



**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held  
on Wednesday 17 March 2021 by Zoom**

**Attendees:** SLRA Committee: Tony Bartlett (Chair)  
David Porter (Secretary)  
Fred Dunkerley  
Bryan Hall  
John Hobbs  
Andy Peddle

22 members  
2 non-members

County Councillor: Charlie Simkins  
Borough Councillor: Larry Krause  
Parish Councillor: Christine Drury, Westwell Parish Council  
East Kent Police: Andrew Judd, Volunteer & Neighbourhood Watch Liaison Officer

The meeting was opened by the Chair at 7.07 pm.

**Before normal business a proposal was put to the meeting to amend the Constitution of the SLRA to sanction holding the AGM as a virtual meeting by electronic means.**

Proposed by Tony Bartlett and seconded by David Porter. 26 votes in favour, none against. The amended Constitution was adopted.

**Item 1: Apologies for absence**

Apologies had been received from:

Guests: Cllr Spencer Phillips  
Members: Doug Harman  
Chris & Tony Tester  
Simon Town

**Item 2: Approval of the minutes of the AGM held on 6 March 2019**

Proposed by John Hobbs and seconded by Andy Peddle. The minutes were approved as a true record.

**Item 3: Chair's Report**

Tony Bartlett, the Chair, presented his report:

"Once again, it's my privilege to present the Chairman's Report, providing an overview of what we, your Committee, has done.

But in the absence of even a virtual annual general meeting last year, this report necessarily covers the last two years. And what a different, but still a busy, couple of years it's been. But in the interests of time, I won't present a list of all the things we have done. Our successes have been clearly set out in the Flyer for this meeting and will be touched on in the Secretary's report. But what I want to do is to concentrate on what we have done as a Residents' Association to help make us a stronger community and, we hope, to make your life in this community better and safer.

The boundary changes at the elections in May 2019 united the community so that 99% is now in the Downs West rural borough ward, represented by our hard working ward councillor, Larry Krause. We now even have a Westwell notice Board in Hoads Wood Gardens courtesy of the Parish Council. Thank

you, Christine. But a small part of our area is still represented by Winston Michael and of course Winston is still very much involved in the running of Sandyacres.

Our direct contribution towards making the community safer was the installation of an AED, more commonly called a defibrillator, outside the Hare & Hounds in March 2019. We provided free training in its use and its regular checking and maintenance are also undertaken by the SLRA. Thank you, Andy, if you ever need it and there is no first responder to help, do not hesitate to use it -- its operation is self explanatory.

Whilst we cannot, and will not, become involved in neighbour disputes, we believe we have a duty to represent our residents where an issue affects a number of them. These issues have included continued flooding, unexpected road closures, herbicide drift, litter, apparent planning infringements, traffic arising from the increased use of Sandyacres, and, of course, traffic issues including speeding and on-road, or more accurately on-pavement, parking. In these instances, we collect the facts from those most affected and either write to the relevant local authority, KCC for flooding and road closures, or to the landowners whose actions are the primary cause. In most cases our intervention precipitates action. Where appropriate we will also involve the local Parish councils for their support.

Litter is increasingly a concern and we are regularly asked why we don't organise a "litter pick". The answer is simple – we are not insured to facilitate such an event. We know some of you pick up litter as you go out exercising, which we appreciate, and we thank you. We also request individuals to pick up and dispose of rubbish outside their own premises but only where it is safe to do so. For fly tipping we recommend the use of 101 or Country Eye.

We now have an SLRA representative on the Sandyacres Trustee Board, (thank you Fred) so we get advanced notice of events likely to affect us and have also improved our contacts with the organisers of these events, both to make our concerns known and help minimise their potential impact.

