

GOLDSWORTH NEWS

December 2021 – Issue 178

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Winter edition



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to all our readers*



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GOLDSWORTH NEWS

GOLDSWORTH NEWS is the magazine of the Goldsworth Park Community Association CIO and is distributed free to approximately 5,000 homes and organisations throughout Goldsworth Park and the surrounding area.

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to: editor@ourgoldsworthpark.org.uk

GPCA CIO MEETINGS

Public meeting Wednesday January 19,
7.30pm Goldwater Lodge.

Membership of the GPCA is required to
receive details of forthcoming meetings.
Email chair@ourgoldsworthpark.org.uk for
information on how to join.

LOCAL COUNCILLORS

Ann-Marie Barker WBC,
James Sanderson WBC, and Lance Spencer
SCC (Lib Dem). Chitra Rana WBC,
Saj Hussain SCC (Conservative).

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Please read and recycle

Views from the Chair

MY personal views from the Chair are a bit restricted as I write, because I am self-isolating having tested positive for Covid.

I have no idea where I caught it and I have no symptoms, probably because I had my booster jab a month ago. NHS Track & Trace keep calling to check that I am at home and I explain that it is not that different from shielding during lockdown.

This meant that I missed the Remembrance Sunday Service for the first time in many years, but I will be out of isolation for the Christmas festivities. By the time you read this, the Christmas tree in the shopping centre courtyard will be cheering up shoppers and once more Sing Gold, the community choir, supported by Brownies and Rainbows, sang Christmas carols round the tree when the lights were switched on.

The tree is a joint enterprise between the GPCA, St Andrew's Church, the Goldsworth Park Angling Club, the shops, gym and the pub and we are grateful for all the contributions we receive.

In the spirit of Christmas, the GPCA is holding its first Christmas Market on Saturday, December 11 with stalls selling gifts, crafts and toys, entertainments and refreshments from Andy's Café – see page 5 for details. I hope you will come along to do a bit of last minute Christmas shopping. The GPCA will be contributing its proceeds to local charities.

It only remains for me to wish you all a happy and peaceful Christmas with family and friends again, and to hope that the new year will bring better times for us all.

If you have any issues of general concern or would like to be involved in the work of the GPCA CIO, please contact me through this magazine or at chair@ourgoldsworthpark.org.uk

www.ourgoldsworthpark.org.uk

Irene Watson, GPCA Chair



@ourgpca



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Grab our glossy calendar

DON'T miss out! Grab yourself a GPCA Goldsworth Park calendar for 2022.

This glossy gem is only £5 and all profits from sales will be donated to local charities.

Two outlets at the shopping centre are selling the calendar on behalf of the GPCA, Beacon House Dry Cleaners and La Palestra Health and Fitness. Alternatively you can pick them up at 8 Armadale Road, GU21 3LB (07956 560306) or 37 Willowmead Close, GU21 3DN (01483 714096). Please call beforehand to arrange a pickup time. Calendars will also be available at our Christmas Market outside St Andrew's Church on Saturday December 11.

As well as the current month the calendar shows the previous and next month on the same page.

Bob Cowell, GPCA Community Officer, who oversaw production of the calendar, said: "I would like to thank all those who donated photographs. We have tried to use pictures from different parts of the Park but, of course, the lake is always a popular subject."



We love that £1,000 Partnership gift!



By BOB CHALLONER, NGP Project Manager

THE John Lewis Partnership "Give a Little Love" project has kindly donated £1,000 to Natural Goldsworth Park following a nomination by our local branch of Waitrose.

I am very grateful to Waitrose for its generous donation. It will fund NGP's ongoing programme for conserving and enhancing the Meadow and woodland habitats on Goldsworth Park.

At a time when human impacts on the climate and nature are on everyone's minds, it is very reassuring to see large corporate organisations like the John Lewis Partnership recognising and supporting small scale community initiatives like NGP in their efforts to protect their local environment.

The donation will enable NGP to further its objectives, particularly the Meadow wildflower seeding programme. Other projects being considered are the provision of owl boxes (we used to have a tawny owl resident in the woods) and increasing the wildflower presence in the woods.



