



**Minutes of Committee meeting held at the Hare & Hounds
on Thursday 24 September 2015**

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

Apologies for absence were received from Howard Preston and Evan Thomas.

Item 1: Minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2015

i. Approval

The minutes were agreed and signed.

ii. Matters Arising

Item 9: **JH** said that the road signs throughout Sandyhurst Lane had been cleaned and quoted a cost of £40.00 plus VAT. This was unanimously agreed and **JH** was thanked for arranging this work.

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 proposed rear single storey extension, with replacement window to first floor rear wall, at Elden, 61 Sandyhurst Lane. It was also noted that applications had been made for a pitched roof over the existing single storey flat roofed attached garage at 98 Sandyhurst Lane and for an extension and alterations at 178 Sandyhurst Lane.

An application had also been made for planning permission & listed building consent for Lenacre Hall Farm, 393 Sandyhurst Lane. The proposal was to renovate the derelict baby oast house to provide office space and parking for a local business. A letter had been received from the applicant, asking for support from the SLRA. This was agreed on the grounds that the work would both improve the environment and support rural business. **DP** would draft a supportive response to the planning application and submit it after approval by the committee.

ACTION DP

ii. Site Submissions for Ashford Local Plan to 2030

As agreed at the previous meeting, a letter had been sent to the relevant Ashford Borough Councillors, copied to the Planning portfolio holder (Cllr M Bennett) and Leader (Cllr G Clarkson), urging the Council to ensure that publication of the short list of submitted sites was expedited as soon as possible and emphasising the issue of planning blight affecting our members.

No responses had been received and it was feared that further delays in publication, until 2016, may be in prospect.

Item 3: Community Governance Review

Since the previous meeting, a second response had been made to the consultation, welcoming the draft recommendation to realign the Westwell Parish boundary in line with the proposal made by SLRA. Residents in the unparished ward of Bockhanger had now received ballot papers from Ashford Borough Council (via the Electoral Commission) to vote for or against the creation of Community Councils for Kennington and Central Ashford. The result of the ballot would be used to inform the Council's decision, but would not be binding.

Residents in the part of Bockhanger ward within the SLRA area (146 properties) had also received a letter from Ashford Borough Council explaining that the effect of realigning the Westwell Parish boundary would be to include them in Westwell Parish (and probably Downs West ward) rather than the new Community Councils. However, there was no ballot on this recommendation; residents could only express their views by responding to the consultation online, by email or by post.

SLRA had therefore prepared and distributed a flyer to these Bockhanger residents, explaining what the SLRA had proposed and how they could respond to the consultation on the boundary issue. A similar flyer had been prepared for Westwell residents, but would not be distributed before the meeting for them which Westwell Parish Council is holding on 1 October.

Members would be sent reminders about all relevant events (closure of ballot on 12 October, open evening at Civic Centre on 28 September, closure of consultation on 30 October, etc). **ACTION DP**

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

BH said that many comments had been received at the three Neighbourhood Plan public consultation sessions held so far, with a further session scheduled for 27 September at Sandyacres. In addition to residents, consultations were to be held with businesses and other stakeholders and neighbouring parish councils. Cllr Winston Michael was chairing the seven-strong steering committee and had drawn up a detailed schedule for development of the Plan. Consultants were also contributing and liaising with Ashford Borough Council. SLRA had emailed members reminding them of the importance of making their views known, whether or not they were Boughton Aluph & Eastwell parishioners.

It was noted that SLRA had written formally to Boughton Aluph & Eastwell Parish Council asking them what they had done to make residents aware of the Parish Design Statement (PDS) and the need to respect its provisions, in the light of a recent planning dispute. A reply was awaited.

JF said that there was now a feeling of cynicism among some residents about the usefulness of the PDS and that this was impacting on their view of the importance or otherwise of the Neighbourhood Plan, despite the fact that the Plan would have statutory weight not enjoyed by the PDS.

