



**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at
Sandyacres Sports & Social Centre on Wednesday, 29 March 2017**

Attendees: SLRA Committee: Tony Bartlett (Chair)
David Porter (Secretary)
John Faulkner
Bryan Hall
Doug Harman
Desmond Henley
John Hobbs
Evan Thomas

35 members

5 non-members

County Councillors: Charlie Simkins

Borough Councillors: Larry Krause, Winston Michael

Parish Councillor: Carol Bunker, Boughton Aluph & Eastwell PC

Speaker: Andrew Judd, Volunteer and NW Coordinator for East Kent Police
(Committee member Doug Harman was also a speaker)

The meeting was opened by the Chairman at 7.36 pm.
The AGM was preceded by the Open Forum (see below).
The AGM commenced at 8.10 pm.

Item 1: Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from:

Members: Charles & Heather Slater
David & Maureen Betts
Sue & Denzil Wood
Chris Taylor & Amanda Townley
Arthur Gurteen

Item 2: Approval of the minutes of the AGM held on 9 March 2016

Proposed by Bryan Hall and seconded by Joan Richards. The minutes were approved as a true record.

Item 3: Chairman's Report

Tony Bartlett, the Chairman, presented his report:

"The Flyer you have all had very succinctly summarises most of the things we have been involved in during this past, very busy, year. But a number of them are ongoing.

The next draft of the Local Plan is expected to go out for consultation in June so we will look closely at it and see which of the original submitted sites are included and what new ones. Our task is to continue to press for the retention of our rural character in the face of increasing housing demand.

The Boundary review consultation does not close until 3rd April, although we have our response drafted and circulated to members ready to submit on the inclusion of the tree line behind the houses from the Golf club to Sandyhurst Farm.

John Faulkner, our Committee member at the northern end of Sandyhurst Lane, has circulated our invitation to residents in that area to comment on the new changes.

If implemented as proposed, it will mean that our governance will be simplified as our area will be represented by just two rural parish councils, Westwell and Boughton Aluph & Eastwell and two Ashford borough wards, Downs West and the new Goat Lees ward.

Lorry parking is an on-going problem. Westwell PC is leading on the issue with ABC and KCC and we look forward to new proposals for a solution later this year.

We are also working through Westwell PC to minimise the effects of traffic using Sandyhurst Lane as a rat run to avoid congestion from the road works along the A28, resulting from the start of the Chilmington Green development.

Moving on to our perennial issue of road safety, we know that many members are still concerned about the speed of vehicles in Sandyhurst Lane. During the year we have been exploring actions which may be appropriate to control this. However, again our approaches to KCC have met with little or no enthusiasm to fund any such measures on the grounds that the accident record does not merit it, despite a serious accident a few weeks ago. We will continue to keep the issue alive and would welcome any substantive evidence you get to support the case. Please report it to David.

The SLRA has committee members who are actively involved in the BA&E Neighbourhood Plan evolution, thus ensuring that the views of our local residents are properly represented in its development process.

The SLRA committee also continues to scrutinise and comment back to ABC on planning applications made within our area.

Our Neighbourhood Watch scheme has now been operating for nearly four years and is well established and complements, and I am afraid occasionally duplicates, information sent out from our neighbouring schemes in Westwell and Boughton Aluph. More on crime prevention later.

David will also deal with some of the issues we have dealt with, raised by our members

Now looking forward to next year, there are still items unresolved which will demand our attention. Two I have mentioned - the Local Plan and the HGV parking. But there will be others of which we are unaware, either arising from our local authorities or relevant consultations but also from you, the community we represent. Let us know, it's what we are here for. If you want to take a more active role and would like to join the Committee please let David know when we get to the election in a minute.

So on behalf of your Committee I would like to thank you, the members of the Association, for your support and remind you it is only through your continued membership and support that the Association has the strong voice needed to represent you and our community.

On your behalf, I would also like to thank all our county, borough and parish councillors for their past, and I hope future, support.

