

Sandyhurst Lane Residents' Association

Minutes of SLRA Committee meeting held at the Hare & Hounds on Wednesday 25 June 2014

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

Apologies for absence were received from Doug Harman, Don Murrell and Evan Thomas.

By invitation (for item 1): Adrian Hart, Rod Stone & Steve Whitlock, Southern Gas Networks

Item 1: Proposed closure of Sandyhurst Lane/A20 junction for duration of road works for gas mains replacement

This item was included in response to the circular received by residents on 18 June 2014 from Southern Gas Networks advising that KCC have made an Order to prohibit westbound traffic from joining the A20 from Sandyhurst Lane from 30 June to 11 August 2014 whilst work is carried out replacing gas mains and services.

DP reported that letters had been sent to both our KCC Councillors. Charlie Simkins had taken up our case and contacted Kevin Dash, the Roadworks Coordinator at KCC Highways responsible for the traffic management, explaining our request for a two-way traffic flow using traffic lights. The reply he received advised that the works will take place in the slip road on to the A20 and ruled out traffic emerging from Sandyhurst Lane into the single "fast lane" of the A20. Kevin Dash had been invited to the meeting but had declined, and also declined a further invitation to send an alternate.

Contact had also been made with Adrian Hart, Team Manager at Southern Gas Networks (SGN), who was the signatory of the original circular to residents. He and his colleagues had readily agreed to attend the meeting. He regretted that he had not been previously aware of the SLRA; otherwise he would have consulted us at an earlier stage.

The SLRA team explained the enormous impact of the road closure on our members, giving examples (drawn from emails received from members) of the disruption which will be caused. These included 'nightmare' school runs to Godinton and Repton Park, range problems for mobility scooters, etc.

The SLRA team made the point that closing Sandyhurst Lane westbound to avoid slow emerging traffic joining the fast lane of the A20 was pointless given that slow traffic would still be emerging from the large lay-by at the Hare and Hounds (eg buses and foreign lorries). SGN advised that the lay-by will be closed to avoid this problem. The (Ashford bound) bus stop will temporarily be moved to a position further down the A20 towards Ashford. SLRA advised that one of its members lives in a property accessed from the lay-by; SGN said they will make the necessary access arrangements.

SLRA asked if SGN could work weekends and evenings to shorten the time. SGN said that to do so requires special licences from the Environment Agency and these are normally granted only in exceptional circumstances. However, they would be able to do some work on Saturday mornings (as they have done hitherto in Sandyhurst Lane). They also explained that there are inevitably periods when no work appears to be in progress, but they are in fact carrying out pressure leakage tests on each section of gas mains after it is laid.

SGN said that, although they had scheduled six weeks for the works, this included a significant contingency period to cope with unexpected problems. If such problems did not materialise, they expected to be able to complete the works in a shorter period. They said that they would do everything they could to minimise the length of time of the works.

The SGN team tabled a map showing the diversion routes and their associated signage which will be put in place on 30 June 2014. They agreed to provide an electronic copy for the SLRA website. SGN agreed to an SLRA request to provide an additional sign near the entrance to the Golf Club. SLRA raised alternative proposals on diversionary routes, but the alternatives were not viable because they involved very narrow lanes and, even if they were made one-way, would be unsuitable for many types of traffic, and would cause further problems for farmers and local residents.

SGN agreed to keep in contact with SLRA throughout the duration of the works and would provide news of progress for SLRA to share with its members.

Item 2: Minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2014

i. Approval

The minutes were agreed and signed.

ii. Matters Arising

All the actions had been completed.

JF and **ND** reported that Boughton Aluph & Eastwell PC had received approval from Ashford BC to develop a Neighbourhood Plan, which would include all parts of the parish. This required consultation of residents and an online survey would be available in September for this purpose (with hard copy for those who prefer). The possibility of extending the consultation to areas outside the parish (eg the rest of Sandyhurst Lane) was discussed. **JF** & **ND** will advise further on this possibility in due course.

