

# THE BADGERS MOUNT RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

## DRAFT DOCUMENT FOR APPROVAL

Minutes of the 53<sup>rd</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Association held Thursday, 11 May 2017 in the Memorial Hall, Highland Road, Badgers Mount, Kent.

The meeting opened at 8.00 p.m.

Outgoing Committee:

Chairman – Alistair Dunlop

Vice Chairman – Dave Woledge

Secretary – Christine Donovan

Treasurer – Gordon Plumb

Committee Members – Eric Raven, Brian Marston, Trevor Simmons, Zena Belton, Adrienne Dunlop, Christiane Ohland, Will Withecombe

Present: 34 members of the Association

### Greetings:

Good evening everyone. I am Dave Woledge, the Vice-Chairman of the Residents Association and I must apologise for the absence of the Chairman. Unfortunately, he was scheduled for a knee operation today and therefore cannot attend.

Prior to the start of the formal AGM business a respectful silence was held for residents who passed away during the past year.

- 1- **APOLGIES FOR ABSENCE** were received from Alistair & Adrienne Dunlop, Trevor & Maureen Simmons, Zena Belton, Brian & Linda George, Arthur & Maureen Evans
- 2- **MINUTES OF THE 52<sup>nd</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** were approved with no comments being made. Proposed by Roger King and Seconded by Eric Raven and it was unanimously agreed that the minutes be accepted as prepared. The Vice-Chairman signed off the minutes.
- 3- **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES** – No matters, not being dealt with elsewhere on the Agenda, were raised.

### 4- PRESENTATION OF THE CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT:

#### FUTURE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

Last year, Sevenoaks District Council circulated a request for possible sites for future development, primarily housing. The request covered both previously developed sites – so-called 'Brown Field Sites' – and currently undeveloped sites. Since the vast majority of land in the SDC area of responsibility lies within the Green Belt, sites in this latter category would be subject to a detailed analysis of their relevance to the ideals behind the Green Belt and hence their suitability for future development. The list of sites and the analysis of the local Green Belt was made available towards the end of last year and covered by the Parish and Residents Newsletters. SDC are due to publish their first assessment of site suitability sometime in July

and we all look forward to seeing the results. There will be several rounds of calling for comments and we fully intend that our community should be involved.

More locally, the old **Elite Motors site** on the Orpington Bypass (A224) is expected to begin demolition in the near future. This will mean some disruption for the next few months; if you have any problems with builders parking awkwardly, contact the Parish Council and the Residents Association and we will jointly endeavour to stop any nuisances.

The **crematorium situation** is as confused as ever. There appears to be 2 sites in the running but announcements of the opening of the Watercroft Woods site appear to be somewhat premature. Gordon Plumb will cover this area in more detail later.

**Jenkins Neck Wood** – the area of woodland East of Highland Road abutting the M25 Motorway – has been put up for sale by SDC, as a result of Government encouragement to sell off unwanted assets. The most likely future use is partial clearance for animal pasturing. Apart from the loss of a local amenity, we are worried about the effects of such a sale on noise and vehicle pollution levels on our community. The initial asking price is many times the income of the parish – parish precept – so we are unlikely to be able to purchase it directly, but the Parish Council, assisted where relevant by the Residents Association, are drawing up a list of possible future options together with their pros and cons.

**Neighbourhood Plan** – A little while back, the government introduced the concept of Neighbourhood Plans. These are intended to set out how the local community sees future development and will be binding on developers after being approved by a planning inspector. Obviously, they cannot contradict the overall District and Council plans, but are intended to cover more local interests below the higher planning levels. Production of a competent plan is likely to be a long, complicated and possibly expensive process but in return would give us a legal framework for controlling some aspects of local development. The first stage is to identify a Community Vision – where we have come from; what are the features that make us unique as a community and which must be preserved; what are the current Threats, Opportunities, Weaknesses and Strengths of Badgers Mount. The next stage is to identify where we want to be in 10, 20 and 30 years, including aspects such as employment, facilities, utilities, public transport, internet etc. The Parish Council is leading on this project but is currently looking at how to incorporate inputs from across our community. The Residents Association intends to participate fully in developing ideas and presenting them to the community for assessment.

## **DEFIBRILLATOR**

A defibrillator is a simple-to-use piece of equipment which can help revive heart attack victims. Some local communities have already installed these emergency devices and the Residents Association fully supports the Parish Council in their drive to equip Badgers Mount with one. We understand that money may be available to install the equipment at this Memorial Hall during the coming Financial Year.

