

NORTH WEST FARNHAM RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

St. Francis Hall, Three Stiles Road

Thursday 19th June, 2025 at 8 pm

1. **Apologies:** Tony and Clare Rooth, Anthony and Sam Hook, Shelagh Bone, Heather Fox, John Willacy, Richard Gunner, Michael and Maureen Grew.
2. **Minutes of the previous AGM:** The Chair asked the attendees to look at the Minutes of our last AGM held on the 24th July 2024, which have been distributed. He requested a proposer and seconder for approval of the minutes. Proposed, Penny Marriott, seconded, Sue Ostrom.
3. **Chairman's Report**

David King welcomed everyone to the AGM and said he had recently learnt that three of the councillors due to come tonight are attending a full council meeting. However he was assured that, unless there were any abnormal items to be discussed they would be here for the Q & A session. Andy Macleod is here already and will hold the fort until the other councillors arrive.

He announced that no resolutions to be moved at this meeting have been received.

The Chairman asked how people had heard about the AGM, through the email he sent, posters, the Farnham Herald under Community News or our website. From the show of hands it was evident that the email was the most effective.

The developer's appeal to build 83 houses on land adjacent to Abbey View has succeeded and this will be discussed tonight. Trevor Free of the Abbey View Residents Association (AVRA) is present and will give us his thoughts on this later on.

We have been asked about the road works in West Street which, according to the Surrey County Council Highways website, are for the installation of drainage, presumably for the Coxbridge development. The works are supposed to cease on 15th July.

The Community Speed Watch, organised by a member of our Committee, Emma Heath, has been running for a while and Emma will give us an update on the situation this evening. Another Community Speed Watch is being formed to cover the top of Crondall Lane. The 2 speed watches will liaise with Emma so that their days of operation do not overlap – which the police will not allow.

The Chairman said he has been in touch with the engineer responsible for speed awareness for Surrey County Council (SCC) and he arranged for a radar device to be installed in Crondall Lane for about a week. This was to monitor not only speed, but also how many of each type of vehicle was travelling along Crondall Lane during this time. We are awaiting the figures and when received the website will be updated with the information. David feels that now the HGV restrictions are in force in Upper Hale, some HGVs are using Crondall Lane as an alternative route, the radar device will show if this is so.

NWFRA tries to co-ordinate and deal with local matters and we rely on all of you to keep us informed of any problems we should be aware of. Some of the residents of Crondall Lane, including David himself, have had a problem with low mains water pressure. A subsequent investigation showed that the pressure was within limits but that the flow rate did vary and the

probable cause was the increase in the number of houses. With even more houses due to be built in our area the problem can only get worse. David asked if anyone else has experienced this problem.

The water leak in Crondall Lane was fixed today. David said he called South East Water yesterday and they said they were waiting for a road closure notice from SCC. Then within 48 hours the Road Closed signs went up and the work was carried out overnight.

The Chairman understands that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) has been wrongly applied by Waverley to some house owners who have had to pay it for minor extensions. A statement from Waverley recently stated that "People hit with huge bills for work done to their homes will be refunded if the correct processes were not followed." The CIL was designed to apply to large developments and the builder has to give a CIL to the council, which then decides how it should be spent.

Water pollution is a grave problem and the Secretary of our Committee, Julie Russ, has written a letter to the Herald concerning it. Her letter is well worth reading but due to lack of space the Herald did not print her complete letter. David's opinion is that water companies should not dole out huge bonuses to ill-deserving directors and dividends to investors whilst these problems exist and are not being fixed.

One of our committee members, Anne Pullinger, is monitoring the state of local footpaths. The steps on footpath number 5 were in a poor state and she helped Farnham Ramblers maintenance working party to repair the steps and clear vegetation.

An engagement report showed that 51% of residents were for School Streets, 43% against and 8% neutral (which does not add up to 100%). A survey for comments will be on the Commonplace website and the results of this will be presented to the local County Council who will then decide whether to proceed or not.

