

ARA article for A&LL July 2021 issue

The ARA article in last November's edition of this magazine was about the future of the Association, given our ageing committee and the lack of people volunteering to join us and take on the mantle of our work. Simply put, if more Ashtead residents do not put themselves forward to take up places on the committee then it will cease to be able to function at all.

Why is it, I wonder, that there is not greater interest in seeing that the Association survives? Remember that our voice carries weight with both the District and County Councils and through that voice we are another conduit, working on Ashtead's behalf. into those Councils. Don't forget that the Association also works in Ashtead's interests with other statutory bodies such as the railway companies and neighbourhood policing. If you think that our voice doesn't reflect that of Ashtead residents then come and join us to make sure that it does.

Our voice is heard..... Mole Valley District Council (MVDC) Officers meet bi-monthly with the local bodies whom they consider to be representative of their communities and who have a broad perspective and awareness of what is going on in their own locality. In the south of the District, those bodies are mainly Parish Councils, represented by Parish Clerks; in the north, those bodies are the Residents' Associations (RA) represented by the RA Chairs.

Our voice is heard..... The Association also works closely with the RAs in Bookham, Fetcham and Leatherhead and we act as a unit on all matters that affect each of us. Together we carry the voice of around 45,000 Mole Valley residents and our opinions are valued and listened to. Ashtead's place in that unit is under threat if we do not manage to recruit willing volunteers to join the committee and carry things forward after existing members cease to be able to do the work and step down.

The Association has a constitution that defines its *raison d'être* and allows for a 16-strong committee. At present we number just 10 people, so that alone should indicate just how many areas of Ashtead life we are unable to cover. Could you be the person who could bring a perspective on schools, youth services, be our liaison with Ashtead's business community, take on running our publicity and social media? Do you have any interest in, for example, planning or railways and could begin to take on some of that work from current committee members?

I'm repeating below just a few of last November's reminder of the work we have done over the years, or been instrumental in effecting:

- Reviewing all Planning Applications in Ashtead and making representation to the Council.
- Persuading the Woodland Trust to divert construction lorries away from Park Lane and Farm Lane and encourage all visitors to the site to use the "Derby" traffic route.
- Organizing the annual Ashtead Spring Clean.

- Sponsoring Ashtead Tree Wardens.
- Supporting the fight to get a pharmacy back in The Street.
- Ensuring planned level crossing closures are arranged to minimise disruption for residents.
- Obtaining an off-peak parking tariff in the station car park.

If any of the kind of work listed above matters to you, then we need your help to ensure its continuation. The Association is very much in need of your support so, if you are interested in learning more, I'd love to hear from you at chairman@ashteadresidents.org.uk.