## **ROAD**

We have been promised speed roundels on our roads during this Financial Year. These are designed to alert drivers to the speed limit and hence moderate their speeds. We have also complained about the filthy state of the reflective signs, road signs and the village gates.

## **F M CONWAY**

The local F M Conway Management Team changed recently but our negotiators report that so far the previous professional atmosphere of mutual respect appears to be continuing. We have made it a fundamental principle of our approach that we should never be beholden to F M Conway; they respect this attitude and in return they have been conscientious in minimising noise and other anti-social behaviour. A more detailed report by Trevor Simmons will be included later.

## **SOCIAL EVENTS**

We have held a number of social events during the year. Turnouts have been relatively small but everyone seems to have enjoyed themselves.

## **4a REPORT ON F M CONWAY LTD**

Since the last AGM, the Conway organisation have had a slight reshuffle of personnel resulting in a complete change in customer service and operational director level.

However, after two meetings, they remain committed to considering and addressing any issues we have in an understanding and professional manner.

The major problem this year has been depot noise. This has been caused mainly by them being very busy and hence the noise retaining bunds of various working materials being depleted and reduced in height. The new incoming operational staff were unaware that these bunds had been strategically placed to avoid noise escaping and to minimise noise at certain times of the day or night.

The new staff now have an updated map of the area showing the dwellings most vulnerable to these noises, they have also toured the area and will be rebuilding the bunds to maximise their effectiveness.

They remain committed to being a good neighbour and are happy for us to approach them with any concerns we may have in relation to the operation of the depot.

I would ask any residents with concerns or complaints regarding the FM Conway Chelsfield Depot to contact the BMRA with appropriate details i.e. date, time etc. ASAP and we will pursue it with them and follow up accordingly.

They are performing well within their permitted licence and we would like to continue to encourage them to be even more mindful of their neighbouring dwellings for the future and we can only do this by working with them in a respectful relationship.

## **4b REPORT ON PLANNING MATTERS – Gordon Plumb**

There were a total of 43 planning applications submitted to SDC since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 for work to buildings.

28 were to clear conditions imposed on earlier approved applications. Of these, 14 were granted, 2 withdrawn and resubmitted later which increases the numbers, 1 refused and the remainder are still awaiting determination, including 8 for the care home added this week.

11 were for extensions, mainly side or rear. Of these, 9 were granted and 2 were withdrawn and later resubmitted. Recent changes to planning rules by the Government have meant that many of the extensions are considered "permitted development" which can normally only be challenged / refused in exceptional circumstances. One planning officer is known to have commented that one such extension would have been refused under "normal" planning rules but now had to be allowed as permitted development.

3 were for work to trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders.

There were only 3 applications for completely new construction which were all granted.

The most significant application was for the demolition of the Elite Motors garage and building a 60 bed elderly care/nursing home which was finally granted permission early this year. It is generally considered that the new building has been designed sympathetically with the area. Work on demolishing the existing garage buildings and decontaminating the site will probably commence within the next few months. Applications to clear some of the conditions in the approval have been submitted to SDC. The first was the demolition management plan which was due to be determined today, but SDC Environmental Health only sent in their comments yesterday. One of the biggest concerns has always been parking, particularly during construction. SDC planners cannot prohibit parking which is, in all other aspects lawful. BMPC and BMRA will examine the construction management plan when it is submitted, and no doubt discuss with the developer and builder how to minimise potential problems. A good working relationship with the site can be beneficial, as happened recently with the 4 houses under construction on Old London Road where residents were having problems with parked vehicles. Discussions with the site manager by our District Councillor resulted in some now parking on the verge opposite.

The replacement dwelling for Kloof in Milton Avenue was finally given approval, although there were still some concerns raised. The SDC planning officer considered that this latest application had addressed the reasons given by the Planning Inspector in refusing appeals against SDCs refusal of the previous applications.

The recent application for a new 18 metre telecoms mast in a field alongside Badgers Road and adjacent to the M25 was approved in spite of objections, mainly because of the tight rules for such applications and Government requirements to improve mobile phone coverage. The Parish Council has now found out that the only time effective objections can be made to these applications is before they are submitted, which is contrary to all normal instructions as it is considered "pre-determination".

The others were for change of use of a building, which was refused, removal of the pay phone at the top of Polhill and modification of a phone mast near Woodlands View.

As for our old friends in Halstead, Fort Halstead, the cemetery and crematorium, there has been no further progress on Fort Halstead redevelopment. The cemetery has had its entrance walls built and they have permission for the chapel and car parking, but nothing much else seems to have happened since the importing of soil and partial levelling of the site. The legal challenge for the crematorium at Oak Tree Farm taken out in January 2015 was heard in June 2015 but the decision to dismiss the challenge was not made until February this year. Applications to clear some of the conditions of the application for the crematorium, which was granted on appeal, were submitted in autumn 2015 and then withdrawn, and no further applications have been made.

