

LOWER SUNBURY RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

2025 AGM NEWSLETTER



www.losra.org

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Lower Sunbury Residents' Association will take place at The Riverside Arts Centre, Thames Street, Sunbury, on Wednesday 25th June at 8 p.m.

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for absence**
2. **Minutes of the 2024 Annual General Meeting**
3. **Chairman's Report**
4. **Treasurer's Report**
5. **Election of Officers and Committee**
6. **Guest speaker: Lincoln Jopp MC MP, Member of Parliament for Spelthorne**
7. **Open Forum**
8. **Any other business**

Please note that we do not circulate the Minutes of the previous AGM or the Association's audited accounts with this notice, because to do so would generate disproportionate printing costs. Copies will be available at the AGM, and will also be posted on our website. If you are unable to visit the website but would like to see the documents in advance of the meeting, please contact Paul Thompson, LOSRA Chairman, whose details are included in this newsletter.

The AGM features Lincoln Jopp MC MP, Member of Parliament for Spelthorne, as Guest Speaker

We are privileged and delighted that Lincoln Jopp MC, the MP for Spelthorne, has accepted our invitation to be our Guest Speaker at this year's AGM.

These are crucial times for the future of Spelthorne, what with the Local Government Reorganisation and coping with wider problems the whole country is experiencing, so it's an opportunity to find out what our MP sees as his priorities for the constituency and what he aims to do to improve the quality of life in our area.

Mr Jopp has already demonstrated that he intends to be very active and visible in the area - he actually lives in Lower Sunbury, and has established links with many local organisations, and has attended a number of local events

It is to be hoped that what he has to say about his objectives for Spelthorne and how he can use his new position in Parliament on behalf of the Borough will be most interesting, with, hopefully, some worthwhile and fascinating insights into his first months as an MP.

We know he is very approachable and communicative, and there will be ample opportunity after his talk to ask him questions about matters you want to hear his views on and his intentions for addressing them.

As always, our Annual General Meeting is an opportunity for residents to come along, join the Association if you are not already a member, pay your subscription for the year if you have not already done so, and have a chance to hear about the activities of LOSRA and to ask questions about local issues.

We usually also have a good turnout of local councillors at the meeting so it's chance to meet them as well and they are usually happy to make themselves available to answer questions directly if they can.

We always pride ourselves on being unusual among organisations like ours that we are able to attract a good audience for our AGMs, so we look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at this year's meeting.

Local Government Reorganisation

What's it about and what does it all mean?

On 16 December 2024, central government published a Devolution White Paper, proposing the de-centralisation of government power to local or regional authorities. The White Paper proposed the creation of Mayoral Strategic Authorities in areas that don't currently have one – like Surrey.

The government also outlined plans for Local Government Reorganisation to create more unitary councils to simplify and streamline local government. The government has confirmed that Surrey will be on an accelerated programme to do so, based on the following timeline.



At present, Surrey has a two-tier council system, with 11 district and borough councils and a county council. Different services are currently delivered by the different tiers. A new unitary council or councils would deliver all the services in an area.

We could also see a new Strategic Authority created, led by a new Mayor. This could cover the whole of Surrey, or Surrey could join together with neighbouring councils with a mayor sitting across a large geography.

There were 3 different full business cases submitted to Central Government covering the Surrey Area:

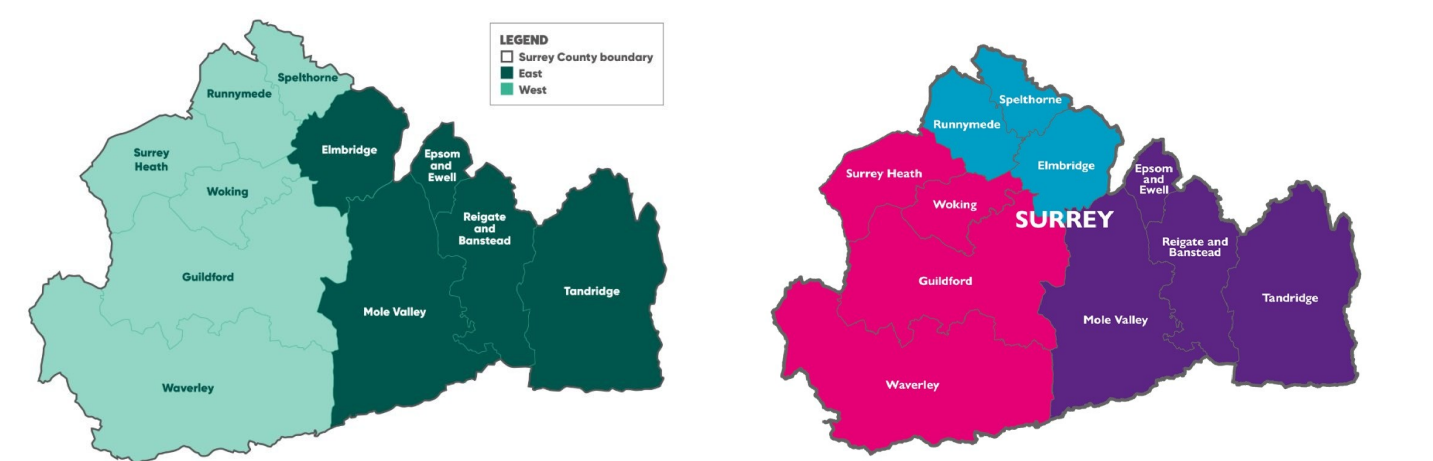
- A 2 unitary model – proposed by Surrey County Council, Elmbridge Borough & Mole Valley District Councils.
- A 3 Unitary Model – proposed by the other 8 District and Boroughs (Not Reigate & Banstead).
- Reigate & Banstead Borough Council submitted their own business case proposing unitary status with Crawley Borough Council.

Table 1: Proposed Transition costs within the Businesses case. Cost of Local Govt Reorganisation

Business Case/Proposals	Surrey County Council, Mole Valley BC & Elmbridge BC Business case	8 x District & Borough Business case
2 Unitary Model	£76m-£94m	£58.48m
3 Unitary Model	£85m-105m	£62.48m

A decision is expected in the Autumn. Central Government has stated that a Consultation will be carried out, but the details are still to be confirmed. We will provide more information on what this may mean for Lower Sunbury and how you can participate by submitting your views to any Consultation on our website when available.

The diagrams below show the potential splits from the 2 and 3 unitary models that have been submitted to Central Government.



There are clearly going to be problems in trying to implement what is a huge change in such a short time, and the issue of how services which are currently provided at Borough level within Spelthorne will be integrated with those provided by Surrey, will take some sorting out.

Central government sees this re-organisation as a way of achieving efficiencies, i.e. saving money, which presumably mean staff losses. How the quality of services can be maintained remains to be seen, and it looks like being a tricky few years or so as the transition moves ahead.

Spelthorne Council 'Best Value' Inspection: Commissioners deliver their report

In February 2023, Spelthorne Council received a letter from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities outlining concerns about Spelthorne's debt. This related primarily to historic property investments funded by loans from the Public Works Loan Board.

In May 2024, the Council received a Best Value Inspection letter from the previous government to inform them that an independent inspection would be undertaken to review the Council to seek assurance that it is compliant with its Best Value Duty.

The letter said *'Given that the Council remains one of those with a larger amount of debt and a reliance upon commercial income, we are requesting that an external capital review is undertaken of the Council's position including whether there are actions which are appropriate for the Council to take to reduce its level of risk over the coming years.'*

In March 2025, the Council received

the Best Value report.

This can be viewed on the Council website. Amongst the recommendations is *'The Secretary of State should consider appointing Commissioners with expertise in finance, commercial investments, property, and transformation to oversee the Council's recovery process and ensure effective governance.'*

In a letter to the Chief Executive dated 8 May 2025, the Government advised that it will appoint Commissioners to Spelthorne Borough Council.

The Council has been advised that the team will consist of Lesley Seary as Lead Commissioner, and Peter Robinson, Deborah McLaughlin and Mervyn Greer as Commissioners. The Commissioners have been appointed until January 2026.

The Commissioners are accountable to the Secretary of State to exercise the following functions:

- To strengthen the commercial decision

making, regeneration, property management and procurement functions of the Authority

- To deliver financial sustainability by closing any short or long-term budget gaps and reducing the Authority's external borrowing

- Transformation of council services to achieve value for money and financial sustainability, taking account of any decisions relating to proposals for unitary local government in Surrey

- Ensure the Council has the right skills and structures to make ongoing improvements across the entire organisation

The Secretary of State considers that most decisions should continue to be made by the Authority, but with the oversight of the Commissioners who will *'uphold proper standards and due process and recommend action to the Authority'*.

