Tel: 8657 0973
Email: yvette.hopley@croydon.gov.uk
Lynne Hale
Tel: 8405 6721
Email: lynne.hale@croydon.gov.uk
Tim Pollard
Tel: 8251 8500
Email: councillor@timpollard.co.uk

GREATER LONDON ASSEMBLY MEMBER FOR CROYDON & SUTTON
Neil Garratt (Conservative)
Email; neil.garratt@london.gov.uk

RIDDLESDOWN/LONDON/LUTON/BEDFORD TRAIN TIMES

Southern Rail and Thameslink trains to and from Riddlesdown
The rail service is running to a restricted timetable due to Covid, so please consult the GTR or National Rail website.
Enquiries: Southern Railway: Tel: 03451 27 29 20 (07.00 - 22.00 hrs) or southernrailway.com
Thameslink: Tel; 0345 026 4700 (07:00 to 22:00 hrs) or thameslinkrailway.com
National Rail Tel: 03457 48 49 50 or nationalrail.co.uk

Local Bus Route and Frequency
In summary the 412 Service is: From Croydon, the 412 stands and starts in Katharine Street (by Queen's Gardens - along with the 109 which goes towards West Croydon; 405 routes) and then travels via the Croydon Flyover in High Street, South End, Selsdon Rd, Upper Selsdon Rd, Addington Rd (stop for Selsdon), Rectory Park, Mitchley Ave, Downs Court Rd, Godstone Rd, Pampisford Rd & ends on Brighton Rd (High Street) opposite the Purley Hospital.

From Purley, the service is nearly in reverse direction starting from Purley Downlands Precinct, (Brighton Rd) then left into Godstone Rd, Down Court Rd and terminates at the bus stand in Katharine Street, Croydon (by Queen's Gardens).

Approx Frequency Weekdays & Saturdays: Early; 20 mins, Peak; 15 mins, Daytime; 15 mins, Evenings; 20 mins, Late Evenings; 30 mins. **Frequency Sundays;** 30 mins.
For exact timetable, consult the Tfl website: tfl.gov.uk/bus/timetable/412/
Enquiries: Tfl London Buses: Tel; 0845 300 7000 or Tfl website: www.tfl.gov.uk
Links also available via the Transport section on the RRA website: riddlesdownresidents.org.uk/transport.html
Timetables are subject to change, so if in doubt, check with the rail and bus operator, Tfl or National Rail. The RRA cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of any of the above information and times.

Libraries: Purley and Selsdon - Closed on Wednesdays and Sundays.
Sanderstead – Closed on Mondays, Thursdays and Sundays.
Croydon Council's telephone number for all enquiries: 020 8726 6000, website www.croydon.gov.uk
Address: London Borough of Croydon, Bernard Weatherill House, 8 Mint Walk, Croydon, CR0 1EA

RRA Committee Meetings: usually 3rd Wednesday in January, March, May, July, September and November. Contact a Committee member for details.

The AGM is to be held in April/May 2022 in St Edmund's Church Hall,

Mitchley Ave. Please check the RRA website, E- Blast, or RRA Facebook page for the date.

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