

THE BADGERS MOUNT RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the 52nd Annual General Meeting of the Association held Thursday, 12 May 2016 in the Memorial Hall, Highland Road, Badgers Mount, Kent

The meeting opened at 8.00 p.m.

Outgoing Committee:

Chairman – Dave Woledge

Vice Chairman - Alistair Dunlop

Secretary – Christine Donovan

Treasurer – Gordon Plumb

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

Present: 25 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 past year.

- 1- **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were received from Mrs Davina Powell, Naomi Marston, Carol Masters, John Grint, Brian & Linda George, Noel Wills.
- 2- **MINUTES OF THE 51ST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** were approved with no comments being made. Zena Belton proposed, Brian Marston 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 Committee: In July 2015 Christiane Ohland was co-opted onto the Committee and is heading up the Garden Party set for 9 July at Oaklea, Highland Road by kind permission of Dr Mary Bliss.

4.2 FINANCE:

4.2.1 Membership Subscriptions are slightly up on last year.

4.2.2 The social events have generated a healthy income which will enable us to expand our community activities.

4.2.3 Gordon will provide further details about the accounts later in the proceedings.

4.3. LOCAL ROADS:

4.3.1. Speed Roundels for Old London Road and Orpington By-pass, footpath on the East side (Memorial Hall side) of Orpington By-pass and an electronic digital speed sign are scheduled to be provided by Kent County Council during 2016/17 Financial Year. We are pressing the Parish Council to chase KCC for the work to be carried out.

4.3.2. It is a LEGAL requirement to cover skip lorries.

4.3.3. It is TEMPTING to take photos of breaches of the law but beware. Take a photograph and note the registration number plate but let the police deal with the matter.

4.4. PLANNING:

Gordon will talk about Planning issues later in the proceedings but I would like to touch on the major schemes.

4.4.1. FM CONWAY LTD:

Conway's briefed the Committee two months ago. They still plan a development of 20 prestigious dwellings but admitted it could end up with as many as 200 smaller dwellings. Clearly 200 dwellings generate higher profits for the developer and the Council achieve a greater income from rates. Old adage be careful what you wish for because both the main players gain and the Badgers Mount Residents Association & Parish Council must ensure the residents do not lose out. Conway's still have to relocate their operations against a demanding specification so may be the timescale has lengthened.

The day to day liaison meetings are ongoing and highly effective and Trevor will talk about this later in the proceedings.

4.4.2. ELITE MOTORS:

Earlier this year Elite Motors (Dominic Lawson Bespoke Planning) briefed a couple of committee members as a prelude to putting on an exhibition for a 60 room nursing home on the site, employing artist impression techniques. When first approached it was all verbal with no supporting documentation and the committee was unsure whether we would support or oppose the application. Elite Motors were seeking a quick turnaround so the committee decided to separate out the two elements of the fighting fund as the portion site specific to Conway's could not be used to oppose Elite Motors whereas the remaining portion, not site specific to Conway's, gave the committee immediate access to funds should that prove necessary. The accounts now reflect both elements of the fund and will now need to be ratified at this meeting – Gordon will deal with this later. The committee broadly welcome the nursing home proposal and any comments from the floor can be dealt with under 'Any Other Business'.

4.5. BADGERS MOUNT PARISH COUNCIL

4.5.1 The Parish Council appear to be forging ahead with taking responsibility for Jenkin's Neck Woods having recently embarked on a condition survey. I am aware that not all residents are in favour of the idea as with such responsibility comes financial implications which would fall on the residents via their rates. For the BMRA to formulate a view on the subject, the Parish Council need to justify their objective with a cost/benefit analysis so that the residents can make a judgement from an informed position. The BMRA is keen to support the endeavours of the Parish Council and to this end needs to have confidence in what the Parish Council propose. Above all, the BMRA is keen for the residents to have a voice on what could turn out to be a controversial issue or it could merely end up being viewed as a vanity project. Maybe there is justification for further meetings to gauge the strength of feelings when things become clearer.