And finally on a personal note, I would like to publically thank my Committee colleagues for their time, dedication, help and guidance, without which much of what I have just reported would not have happened, and of course to thank our Secretary, David Porter, for his tireless efforts and without whom, nothing would have happened."

There were no questions after this report, but during the report several members indicated that they were not in favour of 'sleeping policemen' as speed control measures in Sandyhurst Lane.

Item 4: Secretary's Report

David Porter, the Secretary, presented his report:

"As you have heard from Tony's report, we have had another very busy year and this has been supported by the committee, both by holding meetings and in email correspondence. The committee has physically met five times and the meetings have been well attended by an average of six members.

The Committee membership has been generally stable over the year, but I'm sorry to say that we have recently lost our only female member, Joanna Clarkson, who has moved to a new area. We thank her for

her contribution to the committee's work and wish her all good fortune. We hope very much that we can look forward to recruiting future female members to provide a better balance in the committee membership.

Tony has mentioned the main issues we have addressed and we have made submissions to Ashford Borough Council on the draft Local Plan (in August 2016) and to the Boundary Commission on the warding arrangements for Ashford Borough (in September 2016).

There are quite a number of other issues which we have also dealt with, many of them raised by members.

In January we lodged an objection to an application to fell nine birch trees in the buffer zone between Sandyhurst Lane and the Goat Lees development. The application was subsequently withdrawn.

We have also been involved recently in progressing the extinguishment of footpath AU1. This is an issue which has been going on for at least 20 years and is finally approaching a conclusion. It refers to a footpath which runs through properties in the 140s to 160s Sandyhurst Lane, some of which were built over the footpath in the 1930s. The process is now in the consultation phase and the SLRA has made a response.

Another long running issue, though we hope it won't take 20 years to fix, is the water leak denoted by the yellow barriers near the entrance to Pondfield in Sandyhurst Lane. It has been there since last summer and a member brought it to our attention in November. We immediately referred it to our friends in Boughton Aluph & Eastwell parish council and they have been making strenuous efforts to halt the buck-passing between KCC, Southern Water and South East Water. Their endeavours are still in progress but we hope to have a resolution soon.

One other issue I should mention is the phone box at the junction of Sandyhurst Lane and Lenacre Street. One member has suggested we should seek its removal, as it has become, in his words, a grubby advertising hoarding. So please let us have your views and if there is a general wish for it to go, we can request that BT instigates the process it is required to carry out for phone box removal.

We have also reviewed numerous planning applications and supported some where appropriate, such as the conversion and restoration work on the barns at Lenacre Hall Farm.

Our membership has remained fairly stable with continued support from 37% of the 345 homes in our area. We keep in touch using email bulletins on a wide range of subjects, from bin collections to water pressure, from road closures to high speed broadband, and many other subjects. We also post a wide range of news and information on our website.

We also continue to deliver quarterly printed news summaries to those of our members who choose not to receive information by email and these are also displayed on our notice board, which is located by the post box opposite the footpath to Sandyhurst Farm.

Finally, may I add my own thanks to the Chairman's for the support we receive from all our county, borough and parish councillors; 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."

There were no questions on this report.

Item 5: Treasurer's Report

Don Murrell, the Treasurer, was unable to be present. The Secretary reported that the SLRA bank balance currently stood at £2,261.84, compared with £1,760.84 at the 2016 AGM.

A vote of thanks was recorded to Carole Borner for her continued work in the day to day management of the Association's finances.

Item 6: Election of Committee

All of the existing committee members offered themselves for re-election. There were no further nominations. Proposed by Doug Harman and seconded by Jane Hall, all candidates were duly elected unopposed:

Tony Bartlett
John Faulkner
Bryan Hall
Doug Harman
Desmond Henley

John Hobbs
Don Murrell
Andy Peddle
David Porter
Evan Thomas

Item 7: Sandyacres Trustee Board

The Chairman said that he had been approached by Cllr Winston Michael in his capacity of Chairman of the Sandyacres Trust. There may be an opportunity for the SLRA to nominate a representative to the Board. Further information would be circulated to members in due course; it was first desirable to examine the Trust Deed to satisfy questions on issues such as public liability.