THAT'S GRAND — Carol Brown and Matt Bull from Waitrose present the cheque for £1,000 to NGP's Bob Challoner and GPCA Chair Irene Watson

WALK onto the lake banks during the summer and you will soon be greeted by an armada of swans, geese, ducks, coots and seagulls expecting an easy meal.

This demonstrates how unnatural behaviour can result from wild animals becoming accustomed to regular feeding by humans. Many believe that feeding wild animals helps them survive. However, if there were insufficient natural food in a locality the animals simply wouldn't be there.

All animals exploit the most readily available food source and will rapidly learn where it can be found. Supplemental feeding by humans falls into that category and will be eaten in preference to natural foods requiring more effort to find. Unfortunately, human-supplied foods are often of low nutritional value or contain salt, saturated fats, sugars or unhealthy additives — junk food for the animal.

With full stomachs after eating such food, animals will be disinclined to seek out their natural foods, potentially resulting in a nutritionally unbalanced diet. Unnaturally large gatherings of animals expecting supplemental feeding can also spread disease and create competition and conflict between them.

Habituation to human presence is a serious problem. This year, many will have seen the very bold fox around the lake in the daytime — urban foxes are generally active at night. She lost her natural fear of humans as a result of being fed by well-intentioned people. The downside was that some took a less benevolent view, with reports of the fox being chased by adults and being stoned by children. Her diminished wariness around humans could have had disastrous consequences for her and her cubs.

Feeding wild birds during prolonged severe winter weather is certainly sensible as natural foods will be hard to find. Otherwise, please think twice before putting out food for wild animals. Is it for their benefit or yours? If you feel you must, ensure the food is nutritious, is part of their natural diet, and is of limited quantity (how many other free meals is the animal getting?).

The internet has ample guidance as to suitable foodstuffs for particular species. And please do not try to interact with the animals, however tempting it may be. Just watch from a distance and enjoy their presence or set up a camera trap in the garden to take photos or video. If you decide to stop feeding, gradually reduce the amount of food over a period of time rather than ceasing immediately.

NEWS ROUNDUP

■ FOLLOWING discovery of two very rare moth species, the Meadow and woodland are being nominated as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance. If accepted, this should protect them from future development but will not impact on access by the community.

■ THE NGP pages on the GPCA website have been updated. Please have a look and let me know what you think: www.ourgoldsworthpark.org.uk

■ OUR Facebook presence is being changed to a "visible private group" in the near future. This will allow members to post photos and observations or opinions directly onto the page. Membership invitations will be sent out to our regular followers, but anyone with an interest in the natural world will be very welcome to join.

■ THE first phase of the wildflower seeding programme took place at the end of October. The objective is to extend the ranges of plants with more restricted distribution and to try some new species. Progress will be monitored next year and the year after. Thank you to all who took part.

■ REGRETTABLY, the second phase of the mammal survey at the end of October was cancelled due to adverse weather — small mammals do not like cold or rain! We'll try again in the spring.

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A personal view

Royer Slater



LET'S go back a few hundred years and imagine the area we now know as Goldsworth Park.

It's not the green and fertile place we would recognise, bejewelled with well-tended gardens and a wide variety of trees and hedgerow plants. Instead we see a landscape of low-lying plants struggling on nutrient-poor and acidic soils. There are no buildings and no roads, excepting perhaps the tracks made by grazing animals. All rather as Chobham Common is today.

Up to 200 years ago this was predominately lowland heathland, as was much of western Surrey. It's a habitat dominated by grasses and dwarf shrubs such as heather and gorse. Yet it supports a diversity of wildlife, including many rare species such as the southern damselfly, nightjar and sand lizard, which tend to live only in these areas.

Commoners and landowners grazed animals on the heathland until around 1800. This used to keep tree growth in check. But when grazing stopped, trees become established and the heathland habitat perished.

Over the past 200 years most of Surrey's heathland has been lost due to housing and agriculture. Remnants survive: the largest areas are on Chobham Common and the Ash and Pirbright Ranges, but only because much effort is made to keep them that way. Regular visitors to Chobham Common have observed that the heathland habitat is being damaged by unchecked tree growth, which Surrey Wildlife Trust has been addressing.

