

Miniature railway set to get bigger

12 June 2024



There will be a new train line coming to Surrey – for enthusiasts, engineers and eager families looking for a day out.

The Surrey Society of Model Engineers has been given planning permission for a revised inner track complete with a new bridge across a man made pond.

The site, in green belt on Fetcham Springs, Mill Lane, just outside Leatherhead, has long been established as a model railway.

It was considered acceptable for development because it was being used for outdoor recreation and the pond would add to the biodiversity of the area.

Councillor Chris Hunt said: “I think this is an excellent proposal and the policy grounds for approving it are very clear.

“My hope will be that the pond is maintained.

“As you might know we’ve had some issues with the main pond in Ashted in terms of some of the species were too aggressively growing and led to a loss of biodiversity in the end until it was cleaned out.

“Perhaps if there were to be an extra informative about the maintenance of the pond would be just as important?

“Planting is a condition already – but obviously the engineers might not be biodiversity experts and maybe they could approach the council for some hints on long-term care for the pond. – or Surrey Wildlife Trust?”

Leatherhead Miniature Railway is run as a non-profit, members’ club, and “unites those with interests in model and miniature engineering, particularly but not exclusively trains” planning documents presented to Mole Valley District Council’s Wednesday June 5 planning committee read.

The club has about 11 open days this year usually falling on Sundays and Bank Holidays, including a Santa weekend in December.

One of the open days is in association with the fire station open day. The fire station is adjacent to the site, and train rides take visitors to and from the fire station open day.

Tickets are sold for rides on the miniature trains at £2 per ride.