4.6. DEFIBRILLATOR:

4.6.1 Earlier this year we formally approached the Parish Council with a view to embarking on a joint venture to so provide. The positive response from the Parish Council was most encouraging and talks are ongoing.

4.7. RUBBISH:

4.7.1 We have received one extremely adverse comment regarding our latest edition of the Newsletter with particular reference to dog waste/bin disposal. I am sensitive to the resident's comments and it is my intention to speak to the person concerned and make it clear that it was not the BMRA's intention to ridicule or act as a policeman. As an association, we hold no executive powers and the only tools at our disposal are limited to one of persuasion. There was no intention to offend but merely remind residents of the customary annual problems which always arise this time of the year.

4.8. NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH:

4.8.1. I regret to have to admit to you that I totally failed to get this off the ground. I thought I had done the ground work only to find that matters conspired against me. We need Road Stewards and a Co-ordinator. A matter I will now have to leave for the incoming committee.

4.9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

- To Rev John Benson for the loan of the presentational equipment and to Alistair for driving it.
- To the Vice Chair, Alistair who has stood in for me constantly and Christine, our Secretary, for their support and hard work.
- I said last year we had the framework of a good team and with this year's additions of Christiane Ohland and Will Withecombe, the BMRA Committee has been immeasurably strengthened and developed into an exceedingly active and effective team. Deep thinking and never afraid to push their point of view. They have made my job much easier so thank you all for that. The residents are extremely fortunate to have so many talented individuals at their disposal.
- To Gordon for being just Gordon

4.10. END OF THE LINE:

This is my curtain call as Chairman as I can only hold the position for three years. It's been interesting meeting so many people with varied views and opinions. I have enjoyed the debates and the ride.

THANK YOU

4a REPORT ON F M CONWAY LTD – Trevor Simmons

Since the 2014 AGM, together with Sue Wyatt, we have had eight Face to Face Meetings with F M Conways Ltd which have included Head Office and Site Staff. FM Conway Ltd are committed to being good neighbours.

The complaints that have been discussed have included:

- Night time depot disturbance
- Daytime depot disturbance
- Parking on Shacklands Road
- Noise on By-pass

Conway's identify where noise is coming from. The night-time direct line has not been used by anyone. During the day there is occasional tailgate banging and this practice will not be tolerated. All drivers are trained how to avoid this and sub-contractors using the site are verbally warned. It is in breach of health and safety. Should you hear loud noises during the day please let us know the date and time and this will be investigated as to what was happening on site during that day.

A resident reported continuous loud bangs during a particular day which turned out to be the stacking of porta cabins – the releasing of the chains created the noise. The staff have now been trained to avoid this disturbance.

Parking on Shacklands Road: Early one morning last November it was reported that parked lorries had blocked Shacklands Road. Following an investigation by Conway's it transpired that Polhill Garden Centre had inadvertently quoted Conway's post code instead of their own on documentation and several of the lorries were waiting to access the Garden Centre via the back entrance. Conway's now open their site gates earlier to allow vehicles to park on their access road.

Rubbish in the Road: It had been reported that granite bricks found on Orpington By-pass had fallen from Conway's lorries. Most of the time this was proved not to be the case although one item of rubbish they had to admit to, a Conway's sign, following which all vehicles' signage was checked.

Orpington By-pass Traffic Noise: A resident contacted FM Conway Ltd direct complaining about early morning noise on the Orpington By-pass. This road is opened 24 hours and is used by everyone. Problems on the M25 can greatly increase the amount of traffic and noise on this particular road.

Conway's vehicles are well maintained and cleaned regularly and all cabs are installed with a CCTV camera.

Forestry: FM Conway Ltd are very aware of their forestry responsibilities. Forestry inspection takes place at six monthly intervals when tree maintenance, where necessary, is carried out, in particular perimeter trees. Perimeter fences have been repaired on both Charles and Highland Roads.