Item 8: Any Other Business

There was no further business. The formal AGM closed at 8.37 pm.

Open Forum

The Open Forum was held prior to the AGM, starting at 7.36 pm.

Cllr Carol Bunker, Chair of Boughton Aluph & Eastwell (BA&E) Parish Council (PC), provided a summary of the relevant information about the parish:

The position of the parish was unusual insofar as it included both the rural area of Boughton Aluph and the urban area of Goat Lees. This had been highlighted by the recent Boundary Commission recommendation to create the new near-urban ward of Goat Lees, with Boughton Aluph and Eastwell then being within the rural ward of Downs West. By area, the parish was predominantly rural (over 90% rural and less than 10% urban).

A survey of residents carried out in May 2016, as part of the Neighbourhood Plan process, had shown that 92% of respondents wished to preserve the rural character of the parish and 91% wished to preserve the rural/urban boundary at Sandyhurst Lane. 50% said they were able to walk into the countryside in 5 minutes. This underlined the importance of the rural character of the parish to residents through both the rural and the urban parts of the parish.

Recent changes in the parish council's activities included providing more detailed, informative minutes and managing budgets so that there were specific costed projects in both the rural and urban parts of the parish.

The main current activity was the development of the Neighbourhood Plan, with an emphasis on good communications, for example through a dedicated website, newsletters, Twitter feeds, etc.

The PC was working with Goat Lees primary school to provide equipment for their outdoor space and also hoped to be able to fund a patrol officer for crossing the road. The PC also wanted to develop a 'park run' around the perimeter of Sandyacres. There was also, starting in April, a grants scheme in which 5 x £100 will be available to groups which can use the funds for the benefit of society (and provide photographic evidence that they have done so).

The Eureka development site in the draft Local Plan now looked as if it would involve the construction of 370 new dwellings on an attractive site, which includes lakes and trees. The PC is interested in local input to say what we should like to see, how to build a community and provide infrastructure such as schooling.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Bunker and noted that, with reference to the proposed Eureka development, the SLRA had successfully called for vehicular access not to be on to Sandyhurst Lane. Cllr Charlie Simkins, KCC member for Ashford Rural West division, provided an update on lorry parking. The problem at Potters Corner was under active review and a safety audit (funded by £3,000 from Cllr Simkins budget) had been carried out. The results were due in mid-May. Subject to his re-election on 4 May, he then intended to push for further work to decide on and implement an option for solving the problem.

With regard to the Stanford lorry park proposed by Highways England, this was undergoing judicial review which would delay progress until at least mid-June. There were also 'behind the scenes conversations' in progress about establishing many smaller lorry parks across Kent and across the whole of the UK.

Margery Thomas said that recently some tree felling had taken place near Westwell Lane, as a result of which the view had been opened up to the M20 and a valuable amenity had been destroyed. Joan Richards said that the operation had taken place over one weekend. Cllr Larry Krause, borough councillor for Downs West ward, said he was aware of a recent application for coppicing, but not felling and it was not clear if it was in the same location. He invited Margery Thomas to send him details of the incident, so that he could investigate.

John Lynch asked for an update on the water leak in the vicinity of Pondfield, Sandyhurst Lane. The secretary said he had referred this issue to BA&E PC in November 2016. Cllr Carol Bunker said that the PC had investigated and it appeared that it was the responsibility of South East Water rather than Southern Water (ie water supply rather than waste water). The PC was chasing up South East Water and had asked for a timescale for the problem to be fixed.

