

**Minutes of Committee meeting held at the Hare & Hounds
on Monday 12 September 2016**

Present: Tony Bartlett, John Faulkner, Bryan Hall, John Hobbs, Desmond Henley, Andy Peddle, David Porter and Evan Thomas.

Apologies were received from Joanna Clarkson.

Item 1: Minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2016**i. Approval**

The minutes were agreed and signed.

ii. Matters Arising

Under item 2 ii, **TB** reported that SLRA had been present at the 'road show' exhibition on the draft Local Plan at Sandyacres on 21 June. Discussions with residents and their completion of a questionnaire had helped to inform the SLRA response to the consultation on the Plan.

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

Item 2: Planning Issues**i. Planning applications and outcomes**

It was noted that planning permission had been granted for a new front drive at 358 Sandyhurst Lane. An application had also been made for a single storey extension and pool at 2 Potters Close.

ii. Ashford Local Plan to 2030

The SLRA response to the public consultation on the draft Local Plan had been prepared in consultation with members, submitted and circulated to members. **TB** said that Ashford Borough Council was planning to publish some new information on their website on 15 September. This would include all comments received by the Council, including new and "omission" development sites. (Omission sites are those for which their omission from the draft Plan is being challenged).

It was thought that the omission of the Lenacre Hall Farm site, for development of 100+ dwellings, may be because it would be separately considered as part of the Boughton Aluph & Eastwell Neighbourhood Plan. **BH** reported that the Neighbourhood Plan group was awaiting access to the site, to carry out a site assessment. **JF** said that, in a personal capacity, he would be meeting with the site owner on 14 September. He hoped to confirm the continuing commitment of the owner to the intended type of development, which he had discussed at an earlier meeting in 2015.

Item 3: LGBCE Consultation on Warding Arrangements for Ashford Borough Council

TB said that the consultation had closed on 5 September. Prior to this, he had asked Ashford Borough Council (ABC) for clarification on their thinking and likely submission, given that ABC's submission was likely to be important and influential, but had received no reply. It was then learned that an Extraordinary Council Meeting was to take place on 8 September and that this meeting was to approve ABC's submission to the Boundary Commission retrospectively, given that the closing date for its submission was three days earlier. Although ABC had consulted councillors on the submission during its preparation, it had not been made available to the public. It was approved without comment at the Extraordinary Council Meeting.

As Council meeting papers are published on the ABC website a week before meetings, the ABC boundary proposals in their submission became available on 1 September, only four days ahead of the LGBCE consultation closing date. It was only then that SLRA learned that ABC was proposing the abolition of Boughton Aluph & Eastwell (BA&E) ward, the expansion of Downs West ward to include (in the SLRA area) the existing 95 properties in Westwell and a further 145 properties currently in Bockhanger and 17 in BA&E, and the creation of a new urban Trinity ward, to include 88 BA&E properties in the SLRA area (in Sandyhurst Lane, Faversham Road and part of Lenacre Street).

TB said that, in the light of this, the SLRA submission was completely re-drafted and members were quickly consulted on an SLRA proposition that the Trinity ward/Downs West ward boundary proposed by ABC should be relocated beyond the tree line behind the houses on the even side of Sandyhurst Lane and that those houses and those in Lenacre Street and Faversham Road be included in the Downs West ward. Despite the short timescale, a strong and unanimous response was received, supporting the SLRA position, which was then incorporated into our submission to LGBCE and circulated to members.

JF felt that SLRA should complain that ABC's behaviour amounted to maladministration. After discussion, during which some members expressed the view that there appeared to have been some undemocratic behaviour by ABC, it was decided that SLRA should take no action at the present time, but keep the issue under review. Several members expressed the view that the most important objective was to try to secure the SLRA's adjusted boundary proposals. It was noted that a further consultation was to be held following publication of the LGBCE recommendations on 8 November 2016.