The Chelsfield Depot now has a new Depot Manager and we look forward to making a tour of the site with him and will make him aware of the site's neighbours in Badgers Mount.

Please do not hesitate to advise the BMRA of any complaints regarding Conway's which I am sure can be investigated and solved very quickly.

We have found FM Conway Ltd to be a very professional company and we have an exceedingly good working relationship with them and will continue to maintain regular contact.

4b REPORT ON PLANNING MATTERS – Gordon Plumb

If you look on the Badgers Mount website, you can find an easy link into SDCs planning website to see all the planning applications in Badgers Mount without having to trawl through all the weekly lists. This shows that since 1st April 2015 there have been 24 applications. Of the total:-

9 relate to clearing conditions in previously granted applications, which even the Parish Council do not get consulted on.

7 were for extensions which generally do not cause a problem and we don't normally comment on. However, the application for an extension at Haresfield, Badgers Road was refused because the present building already well exceeds the 50% increase of the original house permitted in the Green Belt. In planning law, the original house is defined as what was there in 1948, or when first built if later, but the 50% rule didn't come in until many years later which is why the existing house already exceeds this. Similarly, the application to remodel Shepherds Green Highland Road should not have a problem because it is actually reducing the occupied area slightly and although still well over the 50% the planners can't make you reduce retrospectively.

4 were for demolition of bungalows and replacing with much larger houses. The 2nd application for Fairlight in Badgers Road was approved, but the two applications for Kloof, Milton Avenue were both refused and appeals for both have been dismissed recently.

Across Old London Road, in Halstead, the saga of the crematoria and cemetery still trundles on. You will recall that the crematorium at Oak Tree Farm, next to the waste crushing and recycling site beyond and opposite Polhill Garden Centre, was approved on appeal but seems to be on hold at present due to a High Court legal challenge by the owners of the Watercrofts Wood cemetery site as they were not notified of the appeal which gave Oak Tree Farm their permission. The challenge was taken out in January 2015 and is still pending. Last autumn, soil was being imported to the Watercrofts Wood cemetery to level the site, and when Halstead Parish Council and residents asked SDC about this they were told that it was permissible within the original permission for the site. However, when more soil was being imported this spring, SDC enforcement asked the owners about it and they claimed that they didn't know anything about it!! Subsequently, a video was found on their own website showing lorries bringing soil in, and saying that it is anticipated that site levelling and the road network and entrance will be completed in Jan/Feb 2016, now well gone by. The link to the website and video was forwarded to SDC, and the site seems to have been fairly quiet since. Another holdup was due to SDCs refusal of a lawful development certificate relating to the construction of a chapel and grounds maintenance shed, but that has been allowed on appeal this week. However, if you want to buy the freehold of one of the 2000 graves on the site, you can get one at present for a bargain £6,150, which represents a 10% discount from the rate when the cemetery is fully operational. There's no 3 for the price of 2 offer!

Fort Halstead appears to be quiet at present, but this is no doubt due to the large amount of work necessary following granting of planning permission before visible progress can commence, and the current users, particularly the MOD, have moved out.

The largest and most important application in Badgers Mount is for the demolition of Elite Motors and building of a 60 bed elderly nursing home. The site is at present an employment site, but is scheduled in SDCs long term plan for residential use. This proposal would result in a higher number of jobs while also providing a greater residential use. About 40 people attended the exhibition here on 24th March to view the proposals, and the applicants listened to the comments made and modified their design for the subsequent planning application which is currently under consideration. While there seems to be general support in principle, the biggest concern still relates to the amount of car parking provided on site. The applicants seem confident that the provision is adequate compared to another similar home, but that is in a flatter area where bicycle usage is not unreasonable, whereas we are at the top of a hill, with major approach roads where cycling is more risky, so car use may be higher. Would you like to cycle up Polhill or round Hewitts roundabout? I know some people do, but I certainly wouldn't except at very quiet times!! The proposed building is higher than the existing garage, but if houses were built, they would be even higher, although the skyline would be broken up by the gaps between the houses. There have also been comments about the rather stark square ends to the roof line when viewed from the Orpington Bypass, and suggestions have been made that hipped ends would look a lot better. There will also be parking issues during construction which we and BMPC will have to monitor. Hopefully the community engagement seen so far by the applicants will continue to minimise or eliminate such problems.