The local over-night HGV parking ban trial proved so successful that we are pleased to report it is now permanent and has been extended across Kent, with KCC now managing its enforcement, although ABC still enforces lorry parking restrictions in residential areas. We have again written to our MP, Damian Green, reminding him of the commitment he extracted from Highways England to include resurfacing our stretch of the M20 in the 2021/22 budget. He had the courtesy to reply and stressed his ongoing concern and support over the issue, but I am sorry to say that Brexit and the consequential Operation BROCK has been an excuse for yet more vacillation by Highways England. We hope Damian is attending the Westwell Annual Parish Zoom meeting next Thursday. With Sandyhurst Lane already being used as a "rat run" and the only route for most of us to get to and from our properties, there are the perennial problems of speeding and the shared use of the Lane by multiple users. This has been made more acute as many are also using the road for "local exercise" during lockdowns. Both Westwell and Boughton Aluph & Eastwell Parish Councils have indicated their intentions to create Highway Improvement Plans (HIPs) for their respective parishes. Through the Westwell Highways Improvement Plan we lobbied KCC on our concerns. Although the HIP was overtaken by central government initiatives to keep us healthy during the pandemic, (cycle lanes etc) the PC was successful in getting a grant from our KCC representative, Cllr Simkins, to fund the preparatory work necessary to implement on-highway speed reminder markings along Sandyhurst Lane. (thank you Charlie). As many will also have seen at the start of the first lockdown, "unofficial" signs appeared at both ends of SHL reminding drivers of the fact that more pedestrians were using the road. Thank you to that committee member who made that happen. (He knows who he is - so thank-you).

And finally, although not a statutory consultee, we keep an eye on local planning applications and where necessary contact the applicant with our concerns or make representations to ABC on the wider community's behalf. We opposed both the Lenacre Hall Farm and Sandpit development applications on the basis of the additional traffic that those developments would generate on SHL. We also stressed to the developers of Eureka Park that the S20 strategy in the Adopted Local Plan prohibited vehicular access to SHL from the site. They appear to have listened and modified the site plan shown in their Scoping Document accordingly. Of course, all developments are now on hold subject to the resolution of the nitrates discharge problem into Stodmarsh Nature Reserve. On a broader front, you will have seen by the draft consultation submissions we regularly circulate to members, that the Committee continues to reflect your views in the response it makes to any relevant national and local consultations.

We were delighted to see many of our comments to BA&E Parish Council on its draft Neighbourhood Plan were adopted in the final Regulation 15 version submitted to ABC. (Well done Bryan)

Neighbourhood Watch continues to report crimes in the local area but through it we also alert you to those “odd” or “suspicious” activities that can be crimes in the making. We only get this intelligence from you, and of course our Postman, so please keep vigilant. Nothing is too trivial!

I would like to close by expressing my continued thanks to all the members of the SLRA Committee and in particular the support provided by our Secretary, without whom most of what I report would not have happened. On your behalf. Thank you, David. A number of questions from you have already been submitted in advance and will be dealt with in the “From the Floor session” but don’t forget you can always contact us with your concerns or questions at any time during the year!”

#### **Item 4: Secretary’s Report**

David Porter, the Secretary, presented his report:

“As you’ve heard from the Chairman, we’ve had a very busy two years since the last AGM. The committee has met 10 times, 5 of which were held online. All the meetings were well attended by an average of 6.5 members. We have recently lost one committee member, Evan Thomas, who has moved away from the area. Evan has been on the committee for at least 12 years and we thank him for his sterling service to the Association and wish him every good fortune for the future.

The other person to mention is, of course, Howard Preston, who sadly passed away at the end of May 2019. Howard was an Honorary Life committee member, having been a founder member of the SLRA in 1983. Following a period working abroad, Howard returned to Sandyhurst Lane in 1996 and became synonymous with the SLRA, leading it as Chairman for 13 years, from 1999 until 2012. He is sadly missed.

My duties as Secretary include making our formal submissions on key issues and consultations to local County, Borough and Parish Councils and other bodies, such as the Boundary Commission and Highways Agency. There have been plenty of these issues over the last two years, including planning submissions, a Neighbourhood Plan, Lorry Parking, traffic speed control measures and motorway noise. I also ensure that the SLRA views on matters of concern to members, such as those already mentioned by Tony, are communicated to Councils, utility companies, road race organisers, local farmers and other relevant stakeholders. Our achievements in this area have even included the removal of an unsightly phone kiosk! And, at the risk of tempting providence, it does now seem that the endless water leaks we had around the 140s and 150s in Sandyhurst Lane have at last been fixed by South East Water.

The Secretary’s more mundane duties include keeping databases and the website up to date and sending out over 120 members’ emails each year. These can be on a very wide range of subjects, from surveying members’ views on planning issues to information on flooded roads, fallen trees, road closures and even bin collections! We also administer nine local Neighbourhood Watch schemes within our area, thanks to local co-ordinators who send out alerts and feed back any relevant information. We have also set up a network of volunteers who are available to assist any members who need help during the Covid pandemic with shopping, medical supplies and so on. Many thanks to all those who have helped in this way.

