

BADGERS MOUNT RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the 50th Annual General Meeting of the Badgers Mount Residents Association held on Thursday, 8th May 2014 in the Memorial Hall, Highland Road, Badgers Mount, Sevenoaks, Kent.

The meeting opened at 8.02 pm.

Outgoing Committee:

Chairman – Dave Woledge

Secretary – Tracey McCartney

Vice Chairman – Alistair Dunlop

Treasurer – Gordon Plumb

Committee Members – Nicola Walker, Adrienne Dunlop, Eric Raven and Brian Marston.

Present – 41 members of the Association

Prior to the start of the formal AGM business, a respectful silence was held for residents who passed away during the last year including Margaret Fox.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Alice Tester, Norma Payne, Chris & Mary Streets, Noel Wills and John Ralston.
2. MINUTES OF THE 49TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING were approved with no comments being made. Tina Bennett proposed, Roger King seconded and it was unanimously agreed that the minutes be accepted as prepared. The 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 –

4.1 ORGANISATION

4.1.1 As you have heard from the Minutes we concluded the 2013 AGM with the election of the following Chairman – Tracey McCartney, vice Chair – Alistair Dunlop, Treasurer – Gordon Plumb. 6 committee members – Nicola Walker, Eric Raven, Adriene Dunlop, Brian Marston, John Ralston and myself. This left a vacancy for Secretary. At the first committee meeting we discussed the vacant Secretary's job and whilst I was not unwilling to take on the role of Secretary with the aid of a separate Minutes Secretary it was decided that for the sake of continuity that Tracey would assume the role of secretary and I would take on the role of Chairman. There were no other nominations.

4.1.2 In assuming the stewardship of the BMRA I considered I had the responsibility to maintain the integrity of the BMRA, implement what was in the best interests of the residents, the Community as a whole and to continue to reinforce the atmosphere of transparency and openness.

4.1.3 On taking up the role I wrote to all members of the Committee at the outset outlining my objectives.

4.1.4 I was, and indeed remain conscious, of the widely differing points of view and heated exchanges expressed at the last years AGM. When I assumed the Chairman's role therefore I was intent on supporting an 'all inclusive' Association where views could be aired forcefully, with passion but where personal animosities were not welcome. So I would ask you all during the course of this meeting to keep to the subject matter and refrain from rancour and personnel attacks on individuals, please.

ACHIEVEMENTS

4.2 ADMINISTRATION

4.2.1 Recognising the criticisms voiced about overly long Committee meetings we now aim to finish the meetings earlier than hitherto typically 2215 hours. We are hoping to attract more people to stand for the Committee as 'midnight' finishes have ceased.

4.2.2 We now deliver the Newsletter to all households irrespective of whether they are subscribing members or not

4.2.3 We re-introduced the old method of subscription collections whereby the Committee members undertake the door to door collections thus endeavouring to arrest the decline in the number of subscribing households. It has the added advantage that it reinforces some small personal contact between the residents and the Committee.

4.2.4 We acknowledged one resignation on The Defence Sub-Committee and the Sub-Committee was appointed for the year 2013/14 thus – Stephen Salmon, Tracey McCartney, Albert Thomas, Eileen Lessey, and Gordon Plumb. Stephen is their Chairman and Tracey it's Secretary. Following several enquires that I have received I can confirm that Gordon Plumb sits on this Sub-Committee but not in his role of Treasurer as the Sub-Committee has no financial responsibilities. All financial matters are authorised by the main BMRA Committee of which Gordon is indeed the Treasurer.