4c. REPORT ON ENTERTAINMENT MATTERS – Zena Belton

Events that have taken place over the year:

December: Christmas Events – Carol Evening and New Year's Eve Party

January: Soup Kitchen

March: Quiz Evening with Piazza/Ploughman's Supper - another planned in October.

April: Easter Eggs Hunt – there are young children living on Badgers Mount – very popular

June: Walking Treasure Hunt on 18th June followed by tea & cake in the Memorial Hall

July: Garden Party – 9th July in the garden of Dr Mary Bliss – community event

Walk in the Woods – 1st Sunday of the month 10.00 a.m. from Badgers Mount Memorial Hall

‘Welcome to your new home in Badgers Mount’: Information Sheet available for all new residents

Suggestions for new events: Wine tasting Event

Where can we let folks know about these events? Newsletter, Parish Magazine, Chronicle, Street Life, Mumsnet site, Twitter, Facebook

5. PRESENTATION OF ACCOUNTS, TREASURER’S REPORT AND APPOINTMENT OF THE AUDITOR

ACCOUNTS:

I hope you have all had a look at the accounts sheet. You will see that subscriptions were virtually the same as last year. Apart from the retirement collection for our postman Tony Nutton, which had to go through the books as some people gave me cheques made out to BMRA, the biggest change in income relates to the social events. Some people gave Tony gifts directly, so he probably received about £500 from residents. On the expenditure side, hall hire was down because last years included the meetings held by the Parish Council working group, but that was offset by the grant from Shoreham Parish Council.

You will note that the total reserve from the Conway Fighting Fund has been split. The Community Protection Reserve is the profit from the art show and sale which was held long after the Conway inquiry had taken place and all expenses paid. The organisers have stated in writing that they do not want any of this returned to them but that it should be kept as a reserve for fighting any undesirable developments facing the community in the future.

Overall, it has been a successful year.

There were no questions concerning the accounts.

The Accounts were accepted. Proposed by Zena Belton and seconded by David Masters

AUDITOR:

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

Auditor for 2016/17 Accounts: Sue Wyatt was proposed by Eric Raven and seconded by Maureen Simmons

Collection of Subscriptions:

Membership of the BMRA is about 80% of households

Suggestion from Dougal Dick – compiling a database

Collecting subscriptions by knocking on doors can often involve returning two or three times and very time consuming, dropping an envelope at each house has also been tried but It was felt that face to face collection enables discussion with residents.

Newsletter will continue to be delivered to every house in Badgers Mount whether the subscription has been paid or not.

6. DISCUSSION OF AND VOTING ON A PROPOSAL CONCERNING THE F M CONWAY FIGHTING FUND RECEIVED FROM THE OUTGOING COMMITTEE AS FOLLOWS:

'Individual donors may apply to the Secretary in writing from the 30th September 2016, should they wish the unspent portion of their personal donation be refunded on the pro rata calculation of 36.2p for every £ donated. After the 30th September 2016 any residual monies left in the site specific Conway Fighting Fund shall be renamed 'The Community Protection Fund' with the wider remit to oppose all unacceptable developments with the community.'

The Conway Fighting Fund is site specific. Although Conway's still would like only 20 houses built on the site, there could be up to 200 houses built there which Badgers Mount residents do not want.

The other fund, The Community Protection Fund' can be spent generally, resisting or opposing any unacceptable developments in Badgers Mount.

Eileen Lessey queried what donation figure was used to calculate the pro rata rate of 36.2p. It was confirmed by Alistair Dunlop that it was the total of individual donations.

