

**Annual General Meeting
Sopwell Residents Association
Held – Monday 28th May 2012
Marlborough Pavilion, Cottonmill Lane, St Albans**

Those present:

Rt Worshipful the Mayor Cllr Eileen Harris	Cllr Janet Smith	Cllr David Poor
Rick Taylor (Chair)	Sandy Norman (Secretary)	Rob Sharman (Treasurer)
Len Lewsey	Steve Peters	Peter Wares
Brian Price	Janet Price	Willem Hofland
Jack Hill	Sandy Benwyn Brady	Paul Lane
Andrew Johnston	Ananda Armstrong-King	Nicki Flynn (St Albans C&DC)
Christoph Lutz (pt-time)	Lilian Murray	Kamil Rizvi
Jo Clarke (Cunningham Hub)	PC Ben Kirby	PC Neil Cooper
Liz Bloom (Fleetville Diaries)	Jennifer Taylor (Minute secretary)	

Apologies received:

Ann Wares, Chris Pudsey, Mark James

1. Welcome & Introduction

The chairman, Rick Taylor, welcomed attendees to the 9th AGM of SRA and in particular welcomed and congratulated Cllr Eileen Harris on her elevation to the mayoralty. He drew everyone's attention to the two major events which had taken place within SRA over recent weeks. Firstly, the successful completion and publication of Sandy Norman's book 'Sopwell - a history and collection of memories' which had been launched at Sopwell House Hotel at the beginning of May 2012. The second event was the nomination of the SRA project for a Mayor's Pride Award for the broadwalk project, where we were runners up. Rick Taylor received the certificate on behalf of SRA at a reception in April. Copies of the certificate had been posted on Green Spaces notice boards.

2. Minutes of the AGM held on 17th May, 2011

Sandy advised that these will be posted on to the website; they had not been circulated. Adoption of the minutes was proposed by Rob Sharman and seconded by Jack Hill

3. Matters arising from AGM Minutes – None.

4. Annual report of the Association

Sandy Norman gave a presentation of the Association's achievements and activities throughout the year 2011/2012. She reported on the committee structure and changes that had taken place. The activities and events during the year included Larks in the Parks (2011), the Ramsbury Road Big Lunch and Open Gardens day raising funds for the Odyssey Cinema project; the autumn history walk led by Councillor Harris; the annual litter pick and willow weaving event. Sandy gave details of the "Friends of Sopwell Green Spaces group"; the continuation of the Sopwell Project and the publication of "Sopwell: a history and collection of memories"; Mayor's Pride Awards where SRA received a runner-up certificate. Sandy listed the conferences and meetings attended by various members of the committee on behalf of the Association. She reported on the Boardwalk grant sustainability, various planning issues, roads and pavements and SRA's continuing co-operation with the police and Neighbourhood Watch on local issues.

The Rick thanked Sandy for her excellent report and asked if anyone had any questions to put to Sandy. None being raised, Ananda Armstrong-King proposed that the report be accepted which was seconded by Len Lewsey.

5. **Statement of Accounts** The Treasurer, Rob Sharman presented the accounts which were approved and adopted. They showed a balance carried forward amounting to £1,872.10 which included a locality grant of £500.00 from Herts County Council towards the Sopwell Project and £500 from the Ver Valley Society as a donation to the Project.

At the time of the AGM the accounts had not been reviewed by a third party. However, in the absence of the accounts being independently examined, Ananda Armstrong-King proposed that they be accepted as drawn and this proposal was seconded by Jack Hill.

The Rick thanked Rob for presenting the accounts.

6. **Re-election of the management committee**
Rick announced that Peter Segers has resigned from the committee and that Chris Pudsey has also decided to take some time off but has said she will continue to help out on specific projects. Willem Hofland has joined the committee along with Jennifer Taylor, who will take on the role of minute taker at meetings. Rick suggested that, unless anyone had any objection then the committee should be re-elected en bloc. There being no objection, re-election was proposed by Councillor David Poor and seconded by Len Lewsey. Rick announced that the Committee would welcome at any time anyone who was interested in joining in order to continue the important work of SRA.

Peter Wares showed concern about the SRA website which had been managed by Peter Segers. Peter had suggested Sandy should recruit someone else to manage the website but in the meantime he is willing to continue to update with text or photos emailed to him. Nicki Flynn advised the CVS may have a volunteer who could help with the website should the need arise.

7. **Announcements**
- The SRA and St Julian's Church combined Jubilee tea-party is arranged for 2nd June where volunteers would be required for catering and setting up.
 - Sandy's book "Sopwell: a history and collection of memories" is now available for sale at the cost of £15, but £14 for residents of Sopwell Ward. There will be a book signing at Waterstones on 9th June.
 - St Peter's School will be willow weaving at the Nunnery Green Space on 18th July.
 - Larks in the Park, 12 noon – 24th June.
 - Bat Walk organized by Countryside Management Services on 7th September.
 - History Walk to take place at some time in September.
 - 'Moth Watch' to be organized.

- 8 **Speakers**
Rick welcomed Nicki Flynn from SADC, who gave some information about possible redevelopment of the under-used Marlborough Pavilion into a community hub to support young people and the local community generally. She advised there was a commitment for the Council to make improvements to the building to encourage it use. An as yet unknown sum of money from the Council is still available to proceed with improvements but she advised there were definitely funds to make improvements to the kitchen and toilet facilities. Councillor Harris said that one of the problems would be finding volunteers to run the site and this would be a major issue.

Rick welcomed Jo Clarke from Cell Barnes Residents Association, who talked briefly about the recently opened Cunningham Hub and the negotiations they had with the SADC and HCC. Jo advised SRA would need to decide what the Pavilion would be used for so as much money as possible can be provided by the two councils.

Liz Bloom gave a presentation and talk about the recently published Fleetville Diaries and starting up the Fleetville History Group.

9. **Open Forum & Refreshments**

PC Ben Kirby, SRA Community Police Officer, gave a resumé of the local policing in the area, stating that crime is down in St Albans generally. Speeding in Sopwell is a major issue, in particular along Cottonmill Lane and Abbots Avenue. He said he was going into the local primary schools giving talks on road safety, drugs and vandalism. He reminded attendees that 101 is the new non-emergency police telephone number. He said his own contact details could be put on the SRA website.

There was discussion about the problem of parking on grass verges and Sopwell has been chosen as an area to put some plans into action, e.g. tarmac the verges in Priory Walk. There are plans for oak posts further down Cottonmill Lane but ultimately it is a matter of cost. That there should be no parking on grass verges is a local council by-law.

Ben Kirby said he would look into the issue of 'furious cycling' along the Ward's pavements.

There being no further items for discussion, Rick thanked everybody for attending and taking part, and in particular thanked Sandy for her tremendous contribution to SRA. He thanked Ananda for providing the evening's refreshments.