Regular grazing by the Trust's herd of Belted Galloway cattle – moved in rotation across the various commons – helps keep scrub growth under control. Their hooves also create thousands of tiny pockets of bare earth which are ideal for beetles and burrowing bees to colonise.

The big problem for wildlife on the heathlands, apart from development, is that the remaining areas have become fragmented, so wildlife isn't able to move between them.

However, there's good news at Wisley and Ockham Commons. The heathland there was being taken over by fast growing pine and silver birch tree scrub. After more than a decade of scrub clearance and mapping vegetation on the reserve, Surrey Wildlife Trust created a dynamic heathland landscape which is a thriving nature reserve of the highest conservation status. The nature reserve is now a Site of Special Scientific Interest and part of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. The site is mainly heathland but it also has areas of open water, bog, woodland and scrub.

The 266 hectare (660 acre) reserve is benefitting the UK's rarest reptile – the sand lizard – which depends on this sandy heathland habitat for its survival. The sand lizard had become extinct on Wisley and Ockham Commons. So after the heathland was restored, this endangered creature had to be reintroduced.

The lizards now living there are the descendants of 41 creatures rescued in 1991

by the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust from a housing development near Bournemouth. The sand lizard population has been steadily increasing with each new generation on this mosaic habitat of new and mature heather and gorse.

Visitors are welcome at the reserve, but you're unlikely to spot a lizard at this time of year – they'll be hibernating underground until April. During spring and summer the creatures bask on rocks in the day, then at night they retreat into their holes, dug out of sandy soil. To protect themselves, they pop off their tails and bite the predators!

For more information on Wisley and Ockham Commons visit <https://tinyurl.com/y267qgry>. There is parking available at Boldermere Car Park, Pond Car Park and Wren's Nest Car Park. Unfortunately the common is not suitable for wheelchair users or those with limited mobility.



SPECIAL RESERVE — Wisley and Ockham Commons

Picture: Surrey Wildlife Trust



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From the Lakeside



■ Roger Wescott is Goldsworth Park Angling Club secretary and fishing bailiff working in partnership with Woking Council to oversee fishing, monitor fish stocks and other wildlife, and keep the area clean and tidy.

MANY of you will recall that earlier this year Roy Anders, our angling club chairman and long serving bailiff, sadly passed away leaving a void in so many lives here in Goldsworth Park.

In order to help fill that void and to remember him, the angling club, with consent from his family, have placed a commemorative bench beside the lake.

The bench has been sited adjacent to his favoured fishing spot, where he spent many a day and night in the hope of catching one of the lake's monster carp, which he did, bless him.

Serco very kindly installed the bench for us free of charge, so many thanks to them for their help. The bench is situated behind platform 19 close to the wildlife area with a view looking along the eastern bank past the island. It's worth noting that it is a very good place to sit in the hope of seeing the kingfishers, which as it was with Roy, is their favoured spot.

The angling club throughout 2021 has again had a very successful year on the lake and its ponds in Brookwood Country Park, seeing some excellent catches of all species with a few monsters for good measure. A number of competitions were held, all of which were well supported with some great catches and lots of smiley faces along the way. All in all, year six of the club's existence has been a great success.

With the start of winter it's a time when much of our wildlife is busy preparing for the cold days ahead. Many of our birds have already left the country on their annual migration to warmer climes whilst others, as I write, will be gathering in readiness of making journeys of hundreds or even thousands of miles in search of warmth and food until returning to our shores in the spring.



FOND MEMORIES — Roy's daughter Karen (left) son Kevin, granddaughter Lauren and pooch Trixie at the lakeside bench

Many, of course, do stay here, making the most of what nature will allow, and this is where we can help by creating habitat in our gardens for insects and the like to create a food supermarket for birds and small mammals over the winter. Leaving fallen leaves and pruned trimmings in an untouched area would be ideal.

Now is also a good time to give your bird table and seed holders a good clean and then regularly top up with fresh treats, seed, fat balls, nuts etc. and fresh water. The birds will thank you by displaying their antics at feeding time which, to my mind, is far more entertaining than watching some rubbish on the television!