Proposed by Dave Woledge and seconded by Brian Marston

The above proposal was voted upon and was unanimously agreed.

7. ELECTION OF THE COMMITTEE:

Chairperson:

No other nominations were received for Chairperson, Alistair Dunlop was proposed by Dave Woledge and seconded by Brian Marston and carried unanimously by those present.

Vice Chairperson:

No other nominations were received for Vice Chairperson, Dave Woledge was proposed by Eric Raven and seconded by Sue Wyatt and carried unanimously by those present.

Secretary:

No other nominations were received for Secretary, Christine Donovan was proposed by Zena Belton and seconded by Eric Raven and carried unanimously by those present.

Treasurer:

No other nominations were received for Treasurer, Gordon Plumb was proposed by Mel Burdett and seconded by David Masters and carried unanimously by those present.

The following Committee Members

Trevor Simmons, Brian Marston, Eric Raven, Adrienne Dunlop, Christiane Ohland and Will Withecombe.

were proposed by Dianne Wills and seconded by Mel Burdett and unanimously elected en-bloc.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

1. Christine Donovan confirmed she had received a telephone call from resident, Joan Neave, with regards to uncovered lorries travelling along Old London Road towards Badgers Mount roundabout dropping rubble along the road. Gary Davies also confirmed insulation materials and printed paper had blown off lorries on Old London Road.

2. Brian Marston mentioned the state of the road etc. outside Knockholt Station due to the work carried out by the skip company BSP – BSP site opens at 6.30 am – lorries are lining up through station carpark waiting to access site, drivers can be abusive. Ticket and Oyster Click-in machines are unreadable due to constant covering of dust but Zena Belton has been informed this is the only place the machines can be sited. It is very dangerous trying to purchase tickets from the machine due to heavy lorries passing close by behind you. Dust is also carried over from the BSP site onto passengers waiting for trains on the platforms.

It is a convenient place at the Station while lorries are stationary to make a note of number plates, date and time.

Solution: Gather information and comments from everyone and forward to all relevant organisations responsible for the safety of travellers using Knockholt Station

3. Ancient Woodland surrounding FM Conway Ltd Inner area: Ancient Woodland cannot be destroyed but has to be maintained which can be costly. The Woodland Trust does not wish to take on responsibility for the woodland due to the maintenance costs involved. A possible solution is for a new trust to be set up.

4. Chris Lucas requested support from the BMRA with regard to his objection to the Retrospective Parking & Landscaping Planning Application at 8/8a Johnsons Avenue. No one is allowed to live in the house until the permission has been received regarding Parking & Landscaping. Gordon Plumb confirmed the BM Parish Council is not formally notified of Planning Conditions relating to a granted Planning Permission. As the Enforcement Officer is already involved in respect of this matter, BMRA would not be able to comment on the situation.

5. Neighbourhood Watch: Trevor Simmons expanded on the work of a Neighbourhood Watch. This organisation relies on people looking out for neighbours, not necessarily criminal actions but nuisances, door to door selling at unusual times of the day (is it legitimate ?), with summer arriving beware of shed thieves, keep your garden sheds locked at all times and generally keep a 'look out' for people especially the vulnerable.

One particular criminal act highlighted is the taking of car keys, especially for 'smart' cars – keep your car keys in a safe place, away from the front door so that they cannot be seen through windows and taken via the letter box.

Neighbourhood Watch builds a relationship with the local PCSO and information can be passed on to the PCSO.

Neighbourhood Watch requires an Organiser to head the association and Street Stewards who would each look after approximately 30 houses. A well run Neighbourhood Watch organisation in the area could have an advantageous effect on the cost of your home insurance.

Recent local crime: Aggravated burglary carried out on 26 April at a house in London Road.

Neighbourhood Watch provides information on local crime, can provide relevant talks and self-defence classes, gradually bringing people together.

The AGM closed at 10.01 p.m.

