

I would like to speak for a few minutes about Mere Pond.

The Council have issued the 3rd version of their 5-year plan.

I have critiqued it and have prepared a response.

There is movement towards my previous recommendations, compared to the earlier version, but I was hoping for more. I'll mention some topics.

1st SILT

Silt traps are planned to inhibit inflows and these should reduce silt build up in future. There are references to monitoring silt. And perhaps to removing silt, but not apparently in the near future.

I understand that £500,000 of CIL money is reserved for silt removal in 7 of the Borough's ponds, and am keen to see money held for Mere in case it is needed. I continue to recommend professional surveys for volume and chemistry, where these could drive a decision on removal.

I have asked for Councillor Ben Green's input.

2nd TREE SURGERY

RBBC's plan calls for surveys of trees and appropriate surgery. I have obtained input from the consultancy firm SJA Trees of Tadworth and they have suggested work on various trees e.g. dead trees near the junction of Walton Street and Sandlands Road, and trees with Ash Die-back disease in Withybed. The council said the latter trees are on private land, but they look like they are on Council land to me, so I am asking for more attention and identification of the owner.

3rd SIGNAGE

As suggested by me, signs were posted around the Pond warning about fish dumping and fowl feeding, but they were only of a temporary nature, and are already looking shabby, so I continue to recommend permanent ones.

RBBC say permanent signs would have to be professionally designed, but they will consider further.

At my request, after seeing people skating, "Keep off Dangerous Ice" signs were posted around the Pond. I have retrieved them, ready to notify the council and display them if they are needed in the future.

4th BULLRUSHES

The Plan calls for control of bullrushes to improve the sight of hydrangea on the bank in the south west corner. We will see if control is successful, but I am doubtful.

Bearing in mind Bullrushes have trebled in size every year, I continue to recommend removal. And a few could be transplanted to an area where they will not be a nuisance. Then, attractive Yellow Flag Iris could be re-established in the water below the hydrangea bank.

5th FISH

With only very few sightings in recent times, fish are not a big problem at the moment. Anyway, I keep a look out for distress and can initiate first aid measures at first sight.

The council's Plan speaks about involving a charity to control fish, but I have not found any interest by angling clubs.

The ultimate remedy, as in the past, has been re-location by a licensed contractor, and I can find a suitable firm if it is ever necessary.

6th MONITORING

I continue to monitor 12 variables with monthly reporting to the Council and Surrey Wildlife Trust. The Plan calls for 2 more variables, but they are difficult for me as an amateur. So I will get input from the Council to see if I can expand my testing.

7th OVERFLOWING

Water level is approaching the level at which it should flow through 2 grills in the embankment in Walton Street, and into the overflow pond behind the Blue Ball pub. I have reported to the council and am keeping a continual eye on it, with a view to seeing if the grills are undersized and are restricting the outflow. If this is the case, then better grills will be needed.

Incidentally, a hole developed in the concrete lid of an ancient well in the embankment in Walton Street. I reported to County Councillor Rebecca Paul, and the hole was repaired on the next day.

8th LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

RBBC only made little progress in the first year of their 5-year Plan. I'm hoping for more progress before they disappear next year. Then, we will presumably have to deal with the new East Surrey Council, or perhaps a Parish Council if one is established. In either case, I'll keep up monitoring, reporting problems, and encouraging council attention.

I'm starting to compile a list of works done and costs incurred over the last decade, and future projected costs, in case it is needed for planning.

Thanks for listening. Sorry I cannot attend this evening. Everyone who wants to discuss Mere is welcome at my house, Mereside. But please, NOT EVERYONE AT THE SAME TIME !