4.3 DEFENCE SUB-COMMITTEE.

4.3.1 A Conway's Complaint Procedure was introduced (advertised twice in separate Newsletters) whereby all residents were provided with contact numbers and e-mail addresses so that they were enabled to register individual complaints direct with Conway's. It has recently transpired that individual residents' complaints carry far more weight with the EHO than a bulk approach by associations such as ours so please keep the EHO in the loop along with the BMRA. The EHO wants an arbitration/mediation type role whenever there are unresolved disputes. The EHO has an unenviable job as Conway's do have rights as do we residents and in my experience with dealing with the EHO and commercial organisations it invariably ends up with a mixture of sound judgement aided by sympathetic negotiations and a large dollop of common sense. The complaints system itself appears to be functioning reasonably well with the odd hiccup but precisely how we measure the effectiveness of Conway's actions has yet to be determined. I have been made aware of around half a dozen residents who have complained and regrettably a couple of these are 'repeats' which is major disappointment for us but hopefully its early days. Conway's stance seems to be that they have authority for 24hr 7 day/week operations but will meet with complainants and endeavour to resolve the problems.

I know however of no specific incidents where the EHO has been actively involved in resolving any complaints.

4.3.2 The question of Conway's selling re cycled materials direct to the public from site was referred to the SDC Enforcement officer who ruled that it was a permitted small scale activity. Meanwhile Michael Fallon our MP had communicated with Michael Conway who had confirmed that the site was for storage and distribution activities. Furthermore Michael Conway had offered to meet the BMRA and Michael Fallon had offered to facilitate such a meeting. Whilst not unanimous the Defence Committee voted not to take up that offer although you now have the chance to offer your views.

4.3.3 Conway's have an opportunity until JULY 2014 to apply for a Waste and Minerals Licence so this possibility must be kept under constant review. Both SDC and KCC are aware of our concern and intend to notify us immediately if an application is lodged as we will need to act quickly in this event with 'How to object letters'

4.3.4 Site 104 a potential Waste and Minerals site adjacent to Hewitt's roundabout is no longer considered a threat.

4.3.5 SDC has introduced on their website Air Quality readings and these are being monitored.

4.3.6 The Defence Subcommittee have themselves, questioned the ongoing need for a dedicated Sub-Committee after July 2014 (the date by which the opportunity for Conway's waste and Minerals application lapses). If we do not reappoint this Committee this merely means that all Conway issues will be dealt with by the main Committee along with all other planning applications.

Allied to this please be aware that the BMRA need to retain all its funds as currently exist, including any supposedly ring fenced budgets, as the BMRA will always possess the remit to challenge any unwanted developments on Badgers Mount be it by commercial developers (such as Conway's), residential developers, Travellers sites and the like.

A Trustee Indemnity Insurance was purchased in 2012 and renewed in 2013. The costs appear in the Treasurers Report. The Chairman in her Statement last year said it was specific to the ex-MOD site and went on to justify the expenditure on the grounds of the technical nature of the work. She went on to add that the members of the Sub-Committee were not planning experts and that they were concerned about making mistakes and misinterpreting the Planning Regulations. I would ask the meeting to note that last year's expenditure on this Insurance represents some 30% of our annual income generated through subscriptions. The Insurance is up for renewal in October 2014 and this meeting may have a view on whether to continue to support this level of this expenditure.

4.4 ROAD SAFETY I can report that the traffic island linking the footpath SR8 across Old London Road was installed earlier this year but owing to technical limitations KCC were forced, apparently to relocate it from the position we had suggested. I understand that some residents were extremely unhappy about the revised location selected by KCC and furthermore complained bitterly that KCC had failed to adequately brief the residents most affected. The current position is that those residents affected by the island would see if they could tolerate the level of inconvenience but any representation to the contrary would have to be direct with KCC. The island was also introduced with the hope that it would have a traffic calming effect but we have received no feedback as to its impact on speeding vehicles.

The speed limit on the A224 (Orpington By-Pass) has recently been reduced to 50mph.

We are having White Village gates installed similar to those that exist in Otford, Chelsfield and Sundridge. There are a couple of design options available and we have asked to have an input as to choice. KCC are also funding this project.

The traffic island scheduled for the A224 again the linking of footpath SR8 has not been included in the programme for this 2014/15 Financial Year.

The installation of the footpath along the grass verge of the A224 (the Memorial Hall side) has not been included in the programme for this 2014/15 Financial Year.

We have yet to be advised when the feasibility study concerning a roundabout at the bottom of Badgers Road and the A224 is likely to commence.