The Commissioners have now started their duties. For more information see <https://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/bestvalue>

Major traffic diversions from July on A308 caused by Thames Water reservoir barrier installations

We have just been passed a copy of a letter that's gone to Hampton residents advising of security barrier work along the A308 by the reservoir and filter beds, in order to stop vehicles going through the fence into the water as part of heightened security to guard against threats to the water supply.

This will entail one-way eastbound working along the part of the A308 towards Kingston and a huge westbound diversion up the A311 (Church Street) in Hampton, following the A312 (Uxbridge Road) all the way up to the A316 by St. Clares' Sainsburys. The closure of the westbound side of the A308, i.e. heading towards Sunbury Cross, will start just after the Percy Road junction and end by Hampton Care Home.

We have contacted Thames Water and Richmond Council, and can confirm that there will be access along the A308 westbound beyond Church Street in order to turn left down Lower Sunbury Road at Hampton Waterworks, so Lower Sunbury residents can use that route back from Kingston.

We assume that the 216 bus will be able to go east to Kingston following the normal route, but in the opposite direction, from Kingston to Staines, will have to turn left at Lower Sunbury Road and follow the river rather than coming down Harfield Road. We will try to check this with the bus operator.

Those two factors will help minimise the disruption and inconvenience for our area, but it is clearly not going to be ideal. In particular, there will undoubtedly be increased traffic on the Lower Hampton Road, with people using Harfield Road and The Avenue to get back up to the A308 and Sunbury Cross, as motorists will simply ignore the lengthy official detour and come through Lower Sunbury instead, and there is a danger of HGVs doing the same thing.

This all starts on 7th July, after Hampton Court Garden Festival, and is scheduled to go on, believe it or not, for four months.

Fortunately this does not look like being as major an issue as we feared when we first saw the documents but we will do our best to give you as much information as possible and keep you updated with any developments.

This has only come to our attention in the last couple of days, and we have not had a chance to discuss it with councillors, especially our County Councillor Buddhi Weerasinghe, to see what their thoughts are.

We do not have space here to give you the full details from the letter or show the map they have provided, which is hugely complicated. But we have posted a story on the website at www.losra.org, with downloadable pdfs of the email and letter from Thames Water, which incorporates the map, so that you can absorb it all and take in the details for yourselves.

Lower Sunbury Street Improvement Scheme: Thames Street Action Group

Following our New Year edition report, a further on-site meeting was held in March between members of the TSAG and Surrey County Council's LSSIS.

The latest proposals incorporating changes to the roadway on the Avenue Parade section of The Avenue and on Thames Street between French Street and Orchard Meadow were presented.

Taking into account feedback from the TSAG, revised final proposals are to be presented by LSSIS at the end of May. This will be followed by a further consultation with local residents, hopefully before the summer holidays.

You may have noticed that some of the raised platforms (a.k.a "sleeping policemen") on Thames Street have already had their ramps smoothed. The purpose of this is to reduce the vibrations caused by buses, in particular, and lorries - both legitimate and illegitimate. These have caused damage to a number of properties in Thames Street that front onto the road.

However, the consequence of these adjustments to the platforms is that traffic speeds are increasing - which underlines the need for the remaining improvements to traffic calming measures currently being discussed.

These include the introduction of a chicane and bollards on Thames Street as well as a raised plateau at the junction with The Avenue.

The LSSIS has also acknowledged the need for The Avenue/Thames Street to be added to the patrol hotlist with the Parking Enforcement Team.

One issue is that at this stage, no funds have been allocated to the implementation of the Plan, and the Local Government Reorganisation might play a part. Watch this space for developments!

Friends of Sunbury Park

Cows return to Sunbury Park, and a new management plan in place

Right on cue, on Wednesday May 7th, the cows returned to Sunbury Park to enjoy, we hope, a rich summer's grazing. Once again we have a brand-new batch of nine Aberdeen Angus steers, which are neutered bulls raised for beef production (see photo)

This lot look quite small, and to date, as is usual for the first week or two, they have stuck together and been pretty wary of people and dogs, but they will no doubt relax a bit over time.

