

Great Langborough Residents' Association – Our Reasons for Existing

This Association was founded 30 years ago; initially to protect Great Langborough Recreation Ground from development or other damage. We commissioned legal services to consolidate its protected status as a Town Green. This is acknowledged by Wokingham Town Council, which manages it.

Our aims were soon broadened: to be an effective non-party political voice on local issues; to offer an open forum for residents to air their concerns about our area; to collect and disseminate information to local residents; to pass on the communications of the organisations that govern our environment and that provide our local services; to represent our interests to appropriate bodies and to assist in safeguarding residents' rights.

Membership is offered to all residents in the ancient Great Langborough area of Wokingham that lies east of the town centre: Langborough Road, Murdoch Road, Purslane, Gipsy Lane, Fairview Road, Crescent Road, Sturges Road, Denton Road, Nicholson Mews, Howard Road & Sale Garden Cottages, Southlands Road & Close, Green Drive, Erica Drive, South Drive & Close - over 600 households. GLRA constitutes a significant local voice.

The GLRA committee has established lines of communication with key members and officers of both Wokingham Town and Borough Councils, our local Member of Parliament, Thames Valley Police and Network Rail.

GLRA Activities

There are a number of factors that have enabled Wokingham to be rated consistently as a highly desirable place to live. The local population continues to grow rapidly; Wokingham Borough's population [grew by 15% from 2011 to 2021](#). Inevitably, there is increasing pressure on land for housing development. National Government has imposed demanding targets for new dwellings. Our ancient road network and other essential infrastructure is overloaded. New technology and demographic changes have brought new patterns of work and leisure. Town centre retail offerings have had to adapt. There is more pressure on already stretched public services.

We have engaged constantly with local planning at all levels.

The biggest local influence on our quality of life comes from the unceasing building development in and around Wokingham. At the strategic level, we have examined and commented in detail on the housing and road schemes proposed in all the Borough Local Plans; from 1996 to the current draft plan that extends to 2036.

We held many discussions with councillors and officers about Wokingham's Town Centre Regeneration: we challenged the financial viability of such a large-scale scheme; we explored the effectiveness of the marketing to secure profitable occupants; the impact of the loss of public open spaces; the building and street designs and the impact on traffic and pedestrian safety.

We took a close look at the plans for the new Carnival Pool complex and car park. We discussed issues for users of the relocated Library and for other pedestrians.

We highlighted the need to enhance the amenity value of all these major developments by providing high-quality public art.

We encouraged the integration of ways of making more efficient use of energy and fresh water.

We emphasised the need to provide the proper level of affordable housing in appropriate locations; particularly for essential workers.

We were also vigilant in examining planning applications to modify or replace individual properties, especially those affecting the two Conservation Areas in Great Langborough.

We have explored with our local authorities their strategy for provision of adequate public car parks, the issues caused by inappropriate street parking and the enforcement of restrictions.

We make representations about other environmental issues: air pollution from traffic, speeding, noisy night gatherings, vandalism. We encourage ways to minimise the impact of necessary temporary

road closures. We enlisted the help of our MP to bring pressure on Network Rail to reduce the noise disturbance to Gipsy Lane residents from audible warnings at Knoll Farm level crossing. We added our voice to the strong objections to the unsuccessful application to erect an 80-foot communications mast near the pedestrian bridge in Gipsy Lane – which would have loomed over Langborough Recreation Ground and adjacent properties.

We work with Wokingham Town Council to improve the life expectancy of the magnificent trees in Langborough Rec. We highlight concerns about noise and vandalism in Howard Palmer Park. We have supported the creation of community gardens on land adjoining Gipsy Lane.

GLRA Communications with Residents

Some years ago we established this web site, some social media presence and email newsletters. At our Annual General Meetings, we invite key speakers from local bodies to address important current topics and provide an open forum for public discussion. We disseminate significant local government and police messages.

For over two years, our communications with our residents have been constrained by the Covid pandemic restrictions. Our planned AGM this autumn will be the first public forum since 2019. As usual, we plan to offer residents an opportunity to hear from and question a key local speaker.

GLRA Committee: We Need Your Help

To carry on the work of the GLRA and to remain effective we must represent the interests of a broad range of ages and backgrounds. We need to recruit new members to our committee. We will be encouraging younger individuals to spend just a few hours a year planning our work on behalf of Great Langborough residents. Please help us in this effort by considering how you and your neighbours might join us. If you can, please step forward to help our community.