4.5 PLANNING

4.5.1 CREMATORIUM

Memoria - Orchard Barn (Kitchen Manufacturers) – rejected on appeal

Mercia - Oak Tree Farm (silos, helicopters, and crusher) - rejected by SDC but has gone to appeal

Watercraft - submission withdrawn for further analysis and consideration

4.5.2 TRAVELLERS

SDC are targeted to identify 72 pitches in the Sevenoaks District Area.

An SDC Consultation Document is due to be published shortly (if not out already) identifying sites for consideration. We believe that the Document when published will include Filstone Lane (in Shoreham) the existing site close to Knockholt Station and The Fort Halstead. The site at the bottom of Polehill is considered by SDC, to be full to capacity and therefore is not to be included in the Consultation Document and hence these pitches cannot be set against the target figure of 72

The consultation period runs to around Nov/Dec this year and the selected sites are expected to be announced around June/July 2015.

The downside to all this is that if SDC fail to identify the 72 sites required then the Traveller community (as a minority group) could secure land, set up residence and both the SDC and the local community would have little redress at law.

You may take the view that having Conway's occupy the MOD site may prove to be a blessing of sorts but notwithstanding this we must remain vigilant and alive to the risk of other parcels of land becoming available and open to exploitation.

4.6 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

4.6.1 ORIGINS

Having regard to the discord expressed at the AGM perhaps this year's most resounding success was the formalisation of the BMPCWGroup. Several residents had anticipated this need and so formed themselves into an Independent Working Group to commence designing the infrastructure for the new Parish Council. The SPC clearly have the responsibility to ensure that it all happens by the MAY 2015 target date and of course the BMRA really needed to be consulted as an elected body. The problem was that various sections of the community and individuals held strong views but regrettably there was no coordination between individuals and groups and in short little progress had been made by SPC

In the end our Parish Councillors (Sue Wyatt, Roy Blamey and Noel Wills) called a meeting in January 2014 and invited the Independent Working group (consisting of Tracey McCartney, Albert Thomas, and Gordon Plumb) plus representatives from the BMRA (John Ralston, Alistair Dunlop and myself). After some lively and healthy debate all those present metaphorically shook hands and agreed to work constructively together to ensure the successful launch of the BMPC irrespective of whether they personally agreed or voted at the outset?

I have to tell you that I viewed this united approach as a significant breakthrough for the community as a whole and one which the participants can take great credit. The 3 Parish Councillors, Sue, Roy and Noel need to be congratulated for their leadership skills in getting us all together around the table.

Thus the BADGERS MOUNT PARISH COUNCIL Working GROUP was formed. John Grint –Chairman, Tracey McCartney – Secretary, Vice Chair – Roy Blamey. Gordon Plumb – Treasurer.

Group Members – Sue Wyatt, Noel Wills, Albert Thomas, John Ralston, Alistair Dunlop and Dave Woledge. Phillip Macgarvey was co-opted onto the Group in April as an experienced Parish Clerk bringing a whole wealth of experience to the team and he is indeed proving a valuable asset.

To date the Group has held six meetings and at the end of the AGM John Grint is happy to speak about the progress of the BMPCWG in more detail.

4.6.2 The BMRA has been involved in identifying contracts which need to be transferred from SPC to BMPC. The BMRA has constructed the BM Lenthsmans job description and this was submitted to SPC for agreement and implementation for the year 2014/15. Coupled with one year's experience it could also serve as a template for 2015/16

4.6.3 We have also been considering various budget scenarios and their impact upon the Council Tax for 2015/16. Regrettably those studies currently indicate that the Council Rates are going to rise, in real terms, as a result of Badgers Mount having its own Parish Council. The prospective budget is a current and live issue and has yet to be discussed Committee. Consequently I assumed the responsibility on behalf of the BMRA to resist any prospective budget which showed an increase in the BM parish Council Rates over that in place with SPC for 2014/15. Indeed I impressed on the BMPCWG that a significant number of residents were anticipating a decrease in their Parish Council Tax for 2015/16.