The angling club will be holding work parties round the lake over the next few weeks, having a bit of a trim and tidy here and there round the banks but leaving the bulk of the work until early next year and before breeding season gets underway. With this approach we cause minimum disturbance to the wildlife and wildfowl.

Through the winter months do, if you wish, offer our resident wildfowl a few treats; seeds, corn or water bird pellets are best. Bread is not so good but a little is OK, preferably brown. Please make sure you throw on to the water, never on to the bank as this only encourages rats, feed the birds not the rats.

And finally may I wish you all a wonderful Christmas, a very happy New Year and a Covid free one to boot. A SIZE 12 FISHING WELLY BOOT AT THAT!

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What's your Christmas colour? Rev Malcolm Herbert

SING GOLD, the community choir based at St Andrew's, simply loves Christmas.

It's a time to sing familiar songs together and never more so after the past months. One of our favourite songs is by John Rutter called 'The Colours of Christmas.' We hope to sing this at the carol service at the church on December 19.

Yes, there are the bright colours and lights which smother shops, churches and homes at this time of year. Yet as we seek to immerse ourselves in the gold, red and green of holly, berry, tree and tinsel, I think for many of us there are other colours that creep into our lives at this time.

Elvis Presley sang a great song called 'Blue Christmas'. It is a ballad of lost love and has become the anthem for a parallel Christmas Day on the longest night of the year, December 21. It speaks of loneliness and heartbreak during a time which we are told is supposed to be all about happiness. Blue of course is often used to refer to unhappiness, such as having the blues.

Maybe we need the colour blue at this time of year to give us permission to be real and to acknowledge any loss, sadness and pain we may be feeling. Or just to acknowledge life is tough and a bit depressing for us at the moment — whatever the reason. And in so doing we may find we can begin to open up to those things that really matter at Christmas and all the year round such as love, giving, forgiving, mercy, prayer and kindness.

And red, green and gold? They're not just about Father Christmas and Coca Cola!

Green can point us to God's eternal hope and future in Jesus. Red, God's love made real on earth in Jesus. Gold, God's life in and through us in Jesus... THE gift to all of us at this time. Pure gold.

Whatever colour dominates this Christmas for you may you know blessing, peace and the presence of deep and real love.

Malcolm



Andrew's Church

Abuse charity reaches out to child victims

WOKING-based charity Your Sanctuary, which offers help and support to victims of domestic abuse, is now providing a specialist children's service for young people caught in the middle of family conflict.

Fiamma Pather, the charity's CEO said: "Much of the focus of abuse is inevitably on the adults involved – both the survivor and the perpetrator – but what about the thousands of children who are living with this abuse in their own family?"

"It has been common for people to say that children 'witness' the abuse but this implies that they are unaffected bystanders to what is going on. Through our work with children and from hearing their stories we have come to understand that they are as traumatised and frightened as the adult survivor.

"They feel ashamed and responsible for what has happened in their family and can suffer from PTSD for many years. Recently we have seen a change in people's awareness of the impact on child survivors and were very pleased to see that the new Domestic Abuse Act, for the first time, recognises children as survivors in their own right.

"Currently, specialist support for child survivors of abuse is not universally available, but at Your Sanctuary we have a specialist children and young people's service which offers therapeutic interventions to the children living in our refuge and those living in the community.

"Our one-on-one work enables children to express through play or other methods how they have felt about the abuse, the impact it has had on them, their fears and hopes. Our group work helps children understand that they are not alone and for them to gain support not only from our facilitators but also from their peers.

"We provide a safe, confidential space where they can begin to make sense of what has happened and to understand that they were not to blame."

For more information on the charity's services and how you can support it go to **www.yoursanctuary.org.uk**

The helpline is available seven days a week from 9am to 9pm on 01483 776822.



FIAMMA PATHER

ST ANDREW'S CHURCH CHRISTMAS SERVICES

December 19, 4pm, Carols Outside (mince pies included)

Christmas Eve, 4pm, Crib & Christingle Service

Christmas Eve 11pm, Midnight Communion

Christmas Day 10am, Celebrate Jesus' Birthday

The Crib & Christingle Service will be live streamed at www.standrewsgwp.org



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Goldsworth Park remembers



GOLDSWORTH PARK residents gathered at the war memorial at the health centre for a Remembrance Sunday service.