The Chairman said he attended a workshop arranged by the Waverley Planning Department yesterday to discuss "a bold new Local Plan". These workshops (2 more are planned) will "explore what makes Waverley special" and "our input will play an important role in shaping a clear and inspiring vision for Waverley's future". Infrastructure, pollution, Western Bypass, suitable sites for new housing, avoiding areas where there is a shortage of playing fields and other issues, were brought up. Waverley said that "once this vision is drafted it will be shared with the wider community as part of an issues and options consultation later this year". When this is received it will be added to our website.

4. Treasurer's Report for 2024-2025

Our Treasurer, Rick Gunner, cannot be with us tonight, but he has produced an Income and Expenditure Account, a copy of which can be found on your seats. Please share if there are not enough copies for everyone. His brief comments are as follows:

Closing bank account was £4,282 as at 31st December 2024. We have a continuing core deficit of around £200 per annum, which will, over time, reduce our reserves. The solution is either to increase subs, to £10 per annum, and/or double our membership.

The Chairman asked if there were any questions or comments on these figures. He asked for a proposer and a seconder for the Treasurer's Report, Anne Pullinger proposer and Hilary King seconder.

The Chairman's comments on the Report are that the membership subs were a total of £260, which equates to 52 members paying their £5 yearly dues (nearly 100% by Standing Order).

He thanked those who do this and encouraged others to do likewise as this would help to increase our reserves. Our bank account details can be found on our website and it does not matter when in the year the Standing Order starts, it is never too late to start so please do so now!

5. Election of Officers and Committee

The following have put themselves up for re-election:

Chair: Mr David King
Treasurer: Mr Richard Gunner
Secretary: Mrs Julie Russ
Committee Members:
Mrs Emma Heath
Mrs Penny Marriott
Mrs Vivienne Miller
Mrs Susan Ostrom
Mrs Anne Pullinger
Mr Tony Rooth

The Chairman said we have increased our committee numbers by 3 this year which is excellent. We hold meetings every 2 to 3 months.

6. Community Speed Watch

Emma Heath reported on the Community Speed Watch. The initiative was taken by members of the local community, with the support of the police, to record the speed of vehicles with a detection device. Emma and her neighbours felt that the 20 mph speed limit was not succeeding in slowing down the traffic and so they formed a speed watch group in January. A minimum of 5 volunteers is needed and training has to be carried out with a police officer. The group was given kit – high viz jackets and a speed gun. A couple of sessions may be carried out per month and the police need to be notified in advance that a session will be taking place. There are 2 sites, one on the corner of Beavers Road and the other near the pedestrian crossing to Abbey View. The speed of all passing vehicles is recorded and for any travelling over 24 mph the speed, colour and make of vehicle is recorded. The total number of cars passing is recorded. Recording is done with pen and paper and Emma records details of all speeding cars on a website. The police send letters to offenders and repeat offenders receive a visit from them. The speed watch group does not have the powers to fine anyone. Any abuse the group receive is recorded and abusers also receive a letter from the police. The group has 6 volunteers and as it is all voluntary there is a limit to the number of sessions which can be carried out and Emma would like to carry out more. 12 sessions have been carried out to date and another 2 are pencilled in for June.

221 speeding cars have been recorded, 15% doing more than 30 mph, the highest speed recorded is 39 mph and the average speed is 28 mph. Cars slow down when they see the high viz jackets and warn other drivers by flashing their lights. Speed picks up again after vehicles have passed the speed watch and Emma would like to get a fixed camera. The group has tried to carry out sessions at different times of the day and Trevor Free asked if a session had been done during the rush hour. Emma said they had not done so. It has been said that people put their foot down to get past the parked cars. The man who installed the radar device had offered to send the data it recorded to one of Emma's neighbours and he did so. However, there is too much data to get through and a summary is required.

David King asked if people who receive letters or a visit from police get points on their licence. Emma replied that they do not. Trevor Free said it depends on the number of accidents which happen as to whether you can get a speed camera.

