

NORTH WEST FARNHAM RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the 38th Annual General Meeting 20th June 2013

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Ian Burgess, Mrs Sue Farrow, Mrs Bone, Ms Janet Wall and Mr Rob Golding.

2. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the 37th Annual General Meeting held on 14th June 2012 were approved as a correct record.

3. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer, Mr Dennis Banks presented his report for 2012 which had shown a surplus of £433. He noted that a good contribution had been realised from two bring and buy sales. The deposit account had been transferred from Halifax to Lloyds.

The adoption of the accounts was proposed and seconded and the motion was carried unanimously.

4. Election of Officers and Committee

All the Officers and Committee were willing to stand for re-election being as follows:-

Chairman	Dr Penny Marriott
Treasurer	Mr Dennis Banks
Secretary	Mrs Harriet Ellis
Committee	Mr Stewart Edge
	Mr David King
	Mr Graham Leach
	Mr Keith Miller
	Mr Tony Ostime

They were propose and seconded as a group and the motion was carried unanimously.

5. Chairman's Report

The Chairman referred briefly to some miscellaneous matters of interest as follows:-

Farnborough Airport – maintaining a watching brief.

Bishops Meadow – we had made a donation at the outset and all was going well.

Potters Gate School – expansion is in progress

Speedwatch – thanks were expressed to those involved and more volunteers are always welcome.

Website – there have been about 180 hits a month, with over 300 last month and even more this month, reflecting interest in matters relating to the hop fields and the build up to the AGM. We are now on Facebook for which there is a direct link from the website.

The Chairman then introduced the topic of the potential sites for housing development in the area. These were the hop fields (CON 016), and parts of Coxbridge Farm (CON 073 and 077). Regarding the hop fields, she read out a letter from Margaret Bide whose family formerly owned the fields which referred to the ancient footpaths and the exceptional quality of the land for agricultural purposes. She then commented on recent changes to planning legislation, explaining that there are 3 crucial documents that will control the decisions on planning applications in Farnham. These are the Waverley Local Development Framework and in particular the Core Strategy document which was recently rejected by the Planning Inspectorate; the Farnham Town Neighbourhood Plan, a draft of which is currently being drawn up and the National Planning Policy Framework which governs the other documents. The Chairman then asked Mr Stewart Edge to present an update on these matters.

Stewart Edge said that in the Local Plan of several years ago, an area (broader than CON016) including the hop fields was designated an Area of Strategic Visual Importance (ASVI) but that from March 2012 a new national system, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), favours sustainable development. The new local plan assumes a need for 454 new dwellings on Greenfield sites around Farnham for the period up to 2028, but the Inspector had declared

the Waverley Core Strategy unsound on the grounds of inadequate housing provision. Without an accepted Plan there is a greater danger of development. There may be some hope that the ASVI designation, which has been temporarily retained, could provide some protection for the hop fields but this defence is not available for the Coxbridge fields.

The Neighbourhood Plan, to which NWFRA has been providing input, has to be in line with the Waverley plan so the lack of such a plan does present a problem.

As to the future, the situation is very much in the hands of Waverley councillors if we are to avoid an unnecessary amount of Greenfield development, particularly with the likely significant increase in the total amount of housing to be included in a revised plan. If Dunsfold Park were developed for housing there would be no need for Greenfield development in Farnham.

Stewart Edge then produced over 400 petition cards asking for the hop fields to be designated "Local Green Space", the wording following that in the NPPF. He also commented that in the course of collecting the petition cards it had been suggested that if 165 houses were built on the site there would be significant problems for traffic movements to and from the site. The petition cards were then presented to the Mayor.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.35pm. This was, however, to be followed by a panel discussion involving the local Councillors, and as most of this was related to the matters reported in the AGM further notes are on the discussion are included here.

Councillors' Forum

The Chairman extended a warm welcome to Councillors Paddy Blagden (Town Mayor and Castle Ward), Jeremy Rickets (Deputy Town Mayor), Pat Frost (Surrey, Waverley and Farnham) and Carole Cockburn (Waverley and Farnham).

Councillor Carole Cockburn was asked to give an update on the Neighbourhood Plan in the light of the rejection of the Waverley Core Strategy. She said that work on the Farnham plan would continue but the emphasis would change. The final draft which is expected before the end of the year will be the subject of consultation but the next draft will be available on the Town Council website and this will be built on the basis that there should be no Greenfield development anywhere in Farnham until Waverley's brownfield sites had been used. She pointed out that this position was specifically supported by the National Planning Policy Framework in the light of the EU Special Protection Areas, not just of the Thames Basin (North of Farnham) but also Wealden Heaths (South of Farnham). She thought the case for some protection of the hop fields was robust but as sites for housing development up to 2028 or later may have to be found she stressed the need for residents to make positive suggestions for such sites as, in fact, some residents associations have done already.

Some other points made in response to questions were as follows:-

Dunsfold Aerodrome is 80% brownfield.

Local authorities can specify the style and type of housing to be built.

Flats as well as houses count in the number of dwellings to be built.

The reasons for the rejection of the Waverley Core Strategy were; lack of agreement with neighbouring Councils that some of their significant developments could 'count' towards meeting Waverley's demand; insufficient attention to the EU habitat regulations; and the number of new houses planned being less than the identified demand - it was pointed out that although the Waverley Core Strategy had provided for 230 houses per annum, Waverley had pointed to a need for 300 – 450.

Comments were also made on the inadequacy of the infrastructure to support significant extra development.