Organised by the GPCA and St Andrew's Church, the service was led by Revd Malcolm Herbert.

Guides, Brownies, Rainbows, Scouts, Cubs and Beavers marched from their Generation Centre with their Colours to open proceedings.

The reading was made by Woking Councillor James Sanderson (Goldsworth Park).

Wreaths were laid on behalf of the GPCA, Woking Hospice, St Andrew's, Waitrose and the Goldsworth Park uniformed groups after the last post, the silence and reveille.



Help spread the News

THE Goldsworth News relies on volunteer deliverers to distribute the magazine to all properties on Goldsworth Park. We have some roads uncovered at the moment so if you would like to spread the news to residents and can spare an hour or two every three months please email Linda at hilllinda5@gmail.com

These are the roads that need deliverers: Heythorpe Close 19 properties; Langton Close 18; Wansford Green 27; Perleybrooke Lane 20; Shilburn Way/Low Thorpe 6; Chirton Walk 13; Halley's Approach 14; Huntingdon Road 68; Winnards 3; Abercorn Way 11; Fairbourne Close 12; Blencarn Close 43; Littlemead 38.

Copies for distribution will be delivered to your door. Delivery dates for 2022 are early March, late May, early September and early December.

Issues raised at our AGM

THE state of street lighting around the lake, aircraft noise and parking around Sythwood School were issues raised by members of the GPCA at the AGM at the Dianthus Building on Wednesday October 20.

Woking councillors at the meeting were made aware that lights around the lake were poorly maintained and were a mixture of old sodium and fluorescent tubes that were in dire need of an upgrade to energy efficient LED bulbs. Councillors said they would report residents' concerns.

The flight path into Farnborough Airport over Goldsworth Park and associated aircraft noise was affecting some residents. Cllr Ann-Marie Barker said that Woking Council had been given observer status on the Farnborough Airport Consultative Committee and was hopeful that full membership would follow. She would report back. Other residents said late-night noise from heavy jets taking off from Heathrow was more of a nuisance.

Parking on double yellow lines close to Sythwood School during drop off and pickup times was a road safety concern for residents of Willowmead Close. Woking Council's Geoff McManus was aware of the problem but said enforcement was proving difficult due to a number of successful appeals against penalty notices.

During her report on the GPCA finances, Treasurer Tina Hartley said suggestions would be welcome from members as to which charities the Association might make a donation.

GPCA chair Irene Watson said that two trustees, Social Secretary Cathy Butt and Vice-Chair Chris Martin had retired and were not

seeking re-election. Natural Goldsworth Park project manager Bob Challoner, elected as a trustee by the trustees in April needed, under the constitution, to resign and stand for election by members. He was elected unanimously.

Bob Cowell, who concentrates on community issues for the GPCA, was also elected as a trustee by members.

Irene reported that Steve Willson had resigned as webmaster and thanked him for his work over the years.



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Canal cash safety boost

SURREY POLICE and Woking Council have been given access to £175,000 to help improve safety for women and girls along the Basingstoke Canal.

The government funding has been secured by Surrey's Police and Crime Commissioner Lisa Townsend after a bid was submitted earlier this year.

Since July 2019 there have been a number of indecent exposures and suspicious incidents towards women and young girls along the Woking stretch of the canal.

The money will go towards installing extra CCTV cameras and signage along the canal footpath, the removal of foliage and graffiti to improve visibility and the purchase of four E bikes for community and police patrols along the towpath.

A designated canal neighbourhood watch has been set up by police, named "Canal Watch" and part of the Safer Streets funding will support this initiative.

Mrs Townsend said: "Ensuring we improve safety for women and girls in Surrey is one of my key priorities so I am delighted we have secured this crucial funding for the project in Woking."

"During my first week in office back in May, I joined the local policing team along the Basingstoke Canal to see first-hand the challenges they have in making this area safe for everyone to use."