The formulation of the Parish Council is an extremely important event and in the light of diverse views expressed the BMPCWG has decided that a Public meeting be arranged for the 17th July in order to discuss the Parish set up and the finance issues in more detail and thus give the residents an opportunity to make their views known. To reiterate what I said earlier at the conclusion of this AGM John Grint our District Councillor will outline the work of the BMPCWG in more detail and this will give the Working Group a

flavour as to the feelings of the residents and at the same give the incoming BMRA Committee the basis on which to formulate a policy.

4.6.4 The BMRA has agreed to some limited temporary funding for the purposes of underpinning the administration of the BMPCWG and to tie it over pending reimbursement from SPC.

4.7 FUTURE PLANS

4.7.1 The Committee has in hand for the year 2014/

- The project to complete the new BMPC infrastructure. – Improve communications with the prospect of also publishing the BMRA Committee/AGM minutes on the Web - We have also, through the generosity of Mary Bliss, secured the use of her garden for the 5th JULY garden party. Unfortunately she lost the tree house in the winter storms but this will not detract from what is a good community event and which needs your active support, please

4.7.2 As a Committee, however I detect that we are weak on the social or entertainments side and I would encourage those with some experience in this field to come on board and plug this gap. With a larger committee it is easier to split into small teams but probably more importantly enable us to pursue a succession planning strategy as us old people are not going to be around forever.

So new blood, new ideas is good for the BMRA and consequently the community as a whole.

All those elected to the Committee last year have indicated that they are happy to stand for this coming year which is mark of their integrity and their durability in putting up with me.

I cannot deny that the path has been bumpy at times, mainly over procedural issues, but I would like to think that the green shoots of a team are starting to emerge. So I offer a personal thanks to all the members of the Committee for their honesty of input and support – the credit for the achievements I have outlined is due to them.

4.7.3 Finally a few thank you's and if I have overlooked anyone I apologise to them for the oversight.

Tracey for the immense amount of time and effort that she puts in. I would like to thank Gary our webmaster for his efforts – very reliable and the model of efficiency. The Rev John Benson, Rector of St Margret's Church for securing the loan of the presentational kit and Alistair driving it. And of course Gordon for what he does for the community – he does what he does and it defies a job description. If you cut Gordon in half like a stick of rock BADGERS MOUNT would be printed throughout.

D.C.WOLEDGE

CHAIRMAN

8TH MAY 2014

Following presentation of the report the following queries were raised:

- (a) Tina Bennett enquired about a possible roundabout at the bottom of Badgers Road. It was confirmed that this was an option submitted as part of the Road Appeal.
- (b) Trevor Simmons questioned why the BMRA had not met FM Conway Ltd (FMC) to date. He recently had cause to complain, spoke to the company and was reassured with the feedback. He feels FMC would like to work with the community not against it. He suggested that the BMRA meet and talk to them, visit the site and endeavour to set up regular meetings. Tracey McCartney indicated that the sub-committee had not said it would never meet with the company but that when discussed previously it was not felt appropriate at that time. Brian Marston thought this might be a good idea but that all residents have a duty to be responsible and complain too. Albert Thomas considers an approach to FMC at this point in time could be awkward with the decision of the MWDF Consultation looming in July. Gordon Plumb reminded everyone that FMC could put in a full planning application at any time even if they do not actually appeal the MWDF Consultation decision. Eileen Lessey stated that residents should respect the experience that the sub-committee has in dealing with FMC issues and mentioned the FMC advert in local paper and concerns that the sub-committee has with that. She suggested that an approach could be made in the future but not at this moment. Trevor Simmons put forward a proposition that the BMRA open a dialogue with FMC. David Masters seconded this.

Of those present 26 voted for this, 4 voted against and abstentions were not identified.

The Proposition was carried.

- (c) Indemnity insurance – A discussion then ensued as to precisely [on] why an indemnity insurance was needed. In the light of the cost those present asked if the insurance is required for another year. It was agreed that the incoming committee should review the documentation when renewal is required and then take a decision on whether to renew the insurance.
- (d) FMC Fighting Fund – Eileen Lessey stated that the money given to the Fighting Fund should only be used for FMC issues. Adrienne Dunlop and Nicola Walker stated that this had been discussed at a BMRA Committee meeting and it is ring fenced. A debate should be held in the future as to what to do with the Fund – should it be given back to the residents?