Item 4: Traffic issues

TB said that a follow-up meeting on lorry parking had been held by Westwell Parish Council on 7 July in the Hare and Hounds. ABC and KCC had been undertaking clamping campaigns against illegally parked lorries on industrial estates. This had resulted in even more pressure on lorry parking in lay-bys and roads in the area. KCC was now investigating options for changes to the A20 side road by the Hare and Hounds, with a view to eliminating lorry parking there. It was hoped that changes would be brought forward in the current financial year.

ET said that he felt that a recently completed construction at the front of a property in Sandyhurst Lane constituted a safety hazard, given that it eliminated the verge and abutted the carriageway. It was noted that a number of other properties in Sandyhurst Lane had also built right up to the carriageway in recent years. The Secretary was asked to contact KCC with a view to trying to establish ownership of the land constituting the verge. **ACTION DP**

Item 5: SLRA Constitution

DP advised that, following the committee's proposals for changes to the Constitution, agreed at the meeting on 11 April 2016, members had been consulted. No objections had been received and the Constitution had been duly amended (version dated 21 August 2016). However, whilst the proposals had been agreed, one member had written to propose further amendments on the way SLRA conducted representation. These included a request to include the number of votes received in each direction, the number of 'not sures', the number of abstentions, the number of households in the SLRA area, the number which are members and to consider how to represent the views of households in which the occupants may have diverging views. The member also raised the issue of different views in different parts of the SLRA area and the fact that a majority view is only a majority of those who respond and may not be that of all the members.

The committee debated these points at length and carefully considered the way in which representative organisations worked, the detailed wording of the existing Constitution and the practicalities of implementing the proposals made by the member. The committee finally concluded that the present wording of the Constitution on representation was satisfactory and adequate and that it would be impractical and inefficient to make changes to accommodate these new proposals.

Further minor changes to the Constitution were proposed by **JF**, who had been unable to respond to the earlier debate in April and the subsequent consultation of members. After discussion it was agreed to make the following further changes, subject to AGM approval:

Section 2 (Membership):

Residents of Sandyhurst Lane and adjoining roads will be eligible for full membership. ~~Persons in the neighbouring area may also apply to join.~~ The Secretary will maintain a membership roll.
[Second sentence deleted because it is unclear; the first sentence already defines the area]

Section 3 (The Aims and Objectives of the Association):

3.1 To protect **and preserve** the rural character of the area. [new words in red]

ACTION DP

Item 6: Boughton Aluph & Eastwell Residents' Association/Neighbourhood Plan

BH advised that the Neighbourhood Plan group was continuing its work and was currently undertaking site assessments, following which the Plan would be drafted. The recent ABC proposal to abolish the BA&E borough ward, even if adopted, would not come into effect until 2019 and it was not clear what effect, if any, this would have on the BA&E parish.

Item 7: Consultations

There were no relevant consultations open at present.

Item 8: Membership

DP said that two new members had recently joined and there were now 135 members, of which 20 cash subscriptions remained to be collected. He had emailed or sent a reminder with the July News Update to those members who had not yet paid. It was agreed to circulate an updated list so that committee members could encourage members in their local area to renew their subscriptions.

ACTION DP

Item 9: Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer was not present. **DP** said that the bank balance stood at £1811.84. A further £50 in cash and cheques was due to be paid in.

Item 10: Neighbourhood Watch

The latest database had been issued. There were no issues raised. **TB** said that the Westwell Community Watch scheme had been promoted via the Westwell Events email service and at the Westwell Fete on 28 August and would be further promoted in the Westwell Eye and on the new Westwell community website.

Item 11: Other business

ET said that there was a new drive to raise funds for a toilet block at Westwell church. Events included an evening glider event and a harvest supper. The Secretary agreed to send all committee members the email address for the Westwell Events service.

ACTION DP

DHe said that he thought that traffic turning left out of Sandyhurst Lane on to the A20 was a safety hazard and should be controlled. Other members thought there were a number of safety issues at Potters Corner, some of which might be addressed by KCC in their proposals to control lorry parking.

In response to a question from **JF**, the Secretary confirmed that details of committee members on the website had been updated after a consultation in February 2016. Further amendments could be made whenever required.

Item 12: Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday 14 November 2016.

ACTION DP