So, a great variety of issues has kept the committee and the secretariat very busy throughout the past two years. Our membership has stayed pretty stable and stands at about 43% of the 347 homes in our area. Finally, may I record the Association’s thanks for the support we receive from our county, borough and parish councillors and the relevant officials in councils, the police and many other bodies we deal with; we greatly value our close working relationships with them and the bodies they represent. And, of course, thanks to you the members for your support and your friendly emails and calls. We greatly value your membership.”

#### **Item 5: Treasurer’s Report**

Don Murrell, the Treasurer, was not present. The Secretary reported that the SLRA bank balance currently stood at £2479.37. This compared with £2359.32 at the last AGM in 2019. Our current liabilities are approximately £133 (£45 defib pads, £59 website, £29 Zoom), leaving a net balance of £2,346.

## **Item 6: Subscription rate for 2022**

The Chair said that the Committee recommended that the subscription rate for 2022 would remain at the current rate of £5.00 per household per calendar year.

## **Item 7: Election of Committee**

All of the existing committee members, listed below, offered themselves for re-election. They were duly re-elected (27 votes in favour, none against).

Tony Bartlett	Desmond Henley
Bryan Biggs	John Hobbs
Fred Dunkerley	Don Murrell
Bryan Hall	Andy Peddle
Doug Harman	David Porter

There was one further nomination of Graham Mullaly, proposed by Tony Bartlett and seconded by Fred Dunkerley. Graham Mullaly was elected (26 votes in favour, none against). There were no further nominations from the floor.

## **Item 8: Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

The formal AGM closed at 7.32 pm.

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## **From the Floor**

As the meeting was held by electronic means, a "From the Floor" session was held in place of the usual "Open Forum", with pre-notified questions from members.

### **A20 road safety**

Sheila Woodgate said she was concerned about the speed limit on the A20 at Potters Corner. It was currently 70mph, at this dangerous crossroads. There was now a greater use by pedestrians and cyclists and an increased use of lorries and other traffic on the A20, especially when the motorway was closed. Despite lower speed limits at Hothfield (50 mph) and Orchard Heights (40 mph), this intervening stretch was still 70 mph, which was too high.

The Chair showed the crash data for Potters Corner for the past ten years. This showed one 'serious', seven 'slight' and no 'fatal' accidents. Cllr Charlie Simkins said that he had contributed from his member's grant to Westwell Parish Council's Highways Improvement Plan with the specific intention of conducting a survey on the speed of traffic and road safety at the junction of the A20 and Sandyhurst Lane. The traffic survey would be carried out when the current Covid restrictions came to an end.

Cllr Christine Drury said that the immediate action of the Westwell PC Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) would be to enforce the 30 mph speed limit in Sandyhurst Lane but she was very pleased to hear from Cllr Simkins the interest in the A20 itself, and it could be incorporated in the next phase of the HIP, in conjunction with Kent Highways.

Simon Edwards said that, as he had previously mentioned regarding the Sandpit planning application, crash data does not give an accurate picture of incidents which have occurred, as it only includes reported incidents, whereas there are many 'near misses' and damaged vehicle incidents as well. So the crash data does not reflect the true nature of the danger at junctions such as Potters Corner.

Christine Drury said that an important element of the KCC strategy "Vision Zero" (which aims for zero fatalities on Kent's roads by 2050) was called "Community Circle". This will be of great interest because it registers concerns as well as crash data. She welcomed the support of Cllr Simkins and looked forward to developing solutions for the Potters Corner junction in consultation with KCC and the SLRA.

### **Update on Eureka Park development**

Gavin Fuller asked for an update on the proposed Eureka Park S20 development.

The Chair said that Westwell PC had held a meeting with the developers to discuss the scoping document, but that progress was now delayed by the problem of nitrate and phosphate effluent discharges adversely affecting the Stodmarsh Nature Reserve near Canterbury. The consultation on Eureka Park, promised for September 2020, had not therefore taken place.

Cllr Larry Krause confirmed that this delay meant that no plans had been submitted or deposited by the developers. Stodmarsh was a huge issue and would take some time to resolve. Consequently, no planning documents were yet available for site S20 Eureka Park, other than the Scoping document which had been issued in April 2020 and was available online. He also said that the pandemic meant that cash was in short supply and this was likely to delay investment in development.

