

**Minutes of Committee meeting held at the Hare & Hounds
on Tuesday 7 January 2020**

Present: Tony Bartlett, Bryan Biggs, Fred Dunkerley, Bryan Hall, Doug Harman, Desmond Henley, John Hobbs, Andy Peddle, David Porter and Evan Thomas.

By invitation: Paul Harris, SLRA member

Open Forum

Prior to the formal meeting, a discussion was held on issues raised by Paul Harris (**PH**), who spoke on behalf of himself and 7 of his neighbours. The issues related to the farmland opposite properties in the 170s and 180s Sandyhurst Lane.

Hedgerow: This has been eroded over the years from a substantial wide hedge to a sparse hedge today. The reasons for the decline include excessive flailing and progressive cultivation ever closer to the road.

Flooding: There has been significant flooding to properties in this part of the Lane in recent years. The farmland opposite is now one large field instead of several fields. Formerly there was an earth bank on the opposite side of the road, which helped to control run-off from the farmland. This has been eroded and is no longer effective. Consequently, the land drain becomes rapidly clogged with silt and crop debris, resulting in flooding.

Herbicide drift: There have been serious incidents of herbicide drift from spraying on the farm in windy conditions, resulting in damage to plants in both front and back gardens of properties in the vicinity. Last April, for example, yellow spots covered plants in these properties, caused by herbicide drift when spraying the winter turnip crop.

PH requested that the SLRA contact the farmer concerned with a view to resolving these issues. In the context of protecting the rural character of the Lane, he ideally wanted to see the replanting of the hedgerow on a raised bund and possibly a 'buffer strip' between the farmland and the road. He believed that Greening payments could already be received in this case from the Rural Payments Agency.

TB responded, noting that another member had recently lodged a flooding compensation claim with KCC. On the issue of herbicide drift and hedgerows, he agreed that, in the first instance, the SLRA would write to the farmer concerned, seeking an amicable resolution. Westwell Parish Council was also aware of the issue and would be writing to the farmer.

TB thanked **PH** for raising these issues with the committee.

ACTION TB/DP

Item 1: Minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2019

i. Approval

The minutes were agreed.

ii. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising which were not covered elsewhere in the agenda.

Item 2: Planning Issues

It was noted that the appeal for the application for 21 dwellings at Lenacre Hall Farm had been dismissed by the planning inspector, mainly on the grounds that the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. An earlier hybrid application, for up to 79 dwellings, including the 21 dwellings in the refused application, is still formally undecided, but it was difficult to see how it could be progressed without major modification.

There was no objection to an application for a single storey rear extension at 31 Sandyhurst Lane.

Item 3: Traffic issues

It was noted that the SLRA had written to Damian Green MP on 15 December, following his re-election, with a reminder that Highways England had scheduled resurfacing of the M20 in 2021/22.

TB said that Westwell Parish Council (WPC) was developing a Parish Highways Improvement Plan in conjunction with KCC Highways. He summarised the initial issues identified for inclusion. Those of greatest relevance to the SLRA were:

Sandyhurst Lane, which was identified as having higher traffic speeds than other parts of the parish. It had no footway but was increasingly used by pedestrians/dog walkers and cyclists. The SLRA had established that the 30mph speed limit was widely exceeded. The road was used as a 'rat run' between the A20 and A251. It was proposed that this issue should be addressed by WPC and SLRA jointly working with KCC Highways and the KCC Councillor.

A20/Potters Corner junction. This was a dangerous junction, with a 70 mph speed limit on the A20, bus stops, no pedestrian crossing and no lighting. The crash statistics were worse than the part of the A20 in Hothfield which had recently been restricted to 50 mph. It was proposed to address this issue by WPC discussions with KCC Highways, with input from the SLRA.