Stuart Clay said that two weeks ago both KCC and South East Water had visited the site and established that the leak was of chlorinated water, ie water supply. The leak had been fixed a week ago but had re-started yesterday. Terry Tierney (whose property is adjacent to the leak) said that another sample had been taken yesterday. He had also written to OFWAT about the problem.

The Secretary was asked to provide Cllr Charlie Simkins with the history of the leak.
[Secretary's note: Further activity by South East Water was reported immediately after the AGM]

Cllr Larry Krause said that it helps if as many people as possible complain to the SE Water leaks website (<http://www.southeastwater.co.uk/contact-us/report-a-leak>).

Helga Howells said that there was a problem with two street lights near her property. One on the footpath opposite Sandyacres, which connects Sandyhurst Lane with Dunnock Road, had not been illuminated for about 6 months. The other, on Sandyhurst Lane, was permanently on.

It was agreed that the Secretary would obtain full details and forward them to Cllr Charlie Simkins, who would try to get the problems fixed.

John Lynch asked whether the proposed development on the site of Lenacre Hall Farm would be going ahead. The Secretary said that this site was being considered by BA&E PC as part of their Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Carol Bunker said that the Neighbourhood Plan team had examined the proposal and the PC was not minded to support the inclusion of the site in the Ashford Local Plan. The Chairman said that the Local Plan was currently being re-examined and a second draft was expected to be published in June and would be followed by a further six week public consultation. At this stage it was not possible to say which sites would be supported by the new draft.

The Open Forum concluded at 8.10 pm.

Following the AGM, there were two invited presentations:

“Neighbourhood Watch & Volunteering within Kent Police”

Andrew Judd, Volunteer and Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator for East Kent Police

Neighbourhood Watch had started in the USA and was now the largest voluntary crime prevention organisation in England & Wales. It helped to support the community and educate the public about

crime and anti-social behaviour. Recently the Neighbourhood Watch logo had been updated; new stickers and a new members' guide were now available. There were 800 watches in East Kent and 120 in Ashford. Crime statistics for Sandyhurst Lane were very low (11 recorded offences in 2015/16, 14 in 2016/17). The Country Eye scheme was also now in operation, with the Country Eye App available for mobile phones.

Neighbourhood Watch was now more important than ever, given the reduction of 1,500 police employees in recent years and the amount of intelligence being received had increased 3-fold in the last 3 months.

Andrew had now increased significantly the number of daily crime messages. If members rang 101, it was important to indicate membership of Neighbourhood Watch so that the logged call would be brought to Andrew's attention. He would then follow up by calling back to ensure that good service had been provided.

Examples of crimes in Kent included modern day slavery (Ashford), gangs and drug dealing (Whitstable) and high harm impact crime (Herne Bay). Andrew is also the 'Volunteer Manager' and is actively looking for recruits to assist; he invited anyone with spare time to contact him at Ashford Police Station (Tel: 01233 896151 or 07080 965236, Email: andrew.judd2@kent.pnn.police.uk).

“Digital Photography” Doug Harman, Doug Harman Photography

Doug said that he had lived in Sandyhurst Lane for nearly 12 years and had been a professional photographer for 27 years. He had written a best-selling book entitled “The Digital Photography Handbook: An Illustrated Step-by-step Guide” and had recently launched a new business venture called Capture and Create (“The Luxury Photography Holiday and Cruise Experience”).

Doug showed a series of images taken locally with an overall 'rural' theme. Locations included Leeds Castle, Kings Wood, Westwell, Hothfield, Wye Crown, Stour Centre, Folkestone, Dover and Sandyhurst Lane. Both colour and monochrome images provided a fascinating mixture of 'moods' from serene to dramatic. He also showed some excellent examples of street photography.

Doug also provided a number of useful basic tips towards achieving a good photograph. These included the 'rule of thirds', use of foreground interest, separation between foreground and background and use of leading lines in the foreground (eg a stream, road, etc). He stressed the importance of always looking at everything in the frame.

The meeting closed at 9.33 pm and was followed by informal discussions over tea/coffee.