7. Old Park Lane Development

Trevor Free was introduced by David King. He is one of the lead members of the action group on the Abbey View estate which has put together actions to try and stop the Old Park Lane development. This involves permission for construction traffic to go through the estate and permission to go ahead with the development.

Trevor thanked everyone for the support given to the campaign, including support given by NWFRA. Despite 400 local objections, including a SCC councillor and a local MP, and a petition, the inspector has given permission for access through the Abbey View estate. All other matters, apart from access, are reserved. Waverley were in favour of giving permission for the development originally but because of the objections it went to an enquiry. Despite permission being given Trevor thinks it will take a while as there are many conditions in the inspector's appeal report. The ending of the current Farnham Neighbourhood Plan in April of this year was one of the main reasons for the inspector giving permission. The inspector stated that the harm caused would be medium to low but the residents of Abbey View are very concerned about the damaging effects of construction traffic, etc.

The Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) at Naishes Wood is too far away and beyond the Special Protection Area (SPA). Therefore it is not going to work. This will be contested and there will be a meeting with local councillors and SCC councillors to discuss the matter. The inspector has put conditions in but it is very difficult for planning departments to enforce them as they do not have enough staff. Waverley has failed miserably in the past to enforce conditions. The developers have not planted trees at Abbey View or completed the landscaping and pressure was put on them by Abbey View residents before this was carried out.

The advice of a barrister was taken about making a legal challenge but it would have to be through the high court and this will be discussed with councillors. AVRA's view on this is that, as new residents, it would be wrong to object to houses on the adjacent fields. Therefore the objection was to the access through Abbey View. There are no alternative access routes as SCC have said that it cannot be via Old Park Lane. Neither can access be via the road by the UCA as it is close to Potters Gate School and could put children at risk.

There is a health and safety issue with construction traffic going through the estate. AVRA will look at Taylor Wimpey's health and safety plan and will go to the Health and Safety Executive to make sure it is correct. Estate roads will have to be widened for access and this could encourage traffic to travel faster so the roads may no longer be pedestrian friendly as detailed in SCC guidelines. Issues include the safety of children as the main road through the estate is a route to school, people have to be able to use their driveways and there are concerns about increased noise causing problems for people working at home. The inspector said the trees should be repositioned, including new trees, and some will not survive. The views towards St Andrew's Church are being maintained, according to the inspector, and we must make sure this happens.

The surface water situation and flooding problems have not been addressed. A 66 page report on the problems was put together but it was dismissed and it has been said that there is not a problem. Engineers came out to check the drainage but did not have a drainage map. Abbey View is built on clay and the clay seam will not let water through and when it

gets saturated it floods and the water takes a long time to drain away. The report of the survey for Taylor Wimpey identified this issue but they still went ahead and built Abbey View.

Taylor Wimpey owns the roads up to the perimeter of the estate but it is now known who will own the roads on the Old Park Lane development.

Trevor said it is necessary to follow up on each and every detail of the inspector's report as there are a lot of conditions. It is very disappointing that the inspector approved the access when Clause 106 of National Planning Policy states that green spaces should be protected for the benefit of the local area.

The Government has identified Farnham as a good place for building. Trevor Free and David King attended a Waverley Borough Council meeting yesterday and were not given any indication before this about a new local plan. The work for this is only just beginning when we are 2 years into the new plan. Trevor said he feels people are being used. We need more infrastructure such as schools, GPs, etc. SCC Transport Department are relying on a new bus shelter, issue of electric bikes and the current plans for Farnham town centre to manage the increase in traffic.

8. Councillors' Forum and Questions

Dave King introduced Andy Macleod who is the local Surrey County Councillor for Farnham.

David Beaman is a member of Waverley Borough Council and Farnham Town Council. He said that soon a Unitary Authority will be formed and Waverley Borough Council will no longer exist.