Item 5: Traffic issues

i. Operation Stack

SLRA had written to Paul Carter, Leader of Kent County Council, copied to Damian Green MP and both had replied with assurances about their commitment to finding a solution.

BH had also heard Damian Green at a recent meeting giving assurances that this was now a national issue being taken seriously by Government. **JF** said that recent press reports referred to a three point plan being prepared by Highways England/KCC to extend the Truckstop at J11 of the M20, to build a new park for 4,000 trucks and to make changes to the M20. A further announcement was expected shortly. Meanwhile Manston Airport had been prepared as an interim measure for truck parking.

It was noted that, although Ashford Borough Council (ABC) claimed to have had some success in reducing overnight truck parking in Ashford's industrial estates, the problem in local lay-bys and disused roads had become worse, with some trucks now parking on the Godinton Lane side of the A20 near Potters Corner. If the aforesaid measures to relieve Operation Stack were implemented, it would mean more truck parking capacity during non-Stack periods and SLRA would then look to ABC to ban truck parking in local lay-bys and disused roads. A watching brief would be maintained with a view to acting once any new proposals were announced.

ii. Traffic survey

As agreed at the previous meeting, SLRA had written to the county councillors (Jim Wedgbury and Charlie Simkins), requesting financial assistance with a proposed traffic survey in Sandyhurst Lane. Charlie Simkins had responded with a reply he had received from his enquiry to KCC Highways. They refused to provide any funds on the grounds that there were no "relevant incidents" in the safety statistics for the Lane. They suggested instead that the SLRA might undertake a Community Speed Watch scheme or appoint a private contractor to carry out a survey using automatic traffic counters at several locations along the road.

It was decided to take no further action at this time, not least because KCC also advised that it was very unlikely that they would consider any traffic calming measures, given the good safety record of Sandyhurst Lane.

Item 6: Mains drainage

DP reported that a reply had at last been received from Southern Water, following a letter sent enquiring about the options for mains drainage to be installed for those properties currently without it. The reply outlined three options in general terms only and gave no indication of costs or the current position of sewers in the vicinity. It was agreed to try to gather more information on the latter point before taking the matter further. **JF** said that his house (382) and some neighbouring properties had been connected to mains drainage about 6-7 years ago; he would look to see if his Deeds included a plan showing the sewer location. [Note: A sewer map could be obtained from Southern Water for £49.92].

Item 7: Membership

DP said that there were now 137 members, of which 19 were yet to pay their subscriptions for 2015.

DP would circulate the list of these to the committee.

ACTION DP

Item 8: Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer was not present and no report was available.

Item 9: Neighbourhood Watch

JF said that the Boughton Aluph & Eastwell Residents' Association scheme was operational and he would hand over its administration to two colleagues on 1 October.

The Chairman said that Westwell Parish Council was considering the options he had put forward for a Westwell scheme. There was a wide-ranging discussion about how these schemes might integrate with the SLRA scheme. The Chairman said he would circulate further information on the proposed Westwell scheme when it was available.

ACTION TB

The new Neighbourhood Watch 'No Doorstep Callers' stickers were distributed to SLRA committee members who were local coordinators.

Item 10: Other business

It was noted that there was no more that could be done to intervene in the dispute about the new concrete fence at 388 Sandyhurst Lane. It was understood that this now met planning regulations. As noted in item 4 above, SLRA was now focussing on the related issue of the effectiveness of the Parish Design Statement.

TB said that five properties at the end of Westwell Lane had recent flooding problems and this had been reported to the parish Council. **DP** said that Howard Preston had advised that flooding problems had also occurred at 358 Sandyhurst Lane. It was noted that Don Murrell is also in correspondence with the appropriate authorities to find a solution to the flooding caused by Bockhanger Stream in the vicinity of 196 - 202 Sandyhurst Lane.

Item 11: Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on **Thursday 10 December 2015**.

ACTION DP