

# Sopwell Residents' Association

## Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2009 at Marlborough Club, Old Oak

- 1. Welcome:** The Chair (Sandy Norman) welcomed those present to the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual General meeting of the Association, and explained that the meeting is her first time as Chair.

The Chair asked the audience how they heard about the meeting, and through a show of hands, 50% had heard via the newsletter, and 50% via posters.

The Chair explained that the Association is looking for new volunteers to help deliver newsletters and to join the Association.

- 2. Present:** Ananda Armstrong-King, Linda Batham, Frances Burrows, Cllr. Bob Clarkson, John Cobb, M. Edwards, Katie Fisher, Amanda Godfrey, Frank Guest, Cllr. Lizzie Harnden, Mike Harnden, Eileen Harris, Mary Harvey, Max Harvey, Jack Hill, Adam Hunt, Erik Jacobson, Mark James, Lawrence Jevon, Andrew Johnstone, Yvonne Kingham, Lesley Law, Paul Law, Len Lewsey, John Little, Mary Little, Christoph Lutz, Sandy Norman (Chair), Lillian Murray, PC Drew Pavitt, Steve Peters, Cllr. David Poor, Mr Price, Mrs Price, Rebecca Prebble (Secretary), Chris Pudsey, Jane Ratford, Gillian Reid, Zhada Robertson, Peter Segars, Jose Sena, Janet Smith, Jennifer Soames, Michael Sutton, Rick Taylor, Peter Wares, Jo Welch.

**Apologies for absence:** Cllr. Roger Axworthy, Linda Bateman, Chantal Burns, Liz Klir, Joanne Tang, Helly Sawyer.

- 3. Minutes of last meeting:** The minutes of the last AGM of the SRA were approved. This was proposed by Jack Hill and seconded by Mark James.
- 4. Matters arising from the Minutes:** There were no matters arising from the Minutes.
- 5. Annual Report:** The Secretary (Rebecca Prebble) presented the 2008/2009 Annual Report. She explained that this year the SRA's focus has shifted to activities that bring the community together and to promote Sopwell's green spaces and services to its residents.

The Secretary thanked Association members who worked hard and achieved a lot last year and have now stepped down (Jill Gipps, Helly Saywer, Joanne Tang, and Giles Hanford, who stepped down as Chair but remains on the Committee). She welcomed a new Association member

(Peter Wares) and reiterated that more new members are always welcome.

The secretary drew attention to a typo on the Annual Report; Larks in the Parks 2009 will be held on 28 June not 28 July.

This year, the SRA has been active in a range of issues and events:

- We helped organise another successful Larks in the Parks 2008, held two open meetings, produced two newsletters, organised a litter pick and planted more bulbs.
- The Association launched the 'Sopwell Project' with a Summer Walk.
- We responded to the following:
  1. Hertfordshire Charrette, which aimed to engage the public on planning issues and design and growth.
  2. St Albans City Vision and the Sustainable Community Strategy 2009 ('Shaping our District together for 2021').
  3. Walking Strategy (which sets out plans to increase walking within the District and why this is important).
  4. Multi-Use Games Area at the Marlborough Pavilion
  5. We expressed concerns on behalf of residents about the closure of the sub post office on Prospect Road.
  6. We have expressed concerns on behalf of residents about the proposed expansion of the Sainsbury's store and car park in Everard Close.

The Secretary confirmed that the website has been revamped and she encouraged people to visit it.

Finally, the Secretary outlined the many ways in which residents can get involved in the work of the Association.

Those present accepted the Annual Report. This was proposed by Rick Taylor and seconded by Jose Sena.

- 6. Statement of Accounts:** Mark James presented the 2008/2009 Accounts. The Chair invited any questions. Christoph Lutz enquired about the donation to the Woodland Trust. The Chair explained that this is associated with the new wood at Sandridge and, as some of the Association are Tree Wardens, it seemed appropriate to make a donation.

The Accounts were adopted by those present. This was proposed by Jose Sena and seconded by Ananda Armstrong-King.

- 7. Re-election of management committee:** The Chair drew the audience's attention to the 2008/2009 Annual Report, which confirmed that the following members are standing to be re-elected: Ananda Armstrong-King, Chantal Burns, Giles Hanford, Jack Hill, Mark James, Sandy Norman, Rebecca Prebble, Chris Pudsey, Jose Sena, Rick Taylor and Peter Wares.

The following members are standing to be re-elected as officers: Sandy Norman as Chair, Chris Pudsey as Vice-Chair, Rebecca Prebble as Secretary and Mark James as Treasurer.

The Association structure was accepted.

- 8. Place Survey:** Jane Ratford (Marketing & Communications Officer, St Albans & District Council) gave an informative presentation of the results of the Place Survey 2008.

In her presentation, she explained that the survey asked residents how they feel about the area, and that it is a national initiative so will enable national benchmarking.

The response rate for St Albans was 42% and results showed that 90% residents are fairly or well satisfied with the area, compared to a national average of 77%. The top 3 areas that City residents think require attention are roads and pavements, traffic congestion and activities for teenagers.

Jane Ratford highlighted areas where the results have improved since 2006: teenagers, drug dealing, litter, graffiti. She explained that the results will feed into strategy and consultations and confirmed that a traffic congestion consultation will take place in the autumn 2009.

A question was asked about Westminster Lodge to which Jane Ratford replied that the consultation has not commenced. Christoph Lutz enquired about the age of the respondents. Jane Ratford explained that it is random sampling and that weightings are applied. Another resident expressed concern about traffic congestion around Sainsbury's.

- 9. Sopwell Project:** Sandy Norman (Chair) gave an interesting presentation on the history of Sopwell and the Sopwell Project. She asked residents to contribute to the project by sharing their memories of the area and helping with research. Sandy Norman explained that the outcome of the project will be fact sheets, information on the website and walking tours of the area.

- 10. Mandeville School:** Amanda Godfrey, Head teacher at Mandeville School, gave a talk about the proposed improvements to the school for the community. She confirmed that the build phase will take 18 months and that Mandeville will become an extended school (with longer hours). Christoph Lutz explained his concern about traffic and Amanda Godfrey confirmed this issue is being considered, and that it is also a wider issue for the area.

- 11. Policing:** PC Drew Pavitt talked about policing in Sopwell. He explained that over the last 12 months there has been a spike in the number of dwelling burglaries (20 per year rising to 40 per year) and as a result there has been an increase in high visibility patrols. PC Pavitt explained that the

number of thefts from a person, from vehicles and theft of motorcars have decreased as well as criminal damage. Overall crime rates are down 10%.

Adam Hunt raised the issue of individuals racing around the retail park at night on motorbikes/cars. PC Pavitt explained there is CCTV. Christoph Lutz gave examples of recent incidents, including car tyre slashing in Berner's drive; PC Pavitt agreed to investigate.

PC Pavitt confirmed to residents that they can call the Hertfordshire non-emergency number to report crimes that have taken place on 0845 33 00 222.

**12. Questions and issues raised from the floor:**

- The Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting and invited all to join the Association and speakers for refreshments, over which they can ask questions.

**13. The meeting closed at approximately 9.20pm.**