Elite Garage: Now that the garage has closed and R & B Car Wash have moved on, concerns were raised that the site could easily be accessed by travellers' vehicles and caravans. Dave Woledge agreed to contact both the owner of Elite Motors and developers to bring this matter to their attention.

Further concerns were raised regarding the parking problem of contractor and sub-contractors' vehicles. This issue should be included in the Contractors Management Plan which has to be agreed by SDC.

It was suggested that 'No Parking' signs should be displayed around Badgers Mount. John Grint confirmed SDC were not able to impose any instructions on parking where lawful i.e. Badgers Road. The Construction Management Plan will indicate the developers' wishes to have a friendly residential approach and encourage contractors to park their vehicles responsibly without causing problems to residents.

It was assumed heavy equipment and contractor's vehicles would be contained on the site during the demolition of Elite Garage but agreement should be reached with the contractor and developer regarding parking during the building construction period.

It is illegal for vehicles to be parked on road side grass verges but a possible solution to the parking problem during construction is to allow vehicles to be parked on the West side grass verge of the Orpington By-pass from the construction site up to Hewetts Roundabout – the verge to be reinstated by the contractor at completion and the A224 to be kept clear of any mud etc.

**4c REPORT ON ENTERTAINMENT MATTERS** – Zena Belton was unable to attend the AGM due to work commitment. The Walking Treasure Hunt is organised for Saturday, 24 June 2017 commencing 2.00 pm at the Memorial Hall – it is essential to notify Zena if you are planning to attend.

#### **4d NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH**

In order to re-establish the Neighbourhood Watch in Badgers Mount it requires twelve volunteers.

Crime appears to be on the increase in Badgers Mount, most recent of which being damage and theft from garage, attempted theft of car on driveway, number of break-ins.

Twelve volunteers each looking after approximately twelve people in a road, two meetings a year, delivery of NW Newsletters.

There are sufficient NW funds therefore not necessary to collect subscriptions, Neighbourhood Watch Area is recognised by insurance companies as a 'safe area' and can reduce insurance premiums. Under the umbrella of the Residents Association, Nile cost to residents. Looking out for residents in particular vulnerable ones.

Dave Woledge will act as Organiser but Volunteers are needed.

The following put their names forward as volunteers:

Tina Bennett, Will Withecombe, Nicola Walker, Gill Johnston, Paul Wylie, Rachelle Goff, David Masters, Sue Richards, Gerry Thompson, M Mustin, Cathy Southwood.

#### **4e JENKINS NECK WOOD**

The Parish Council is pursuing a policy of acquiring these woods

Newsletter announced we are separately looking at the options, pros and cons

Indeed, whether as SDC own it already and we, as Sevenoaks Ratepayers should actually embark on a purchasing policy at all.

JNW was given to SDC at Nil Cost in 1991 by the Forestry Commission. So in general terms the BMRA seem supportive of BMPC policy of acquiring the woods, but we are looking at the wisdom and option of how to achieve the acquisition.

Our Chairman has said it is to be evidence led and of course noise, toxicity and the possibility of private owners turning it into pasture land are issues to be considered.

Capital Figure of some £80,000 have been bandied about and we may need to take a look at this too. These woods should be recognised in the Neighbourhood Plan which BMPC are considering. I may be labelled as 'Mr Awkward' or 'Mr Sceptical' but if it delivers the right solution, I can live with that criticism.

Jenkins Neck Wood was passed to SDC by the Forestry Commission in 1991 (query at no cost to SDC)

How to achieve acquisition

Recognised in Neighbourhood Plan

Responsibility to maintain woodland once acquired. Is it practical bearing in mind ongoing costs involved.

RK: SDC have not spent any money since taking over ownership of the woodland, disgraceful for them to now be selling it. It should be maintained for the people of Badgers Mount.

Wild Life Trust do obtain small parcels of land and provides protection for the wild life in these areas. RK is awaiting the contact details for this organisation.

Woodland Trust might be interested? They have indicated they could provide help in maintaining the woodland but unfortunately are not interested in taking over the woodland as at the present time they have several other on-going projects.

Knockholt – Vassiers Wood – This is maintain by a trust with funds. Parish Council and others provide grants for maintenance.

Jenkins Neck Wood acts as a noise bund, a natural barrier.

Are we sure the majority of Badgers Mount Residents are behind the Parish Council in the purchase of the woodland.