ACTION JF, ND

JF said that the welcome letter had been sent to a new resident and would be sent to another in the near future. Further work would be done to develop the welcome pack in conjunction with local businesses.

ACTION JF

Item 3: Review of AGM

It was agreed that the AGM had been very successful, with a record attendance of over 70, including 60 members. 14 new members had joined at the door. The speakers had provided interesting and stimulating presentations. The provision of tea/coffee and biscuits was agreed to have been beneficial and worthwhile.

Item 4: Planning Issues

i. Planning applications and outcomes

It was noted that planning permission had been granted for the erection of extensions and/or garage conversions at Caversham, 308 Sandyhurst Lane, Ranworth, Faversham Road, 39 Sandyhurst Lane, Corona, Westwell Lane and Carpenders. An application had been made for the installation of a new patio at Sandyacres Sports and Social Centre.

ii. Site Submissions for Ashford Local Plan to 2030

It was noted that the SLRA survey report had been published and the Chairman had written to the Chief Executive of Ashford BC. No further activity was anticipated until 2015, or possibly late Autumn 2014, when Ashford BC would move to the next stage in the development of the Local Plan to 2030.

Item 5: Traffic issues

It was noted that the 'SLOW DOWN' interactive sign on the westbound carriageway had finally been connected to an electricity supply on 8 April 2014, after several months of lobbying by the SLRA.

A discussion was held on the 'SpeedWatch' scheme which had previously operated in the Lane on occasions. It was understood that the former volunteers were no longer interested. **ND** said that the restrictions imposed on the operation of the scheme meant that vehicles were well warned of the speed check, which therefore was of little use in gathering evidence of speeding vehicles.

In the absence of Evan Thomas, discussion on the topic of traffic noise reduction trials on the A12 were held over until the next meeting.

Item 6: Membership

DP summarised the membership report that had been circulated. 24 new members had joined since the previous meeting on 29 January 2014, 14 of them at the AGM on 12 March 2014. There were now 121 paid-up members, with 11 cash payment members outstanding. An email reminder would be sent to these members.

ACTION DP

Item 7: Neighbourhood Watch

The signage had been significantly improved as **JH** had arranged the installation of several additional signs (eg Lenacre Street, Kingsland Lane). **JF** reported that Boughton Aluph & Eastwell had put their scheme on the 'back burner', partly because of difficulties in contacting the responsible parties in the police; our own contact was no longer in post. [Alex Harrington advised us on 16 May 2014 that she was no longer the NW contact and we are awaiting news of a replacement].

Item 8: Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer was not present, but **DP** reported that the Treasurer's office had advised him that the bank balance was currently in the region of £1140. The Treasurer's office had also provided the annual accounts (year ending 31 January 2014) and **DP** had circulated these on 8 April 2014.

Item 9: Oil syndicate

JF had raised in correspondence the possibility of using the SLRA to organise a bulk buying syndicate for purchasing domestic heating oil at advantageous rates. A scheme already operates in Challock.

It was agreed that an email bulletin would be sent to members to gauge interest. If there was sufficient interest, **JF** would arrange bulk purchases etc. **ACTION DP, JF**

A similar proposal had been made by a member in relation to firewood for wood burning stoves and open fires. Some members thought there could be problems, given that different people prefer different sizes and types of firewood. Nevertheless, it was decided to gauge the interest of members, provided that the member who had made the proposal was prepared to operate the scheme.

ACTION DP

Item 10: Other business

DP had received an enquiry from a member about the status of footpath AU1. It was thought that, amongst the committee members, only Howard Preston might be able to answer the enquiry, but he was currently in poor health. **JH** said he was planning to visit him soon.

TB said that the area around the SLRA notice board had become very overgrown. **AP** kindly offered to 'strim' the offending weeds and grass. **ACTION AP**

TB noted the existence of the local company 'Westwell Wines', which might offer possibilities for future events or other cooperative activities.

JF raised the issue of social events. After some discussion, the Chairman asked that any volunteer(s) to take the lead in organising such events should come forward if they wished to do so.

Item 11: Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 8 October 2014 at the Hare and Hounds.