FD said that there were currently more cars parking partially on the pavement in the Boughton Aluph & Eastwell part of Sandyhurst Lane. Whilst parked cars may help to reduce traffic speeds, parking on the pavement obstructs pedestrians. It was agreed to raise this issue with BA&E PC as a candidate for inclusion in their Parish Highways Improvement Plan.

ACTION DP

Item 4: Boughton Aluph & Eastwell Parish Residents' Association/Neighbourhood Plan

BH said that the Regulation 15 version of the Neighbourhood Plan was now being finalised for submission to Ashford Borough Council. It was anticipated that the referendum on the final version would take place in the Spring.

Item 5 Sandyacres Trustee Board

FD said that there had been no meetings of the Trustee Board since 25 September. Three new Trustees had been appointed. The flooring at Sandyacres had been renewed in some areas and updating the lighting was under consideration. A 'Landlord's meeting' was due to be held with Ashford Borough Council.

Item 6: Consultations

There were no current consultations relevant to the SLRA.

Item 7: Membership

DP said that there were now 148 members. Of the 9 subscriptions which had been overdue for 2019, 6 had now been paid and the remaining 3 members had been deleted.

Item 8: Treasurer's report

The Treasurer was not present. **DP** said that the bank statement for 30 November 2019 showed a balance of £1,661.39. This would now be significantly higher (around £350), since most subscriptions paid by standing order were received on 2 January. The only recent expenditure had been to update the 10 year old software used to operate the website, at a cost of £33.50.

Item 9: Neighbourhood Watch

The latest Neighbourhood Watch database had been circulated. It was noted that the local PCSO had produced a monthly report which included many items of advice on anti-crime measures.

Item 10: Planning for AGM on 25 March 2020

i. Agenda

The draft agenda was agreed subject to the insertion of the speakers and, at **TB's** suggestion, amending the start time from 7.30 pm to 7.15 pm, to try to improve the time constraints. **ACTION DP**

ii. Speakers and Invitees

All local county and borough councillors and parish council chairmen and the PCSO had been alerted to the date and would receive invitations.

BH confirmed that his daughter, Tara, was willing to speak. She is an ecologist who carries out many environmental surveys around Kent and Sussex and could inform people about what they need to do if they wish to develop on their property. The proposal was welcomed and accepted; **BH** will provide further details. **ACTION BH**

FD suggested that it may be worth approaching those responsible for the current Ashford International Model Railway Education Centre exhibition in Elwick Place for a speaker. This was agreed. **AP** had possible contact information. **ACTION DP/AP**

iii. Flyer and its distribution

DP would produce the first draft of the flyer and circulate to committee members.

ACTION DP

iv. Admin

It was agreed to provide wine/soft drinks at the beginning and tea/coffee and biscuits at the end of the meeting. **DP** would provide a laptop, projector and screen. **DHa, AP** and **JH** offered to staff the reception desk. **ACTION DP/DHa/AP/JH**

Item 11: "Nextdoor" website

DHa had raised concerns about the "Nextdoor" organisation which appeared to be run by a large American company and was not local. Its activities had included recent hand-addressed postal delivery of leaflets to some residents, apparently from a local resident. It was felt that its aims were commercial and not necessarily in the interests of residents. After discussion it was agreed that the SLRA should not issue any statement but would reflect its views when approached by members enquiring about the issue.

Item 12: Other business

TB suggested that, following the "Open Forum" session which had been held immediately prior to the meeting, it should become a feature of future meetings, as required. It was agreed that members should be invited to bring forward issues for discussion with the committee, provided they were in the collective interests of members and with prior notice and agreement. This was agreed. **ACTION DP**

TB also raised the possibility of carrying out a survey of residents' views, similar to that which had been conducted in 2009, seeking views on key issues for the SLRA and the possibility of the SLRA holding social events. After discussion, it was agreed not to conduct a survey at this time, but to explore the idea of social events at the forthcoming AGM.

Item 13: Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 10 March 2020. [Subsequently changed to Friday 13 March 2020]. **ACTION DP**