### **Trees behind Sandyhurst Lane**

Susan Moffatt said that she lived in the low hundreds, Sandyhurst Lane and would like to raise the issue of the trees that line the path at the bottom of her garden that runs from the farm lane to the golf club. When she moved in 20+ years ago these were saplings and she had beautiful views across the fields at the back. These trees are now 60ft high and during the summer when they are covered in foliage, apart from now occluding the view they cause the bottom half of her garden to be in shade for most of the day and huge issues with moss in her lawn. She asked what purpose they are supposed to serve, who is responsible for them and if there any chance of getting them significantly pruned to restore the light to the bottom of her garden.

Cllr Christine Drury said that the trees were on land which is part of the Eureka site, owned by Trinity college, Cambridge. The trees form an important screen for the forthcoming development of Eureka Park and it was important to get the balance right. She suggested that the next time Westwell PC held a meeting with the developers (Quadrant and Bidwells), they would seek some “active management” of the trees, including some selective thinning and crowning of the trees. It would be important also to consult neighbours in the area before managing the trees. As the trees were now developing foliage and birds were nesting, the earliest any action could take place would now be next winter.

### **Broadband speed**

The Chair asked (on behalf of Mark Botfield), if there was widespread view that broadband speeds are low and if there was any appetite for a “Community Fibre Partnership” with BT Openreach?

David Porter said that a Community Fibre Partnership was, in the words of BT Openreach, an arrangement where they work with a local community to build a customised fibre solution to bring fibre broadband to homes and businesses. They put a joint funding arrangement in place, which means they contribute some of the costs and the community funds the rest. They then build “the most affordable solution we can to meet your needs”. They also advise on any grants available e.g. from local authorities or the Government.

In the case of Sandyhurst Lane, it was unlikely that any grants would be available, as fibre broadband was already available via the cabinets at Eastwell Towers and on the A20. Any upgrade would require the installation of “fibre to the premises” which was likely to be expensive. If members were interested, an approach could be made to BT, either individually or as the SLRA, via the BT Openreach website.

It was agreed to canvass members’ views on this issue after the meeting.

### **Neighbourhood Watch: Stone throwing**

The Chair raised the issue of a recent incident of stones being thrown from the motorway bridge on to vehicles travelling below. He asked what the community could do to support the police in this matter.

Andrew Judd said that, thankfully, this had been an isolated incident, unlike the use of catapults elsewhere in the town, which had become quite prolific. He asked that residents remained vigilant and reported any incidents on 101 (or 999 in an emergency).

There followed an invited talk:

**“EU Exit Preparations”**

**Toby Howe, Senior Highway Manager (EU Exit Highways Lead), Kent County Council**

Toby described the key role of the Kent Resilience Forum (KRF) as a partnership of organisations and agencies working together to improve resilience in Kent & Medway and planning emergency responses. There were 42 such Resilience Forums across England, created under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

KRF had been working well together since 2015 planning for the exit of the UK from the EU, including Brexit no-deal planning and planning for the end of the Brexit transition period. This was done through a series of tactical and strategic planning groups, with information being shared in a standard format.

A key part of the planning is a Traffic Management Plan. Most traffic heading to/from Dover Port and Eurotunnel does so via the M20/A20. In the event of delays, the Plan provided for Operation Brock between junctions 8 and 9 of the M20 as the first stage of traffic management. The previous metal barrier, which took 6 weeks to deploy, had now been replaced by a quickly moveable concrete barrier. This allowed up to 2,000 lorries to be held on the M20 coastbound carriageway and to be controlled by traffic lights installed within view of the Sandhurst Lane bridge. If there were further delays, the new site at Sevington would be used for up to a further 1,500 lorries. If there were yet further delays, the Dover Port traffic would be sent via the A249/M2 to Manston airport which holds 4,000 lorries.

In fact, Manston had to be used much earlier than planned, when France suspended all Channel freight crossings on 20 December 2020. Dover Port traffic has continued to be held at Manston but, from the coming weekend (20/21 March), the original Traffic Management Plan will be used, so that Dover traffic will use the M20, rather than Manston. There will therefore be a substantial increase of freight traffic using the M20.

Toby then described the inland border facility at Sevington. The Department for Transport had purchased the land last July and quickly developed the site. It includes the Defra border control post to deal with imports of animal and plant based products from October 2021. At present only exports are controlled. The site also includes large ponds and landscaping to ensure sustainable drainage and to balance the large area of tarmac. Sevington Church has also been protected, funded for improvements, including a new car park, and provided with a new public right of way.

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The Chair thanked the speaker and all participants in the meeting, which closed at 8.27 pm.