Despite the dry spell, the weather has been so warm that the grass, and especially the trees and undergrowth, have grown quickly, so there is plenty of cover for the cows, who not only like to lurk under trees but enjoy the varied diet that the leaves offer.

Last year's bunch grew enormously during the summer, so it's a very good environment for them. FoSP has put notices in the Park noticeboards explaining the biodiversity strategy of which cattle grazing is a part. Having them there helps improve the biodiversity of the grassland by encouraging wild flowers and herbs to take root, and providing a better environment for invertebrates, and it also keeps the rank grasses from growing tall and rotting down, so it obviates the need for expensive mowing in an area which is tricky to mow anyway. Your continued co-operation in avoiding the cows being troubled by dogs is much appreciated.

THE LOSRA COMMITTEE

Clare Amin	82 The Avenue	07971 173572
Jyoti Banerjee	8 Harfield Road	07973 323440
Tamali Basak	38 Sutherland Avenue	07459 693876
Colleen Cuthbert (Secretary & Membership Secretary)	8 Maryland Way, TW16 6HR	01932 783606
Iain Findlay (Treasurer)	58 Thames Street	01932 783739
John Hirsh	21 School Walk	07515 637474
Neil Huntingford	Summer House, Wheatleys Ait	01932 783761
Chris Hyde	29 Queensway	07854 147935
Oliver Parr	Orchard House, Thames Street	07799 411902
Stacey Pinto (Vice Chair)	37 Sutherland Avenue	07894 834277
Nigel Spooner	36 Kingsmead Avenue	07887 898874
Paul Thompson (Chair)	12 Brackenwood	07788 107500
Paul Watts (President)	87 The Avenue	07976 334482



A new management plan for the park and Orchard Meadow has now been finalised and will guide the activities of both Spelthorne Council and The Friends for the next 5 years. It uses the basis of previous management plans and incorporates the results and advice from ecological work and observation in the years since.

Activities like the current grazing regime and woodland and grassland management are all included and the new plan will advise on when specific management activities are most appropriate.

Aerial photographs of the park have been taken and this will help identify and manage the different vegetation areas across the park. An additional set of photos will be taken later in the spring to highlight flowering areas.

FoSP are intending to start collecting data using the National Park Monitoring Scheme protocols (NPMS) (via volunteers) on the grassland so we can better understand its condition, responsively adjust the grazing regime and hopefully enhance biodiversity further.

A survey of nestboxes and bat boxes has been carried out - there are very few nest boxes in the park and the owl boxes are very old. FoSP has allocated a sum of money for replacement and erection of new nestboxes this Autumn.

A small team has cleared a large amount of bramble from along the base of the haka and the wild flower area in the woodland abutting Thames St. near St Mary's church continues to develop. Cleared of weeds and sown with wildflower seed, there has been some growth. Although the lack of rain has not helped germination.

LOSRA MEMBERSHIP FOR 2025 PAYMENT OPTIONS

By Standing Order

You may pay by setting up a standing order with your bank. Please make payments to Lower Sunbury Residents Association at Barclays Bank, Account number: 90581194 Sort Code: 20 46 73. Subsequent payments to be made on 1st January each year. Please use LOSRA with your house number and post code as a reference.

By cheque or cash

The annual subscription is still just £5 per household and voluntary donations are always welcome. For payment by cheque or cash, please use the form below and deliver to Colleen Cuthbert, Membership Secretary, 8 Maryland Way TW16 6HR or any other committee member as listed. Alternatively drop your payment into Skinners Newsagents/Post Office in Avenue Parade, or The Good Estate Agent in Green Street. Please make cheques payable to Lower Sunbury Residents Association.

Via PayPal

This can be done on the website at www.LOSRA.org

Life Membership

There is also the option of Life Membership of £100 with a one-off payment.

If you are not sure that you are up to date with your payments or you need more information about membership, please contact Colleen Cuthbert, Membership Secretary, on 01932 783606 or by email colleen.cuthbert@btinternet.com

Thank you very much for your continued support.

Membership payment slip 2025 for CHEQUES OR CASH

I wish to pay the annual subscription to LOSRA for £5.00 per household and a donation for £..... (please enter amount, if you would like to make a voluntary donation)

Name/s.

Address

Post Code.....

email

Telephone..... Date

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