

Mayor's Report

As Covid restrictions have relaxed, things have got busier and busier and I've attended:

The Car Boot Sale

The Unlocked Festival that was such a great success

The opening of HasleWorks, the new managed office building in town

The new Moma restaurant opening

The inaugural Chamber Brocante Fair on St Christopher's Green

The Beacon Hill Summer Fete

The Circus at a free-for-NHS evening

The Hunter Centre's open evening and of course the 'specialist cabaret' put on by The Swan in aid of the British Heart Foundation.

In terms of town news, the LINK meeting in the wake of the Lloyds Bank closure announcement went reasonably well and a retailer identified who's willing to accommodate a cash machine inside their premises. It won't therefore be available 24 hours a day but longish hours. LINK is now trying to find an operator (ie a Bank) to run a new ATM.

The Georgian progresses well, with the announcement at the end of August that the deal has finally been signed with Coppa Club, a bar/restaurant/hotel chain with premises in Brighton, Henley, Cobham, Marlow, Maidenhead, The City etc. I think it's encouraging that Haslemere is being thought of alongside those towns. It should be a real attraction for the area, but won't open until Spring '22 as Listed Building work now needs to be done by the owners on behalf of Coppa.

Work is underway clearing the Collingwood & Batchelor car park which is supposed to be back in action soon on a pay-per-park basis, with prices equivalent to those elsewhere in town. With the Waitrose car park now often full again, this is welcome. A lot of vegetation has been cleared, some surface patching and lining will take place and it should be open soon, maybe by the time of this meeting.

The Neighbourhood Plan moves to a referendum on 7th October. I'd originally heard from local agents that some of their clients had plans to challenge it, but the 30+ changes made by the Inspector to bring it back into line with the NPPF and the Local Plan mean the developers now regard it as perfectly acceptable apparently. After the delay, our share of planning CIL money will rise from 15% to 25%, assuming the plan is passed by the vote.

The flats being built in Wey Hill are progressing on programme, with completion still scheduled for May 2022. There are 45 apartments, about half and half 1 and 2 beds, which whilst intended for affordable rental, are not conditioned as such.

Finally, a Charity Film Screening – 6th October, Haslemere Hall, 7.30 for 8.00

Tickets £12.50, Bar open from 7.30, Run Time 82 mins.

I invite you to a special Charity Screening of a new international film with a local connection.

The Reason I Jump, a BBC Book of the Week, is about a Japanese autistic boy's explanation of the world as he sees it, and the film of the same name illustrates that by reference to three groups of autistic people's contemporary experience.

It's produced by and features Jeremy Dear and his autistic son, Joss, Jeremy being my brother.

The film distributor has waived all fees for this one evening in order that all proceeds of the Haslemere showing can go to the Mayor's charities and to a new school, featured in the film, being set up for autistic children at the moment.

Jeremy will be there to say something about the film at the end and we'll do a Q&A for those interested.

All most welcome