

April/May 2021 Parish Magazine

St Martha Parish Council News

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Councillors:

The Reverend Stephanie Sokolowski (Chair) sokolowski.s@stmarthaparishcouncil.co.uk

John Peake (Vice-Chair) peake.j@stmarthaparishcouncil.co.uk

Patricia Allen allen.p@stmarthaparishcouncil.co.uk

Graham Brown brown.g@stmarthaparishcouncil.co.uk

Clare Price price.c@stmarthaparishcouncil.co.uk

Jean-Pierre Pugh pugh.jp@stmarthaparishcouncil.co.uk

Julia Tantram tantram.j@stmarthaparishcouncil.co.uk

Clerk: *Anne Tait* – tel: 07976 778864 clerk@stmarthaparishcouncil.co.uk

Spring at last! After what seems a long hard winter Spring, as always, brings the promise of better times. The latest data on the pandemic suggest that due to the lockdown and the vaccination programme, the worst may be behind us and that we can start looking forward to life returning to something like normal. We are of course fortunate to live in such a beautiful part of the country and during the lockdown the Surrey Hills has provided us with fantastic opportunities to exercise in glorious countryside. Spring now brings longer, warmer days in which to make the most of what we have.

Within the Surrey Hills are of course the Gunpowder Mills and for those who are familiar with it will know that at the western entrance is West Lodge, a building that is integral to that site, being where workers would start their days. Guildford Borough Council owns West Lodge and it was their intention to sell it for development. St Martha Parish Council opposed this saying that it would be a serious loss to this historic site and that the building could be put to better use and offer other benefits to our community. Since then, we have been negotiating with Guildford Borough Council to acquire a lease in order to use the building for community use and made a planning application to change the existing use of the West Lodge. We have been hugely encouraged that the Planning Committee unanimously supported our application and now we are able to move on to the next stage of the process.

There is still a long way to go, and our next steps are to secure funding to refurbish the building and to continue conversations with prospective users. To this end we are applying to Your Fund Surrey and we would greatly value your help in doing so. You can do so online by visiting 'Your Fund Surrey Commonplace map' and clicking on the pin' at West Lodge. This will give you additional information about what we hope to achieve. We will also provide a link on the Parish Council website.

In addition to supporting our efforts we would very much like to hear from anyone who has ideas on how to use the building and again you will find contact details on our website. The Chilworth2gether website will also carry information. Please help!

Our last report referred to speeding in Halfpenny Lane based on a traffic report. One of our parishioners, an expert mathematician, pointed out that we had misinterpreted the report and had exaggerated the extent of speeding in the Lane. We are sorry if anyone was misled but we remain concerned that the lane is often used in a dangerous way and will continue to try to find ways to make it safer.

Lastly, we are pleased to welcome Julia Tantram, who has been co-opted to the Council and we are sure she will make a valuable contribution to our community.