West Horsley Parish Council

Briefing Note on the Establishment of a Horsley Heritage Group

Introduction

Following an exploratory meeting held on 23rd January 2024, East Horsley Parish Council is proposing the creation a task group, to be named the Horsely Heritage Group (HHG), as a joint initiative between East and West Horsley Parish Councils. The following information has been provided by EHPC for consideration.

Task Group Objectives

HHG's aim is to support the preservation of heritage assets across the Horsleys. In this respect it will look to pursue two different areas of activity:

a) To assemble, store and present documents of local historical interest
b) To support the conservation of local heritage assets where possible

Historical Information

There is already considerable information about the history of the Horsleys available in the form of books, leaflets, maps, photographs, etc., including a significant number of publications by the HCPS, now in the process of being wound up. This information will be stored in future in a secure archive within the first floor of East Horsley's Parish Office. Residents will be encouraged to contribute unwanted historic material of interest to this archive or else permit their photocopying for inclusion within it.

Part of HHG's remit will be to present such information to residents across a range of formats, as and when appropriate. This may include PC newsletters, PC websites, at Horsley Library, village halls or other venues across the Horsleys, including potentially empty shop windows. The establishment of a local museum will also be reviewed. Some new historical material will also be prepared. For example, a history of the railways in East Horsley, pending its forthcoming 140th anniversary in 2025.

Heritage Conservation

There are two distinct areas of heritage conservation activity initially being proposed for HHG.

- ***Local Authority Planning System*** There are a total of 90 listed structures across the Horsleys, plus 12 locally listed buildings in East Horsley and 18 structures identified as historically significant within the West Horsley Neighbourhood Plan. HHG will engage with the GBC Conservative Officer to ensure that the significance of these heritage assets is fully understood, and that due weight is given in determining future planning applications. Potential new listing applications will also be assessed, together with further research into buildings of historic significance, which receive certain planning protection under our Neighbourhood Plans.

- ***Physical Conservation of Heritage Assets*** HHG will support the physical conservation of assets located within the public domain. For example, small-scale repairs of damaged Lovelace walls. Support for larger scale restoration work will also be considered although this will normally only be financially viable with additional third-party financial backing such as The Lottery Heritage Fund, crowdfunding, etc. HCPS's support for the Lovelace Bridge restoration work provides a possible model for such work.

Task Group Structure

It is proposed that this task group should have two co-chairs, with EHPC and WHPC each making one nomination, and will include additional representatives of the two Parish Councils and residents (a number of who have already expressed an interest).

Ongoing costs are expected to be relatively modest, confined primarily to printing, photo-copying and other stationery costs, perhaps the occasional room hire. Any physical conservation work undertaken will be subject to the normal expense approval processes of both parish councils. It is expected that costs would be shared equally between the two PCs.

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Considerations

Members are asked to consider:

1. Supporting the formation of a Horsley Heritage Group (HHG) as a joint East and West Parish Councils Task Group.

2. If in support, to discuss WHPC's representation on the joint HHG Task Group, including a nomination for co-chair.

3. If in support, to consider what would be a 'reasonable amount' for the set up and annual ongoing costs; and to discuss EHPC's expectation that the costs would be shared equally between the two councils.

Original draft by Cllr Robert Taylor, EHPC; amended by the Clerk, February 2024