"Sadly, there have been a number of incidents of indecent exposure which have targeted women and girls using the canal path in Woking."



FIELD TRIP — Surrey PCC Lisa Townsend visiting the local policing team in Woking

Trust gets a Lions share

WOKING LIONS CLUB has donated £400 to the Brigitte Trust towards the training of a volunteer to help at Goldsworth Park's Woking Hospice.

The Trust is a charity that offers emotional support and practical help from volunteers visiting people and carers facing cancer, motor neurone disease and other life-threatening illnesses.

After serious diagnosis, regular assistance to help with shopping, transport as well as time to listen, is available to those in need.

During the pandemic the Trust's telephone support service has offered assistance to adults in the Surrey area who are vulnerable, lonely, isolated or bereaved as well as carers who need someone to chat to.

To support the volunteers or for further information contact Tanya Stafford on 01306 881816 or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/TheBrigitteTrust

Woking Lions Club is a charity that raises money for the local community.

"Our police teams have been working really hard with our local partners to tackle this issue. I hope this extra funding will go a long way to supporting that work and will help make a real difference to the community in that area."

"The Safer Streets Fund is an excellent initiative by the Home Office and I was particularly pleased to see this round of funding have a focus on enhancing the safety of women and girls in our neighbourhoods."

Woking Sergeant Ed Lyons said: "We are delighted that this funding has been secured to help us tackle the issues we have had with indecent exposures along the Basingstoke Canal towpath."

"We have been working extremely hard behind the scenes to ensure that the streets of Woking are safe for everyone, including working with our partner agencies by introducing a range of measures to prevent further offences from taking place, as well as carrying out numerous enquiries to identify the offenders and ensure they are brought to justice."

"This funding will enhance the work we are already doing and go a long way to making our local communities a safer place to be."

Cllr Debbie Harlow, Woking Council's Portfolio Holder for Community Safety said: "Women and girls, along with everyone in our community, have the right to feel safe, whether that's on our streets, in our public spaces or recreational areas."

"I welcome the announcement of this crucial government funding that will go a long way in providing additional security measures along the Basingstoke Canal towpath, in addition to supporting the ongoing 'Canal Watch' initiative."



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Park's Ian takes Centre stage!

GOLDSWORTH PARK resident and former Woking Councillor Ian Eastwood has officially opened the borough's £26m leisure centre that has been named after him.

Woking's Mayor Cllr Liam Lyons and Ian unveiled a plaque at the state-of-the-art sports facility in Sheerwater.

Cllr Ayesha Azad, leader of the council told the 50 guests: "It gives me great pleasure to be able to thank those involved in the delivery of this amazing building, and to welcome representatives of the various communities that I hope will benefit greatly from this £26m investment by the council.

"It's great to see the building in use today. Even before the doors opened to the public, there was a lot of interest in the centre, particularly from clubs and groups wanting to make the Eastwood their home."

Facilities at the centre include:

- 25-metre pool with viewing gallery, steam room and sauna.
- Teaching pool with a moveable floor, hoist and privacy blinds.
- Five-court sports hall.
- 65 station gym with group cycling studio.
- Full-size floodlit 3G football pitch with covered stand for 100 fans — home of Sheerwater FC.
- Two grass football pitches and a junior rugby pitch.
- Cricket square and cricket nets.
- Multi-purpose function room with bar facilities, which is available for community hire.
- Ground floor café.
- Accessible facilities and disabled access throughout the building.
- Car park with disabled parking bays, electric vehicle charging points and bicycle storage.

Ian, 76, retired from local politics as a Lib Dem Woking Councillor in 2019 after 28 years' service.

During his years as a councillor, Ian's main areas of activity were sport and leisure, planning and licensing. He is particularly proud of having been instrumental in developing the council's leisure strategy and establishing a dedicated department while he was chairman of the Sport and Leisure Committee. He was Woking's mayor in 2000.

Ian is an active member of the GPCA and managed the bar at Goldwater Lodge before the lease was transferred to Dianthus Trading in 2018.

For information on the new centre visit freedom-leisure.co.uk/eastwood



IT'S OFFICIAL — Ian (right) at the centre opening with Woking Mayor Liam Lyons

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