5. PRESENTATION OF THE ACCOUNTS, TREASURER'S REPORT & APPOINTMENT OF THE AUDITOR – Gordon Plumb gave a report on the Accounts over the last year. A copy of this report is attached to the Minutes Record Book. John Grint confirmed that he had audited the Accounts and found them to be in order. He went on to congratulate Gordon Plumb on his efficiency of the book keeping. No questions were raised and therefore, Brian Marston proposed, Adrienne Dunlop seconded and those present unanimously agreed that the accounts be accepted as prepared.

John Grint confirmed that he would be willing to re-stand as Auditor to the Association for a further year. Adrienne Dunlop proposed, Eric Raven seconded and those present unanimously agreed that John Grint be appointed.

6. PROPOSITION BY THE OUTGOING COMMITTEE:

6.1 THAT THE MINUTES OF THE BMRA COMMITTEE/AGM MEETINGS FOR 2014/15 SHOULD BE PUBLISHED ON THE WEBSITE; THE PRECISE FORMAT OF WHICH WILL BE DECIDED BY THE INCOMING COMMITTEE.

The proposition was discussed and passed without descent on a show of hands.

During the course of the discussion Zena Belton suggested that people who did not have access to a computer could be identified and briefed personally by a Committee member acting on the 'buddy' principle

6.2 THAT THE CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL STATEMENT BE PUBLISHED AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE MINUTES OF THE AGM.

The proposition was discussed and passed without descent on a show of hands

During the course of the discussion it was suggested that the report should be published on the website but not necessarily reproduced in paper form. A suggestion was also put forward that the Agenda for the AGM should be made available on the website at least 10 days in advance of the AGM.

7. APPOINTMENT OF THE COMMITTEE:

Dave Woledge reported that the outgoing committee were all prepared to stand for another year. The following were proposed en-bloc by Zena Belton, seconded by Tina Bennett and unanimously elected. Chair – David Woledge, Vice-Chair – Alistair Dunlop, Secretary – Tracey McCartney and Treasurer – Gordon Plumb.

Nicola Walker, Eric Raven, Brian Marston, Adrienne Dunlop and John Ralston were subsequently proposed en-bloc by Trevor Simmons, seconded by Tina Bennett carried unanimously by those present.

Christine Donovan indicated that she would be willing to stand as a committee member. Eileen Woledge proposed, David Masters seconded those present were in favour of her joining the committee.

Trevor Simmons indicated he would be willing to stand as a committee member. Brian Marston proposed, Roger King seconded and it was carried unanimously those present were in favour of him joining the committee.

Zena Belton indicated she would be willing to stand as a committee member. Maureen Simmons proposed, Gill Johnston seconded and it was carried unanimously those present were in favour of her joining the committee.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

(a) The question was put as to whether the BMRA had been in contact with the NHW over the past year? Tina Bennett indicated that nothing has been done with the NHW of late. Roy Blamey had advised her that he is in touch with the BMRA and that things are currently very quiet. Tracey McCartney confirmed that the BMRA had been in touch with NHW with regard to obtaining articles for the newsletter. Trevor Simmons rejected the view that things are quiet he indicated that there are issues that should be notified to residents. It was suggested that the BMRA writes to Roy Blamey to say that residents present at the AGM have concerns that nothing has been heard for ages. Several members of the NHW committee indicated that they would be happy for a NHW committee meeting to be convened and Roy will be asked if he would be prepared to arrange such a meeting.

(b) David Masters queried why there is not a Minutes Secretary. It was felt that this will be considered if needed in the future.

(c) Eileen Lessey asked if there was any progress on issues with the unadopted roads of Badgers Mount. It was confirmed that no progress had been made over the last year.

John Grint gave a vote of thanks to the outgoing committee for their work over the last year.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.40 pm.

.....
.....