Dave King informed the meeting that Councillors Graham White and George Hess have been delayed at a meeting.

Andy Macleod said that the local government reorganisation aims to cut the cost of councils. The existing Surrey County Council will be abolished and split into 2 or 3 councils. Districts and boroughs have recommended 3 authorities, but SCC has recommended 2. The Secretary of State will decide which one to go for. SCC and local councils will disappear in 2 years' time. There will be elections at that time. We will join up with Surrey Heath and Woking and may also have Runnymede and Spelthorne. We are not keen on joining with Woking, Runnymede and Spelthorne as they are in debt. The Government cannot allow a council to become insolvent. Local people suffer as council tax goes up and services go down. There will be a consultation and a big public meeting in July. Andy Macleod recommended people to go to the meeting. The Town Council will continue as it is, but there will be a big gap between it and unitary level. Waverley Borough Council has 50 councillors, there are 14 in the Town Council and there are 3 county councillors. We would only have 6 councillors if there are 2 councils and 9 if there are 3. There will be a lot of disruption and uncertainty and the local plan for Waverley will not be relevant, a new plan will be required. The unitary authority will cover a very wide area. There will be a mayoral authority and this is where most of the power will lie. The mayor will be the strategic authority, responsible for strategic and economic matters, assisted by some councillors from the unitary authority and will get a big budget.

Andy Macleod feels that this change is being rushed too much and is very worried about it. He is concerned about Farnham Town Council as the Government does not have a very high opinion of town councils, but without them there would be no local level of government. Farnham Town Council is having to talk to the Government to ensure that it is not undermined. Andy Macleod said FTC is a good council.

Questions:

Hilary Franklin asked if the Town Council is responsible for the Brightwells development and Andy Macleod said they are not.

Dave King asked what steps are being taken to monitor air pollution in Farnham. Andy Macleod replied that there are monitors throughout the town and air pollution is not increasing in Farnham and, if figures are required, they can be obtained from Waverley. David Beaman said he could get this information.

David Beaman said the 2 way turn at the bottom of Castle Street is working and overall the town is holding up better than expected.

David Evans asked about the evening parking charge, after 6.30 pm, as he wondered whether it was paying its way. Andy Macleod said it is a pilot scheme. David felt the charge might put people off coming to Farnham.

Beverley Teague asked what is happening at the Woolmead. Andy Macleod said the original approval included basement parking with one parking space per home but this was changed so there was less parking. Berkeley Homes decided it would not be profitable and tried to sell the site. Homes England took it on and have tried to sell it and have put it out to tender.

Sue Ostrom asked what has happened about the M & S which may be taking over the Home Base building and David Beaman said it is definite that they will be moving in, in February 2026.

Dave King asked that if student accommodation was built at the Woolmead this would count towards housing numbers.

Andy Macleod said that Waverley is now expected to provide 1,400 houses per year and it used to be 250.

Trevor Free said that the so called "affordable" houses are not affordable to young people and builders are not going to build on brownfield sites because it is not profitable. He asked about the Dunsfold site and why it is not being developed. He asked the council about it and they told him that they do not have the power to force a developer to build on a plot of land. It is local people and essential workers that need houses.

Andy Macleod said councils have very little powers to resolve this. In Margaret Thatcher's day council housing was abolished and people had to buy their houses. Houses in Waverley are unfordable being 18 times income. Government valuation is based on the fact that if more houses are built then this will force the prices down. The Labour Government say nimbies are the problem but this is not true, it is the developers and most of the faults lie with the central government. The Government has withdrawn funding to local councils and say they have to raise funds by such means as car parking charges.

Trevor Free is worried that Farnham will lose its character, eg, taller buildings will be constructed. David Beaman thought this might happen but Andy Macleod thought not as there is really only one road which comes into Farnham.

David King thanked Andy Macleod and David Beaman for attending the meeting and thanked the NWFRA Committee for their work over the year. David Beaman said it was a pleasure and that it is an important time for residents associations.