To date, since the meeting at Sevenoaks District Council Offices two years ago, the Parish Council have not progressed the gathering of information or costs involved. There are lots of talent in the community who can assist.

Parish Council has the policy – then make a decision. The Residents Association have not made a decision. It requires a Focus Group who will physically do the work.

District Councillor, John Grint will research the paperwork at the time the woods passed to the SDC.

If the woodland was sold commercially it could be turned into pasture land though there is a TPO on all trees on the land. However, once trees have been cut down ! An area of this woodland has been leased to one of the cottages in Shackland Road, on which most of the trees have been cut down and the area is now used as pasture land for horses.

John Grint raised a number of issues: cost of maintenance, acquisition, structure

Parish Council are acutely aware of these issues. SDC have not asked for PC commitment at this time but by end of 2017 they would like an indication from BMPC where things are going. At the moment SDC do not have any one else interested in the purchase of this woodland.

Maintenance in Perpetuity (is this the correct word?)

## **5- PRESENTATION OF ACCOUNTS, TREASURER'S REPORT AND APPOINTMENT OF THE AUDITOR**

### **ACCOUNTS:**

You will see that subscriptions were down compared to last year. This was due to the fact that I didn't receive one committee member's subscriptions in time to include in the accounts. I have now received them, and they will show as 'late subscriptions' next year. If included, they would have increased subscriptions to £712. Very few people actually refuse to pay the subscription, it's just that we can never find them at home to collect from them!

The social events yielded a small profit, mainly from the carols evening. The successful wine tasting evening, which represents the majority of the income and expenditure, made a small profit of £2.60, but it wasn't intended to be a money making event, and if it had made a small loss we wouldn't have been worried!

The main item purchased was the framing of the maps obtained and donated by Dean Lockwood of Milton Avenue which you can see on the wall. They show how much the area, not only Badgers Mount but Chelsfield and Green Street Green, have developed over the last 119 years.

About 1/3 of the Conway reserve was returned to residents and the remainder you will see has been transferred to the Community Protection reserve.

This has been yet another successful year.

The Accounts were accepted. Proposed by Tina Bennett and Seconded by Nicola Walker.

### **AUDITOR:**

Sue Wyatt has audited the accounts this year and carried out an excellent job, and she is willing to do so again next year.

Auditor for 2017/18 Accounts: Sue Wyatt was Proposed by Eric Raven and Seconded by Mary Bliss

#### **6- ELECTION OF THE COMMITTEE:**

The four Officials were elected as a group:

- 1- Chairman – Alistair Dunlop
- 2- Vice-Chairman – Dave Woledge
- 3- Secretary- Christine Donovan
- 4- Treasurer – Gordon Plumb

Proposed by Roger King and Seconded by David Masters and unanimously elected en-bloc.

Unfortunately, Adrienne Dunlop is standing down as a Committee Member. She has been an exceedingly valuable member of the Committee.

The following Committee Members

Trevor Simmons, Eric Raven, Brian Marston, Zena Belton, Christiane Ohland and Will Withecombe

were proposed by Roy Pett and Seconded by Sue Wyatt and were unanimously elected en-bloc.

#### **ELECTION OF NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

David Masters and Roger King have been Proposed by Trevor Simmons and Seconded by Maureen Simmons and were unanimously elected.

Arthur Evans was proposed by Eileen Woledge and Seconded by Dave Bonnage and unanimously elected.

As a Committee we encourage independent thinkers who can act as devil's advocate, who are willing to tolerate in-house opposition and recognise that harmony is less important than delivering the right solution.

#### **7- ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

1. Influx of groups of cyclists on local road
2. Residents Association and Parish Council – Where does their responsibilities lie?
3. How can we stop the increase in crime being committed on Badgers Mount?  
People driving about Badgers Mount during the night looking out for opportunities to commit a crime.  
Installing Gates at entrance to Badgers Mount – key for access, one key for each household car but only one key if Road Fund subscription is not paid. Resident looking into costs.  
Cash can be provided from Road Maintenance Fund



#### Additional Cameras

4. Can gates be moved nearer to road – gates are on the boundary of Woodland Trust land and Kent Highway land and therefore cannot be moved forward.
5. Knockholt Station – Network Rail. Skips have to be covered. Please take photos of uncovered skips and registration number of vehicle. Police should take action.
6. Arriva proposal to cancel the 402 Bus Route from Dunton Green to Bromley.  
Information regarding how to register your comments was delivered to every household in Badgers Mount. Please send your comments to \_\_\_\_\_ and copies to Nick Chard, County Councillor and to the Clerk, BMPC

The AGM closed at 10.10