

Chalfont Heights Roads Committee

Minutes of the Fifty second Annual General Meeting

Held at the Parish Church Hall, Chalfont St Peter
at 20.15 on
Friday 23rd February 2007

Present:

Forty four residents (representing thirty seven households) were present including the ten members of the Committee as follows:

D Bryan (Chairman), R J Burge, P G Cassell, G Eykyn, J Garnham, B Hulme (Treasurer), Mrs P E McNair, A R H Mellor, J M O'Neill & K A Quilter

Apologies for absence were received from:

Mr J Ballantyne, Mr & Mrs P Down, Mr & Mrs A Humphreys, Mr M F D March, Mr & Mrs C Saunders, Mrs C Smith, Mrs C Sydee & Mrs C Warrington

The Chairman welcomed new residents attending their first AGM and all residents for attending on a rather wet evening before opening the meeting by introducing the members of the Committee.

52.1 Minutes

1.1 The Minutes of the fifty first Annual General Meeting, held on 23rd February 2006, were submitted for approval. This was proposed by Mr D Palmer, seconded by Mrs A Hulme and the proposal was carried.

1.2 Matters arising: The Chairman read an extract of a letter dated 11th April 2006 from Cliff Saunders pointing out that the assertion made in minute 51.4.3.7 concerning the misuse and dumping of rubbish on the *Mentmore House* site during the construction of *Pinecrest* was inaccurate. He had obtained permission from the owners of the *Mentmore House* site to use it for parking vehicles and storage of materials specifically to minimise inconvenience to neighbours. And all suppliers had been advised that deliveries would not be accepted until after 08.00 but this information was not always passed on.

52.2 Financial Report & Accounts – Barry Hulme (Treasurer)

2.1 The Treasurer outlined the levels of income and expenditure for the main categories in 2006 and pointed out that the income from subscriptions was higher than 2005 at £30,791 as a result of the increase, plus additional income from development charges and fees of £13,050. He also pointed out that the low expenditure on road maintenance of £696 was because the annual maintenance was carried out in December but invoiced in 2007. The exceptional item cost of the subsidence in Chiltern Hill in 2006 was £18,184 in addition to the £3,391 spent in 2005.

2.2 Expenditure would have been within budget for 2006 except for the cost of the subsidence but, even with this exceptional expense, income exceeded expenditure by £20,439 helping to build the reserves we require for future road maintenance. Tree maintenance was significantly lower than in 2005, the liability insurance premium reduced to £1,279 and legal fees were £880.

- 2.3 The honorary auditors had approved the accounts but one resident, an accountant, had pointed out that since the deposits for remote control units were to be returned they should be shown as a creditor under the capital account and not as income. An amended copy of the accounts was circulated and will be attached to these minutes. There is no overall change in the figures of the accounts except that the sum for the remote control units has moved from Income & Expenditure to the Balance Sheet.
- 2.4 It was proposed that the annual subscription should remain unchanged at £150 pa for 2007 due by 30 April 2007 after which £160 is payable. The Treasurer explained that although we are building our reserves, these will be needed for the major road repairs which will be required in the coming years. We also need to maintain a strong level of reserves in case of any further unexpected problems like the subsidence in Chiltern Hill.
- 2.5 The Chairman mentioned that the Treasurer had been told of the existence of a Private Roads Association providing help and advice for private estates and, on investigating the benefits, the committee decided to become members at a cost of £75.00 pa. The association has negotiated a Third Party Liability insurance policy with Norwich Union for a significantly lower premium that we have been paying. We have changed our insurance with a saving in 2006 of £310 and even greater savings in 2007 unless the premium increases. There are also significant benefits in legal advice provided by the Director of the association, who is a barrister and the leading authority in the UK on the legal aspects of private roads.
- 2.6 Mr N McAlister proposed and Mr A I M Belton seconded the adoption of the amended accounts for 2006 and that the annual subscription should remain at £150 which was carried unanimously.
- 2.7 It would be greatly appreciated if residents will make a Standing Order for the annual subscription to significantly reduce the administrative time required to manage subscriptions. A Standing Order form is available from the Treasurer.**
- 2.8 The Treasurer pointed out that he was retiring from the committee after the AGM and would be replaced as Treasurer by one of the auditors Keith Quilter. Barry joined the committee in May 1998, has been Treasurer since February 2001 and a Trustee since 2003. The Chairman thanked Barry Hulme for the outstanding contribution he has made in looking after the Estate finances and pointed out that it was thanks to his prudent financial management that we were able to cope with a substantial unexpected expense for the repair of subsidence in Chiltern Hill. The meeting acknowledged this with a round of applause.

52.3 Honorary Auditors

3.1 The Chairman thanked the honorary auditors Mr Roy Solomon and Mr Keith Quilter for once again giving their time in auditing the Estate accounts. He advised the meeting that, as Keith Quilter had agreed to become Treasurer, we require another auditor and thanked John Williams for agreeing to become an auditor. Most residents will recall that John is a former Treasurer, Trustee and committee member and he and Roy Solomon are prepared to be appointed for the year 2007. Their appointment was proposed by Mr Bruce Allen and seconded by Mrs P E McNair and carried unanimously.

52.4 Committee Report

52.4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 We were devastated and deeply saddened by the loss of Janet Tindale in 2006 who died after a sudden illness whilst on holiday in Spain. She was a charming and very capable committee member who had only moved from Woodside Hill to Sandy Rise early in 2006. She gave invaluable service to the Estate and will be sorely missed.
- 4.1.2 The repair to the subsidence in Chiltern Hill was finally completed involving the construction of a steel reinforced bridge under the road. Persistence paid off in pursuing a claim with Three Valleys Water for a contribution towards the repair, which was immediately adjacent to the major water main burst from a few years earlier. After fifteen months of negotiation their insurers have contributed 25% of the costs.
- 4.1.3 The present day trend towards demolition of older houses and rebuild continues on the Estate and the committee will continue to strike a balance between maintaining the overall character of the Estate whilst not unduly restricting progress in architectural design.

52.4.2 Roads and Signs – Rob Burge

- 4.2.1. General maintenance road repairs were kept to a minimum in 2006 in view of the major expense of the subsidence repair. Details of the work carried out were set out in the Annual Report.
- 4.2.2 The leaf fall was late in 2006 and so the winter sweeping was left until early January. Unfortunately we had a severe storm only two days after the sweeping leaving further debris around the Estate.
- 4.2.3 One gritting was carried out after the recent heavy overnight snowfall which ensured that the main hills remained passable.
- 4.2.4 The subsidence in Chiltern Hill was repaired by installation of a specially designed reinforced bridge under the road. Persistence in negotiations with Three Valleys Water resulted in their insurers contributing 25% of the overall cost of repair but without admission of liability.
- 4.2.5 Mrs D Lafone asked if special severe ramps could be installed at the three entrances to the Estate to deter unauthorised drivers from using the Estate roads and to restrict speed. RJB said that we would consider this when resurfacing programmes are required. Mr D Palmer suggested that we should consider replacing the existing ramps gradually with the type of ramps used on the Moor Park Estate. These are not particularly high, and flat on top but with a very steep and sharply angled leading edge so that the impact to a vehicle travelling at more than a very slow speed is considerable. They are extremely effective. RJB said the committee will discuss and obtain costings for these when resurfacing is next undertaken.
- 4.2.6 Mr R Warrington thanked the committee for the improved drainage work in Sandy Rise but this had only moved the local flooding areas further along. This will require another look when the road survey for this year's programme is made.

52.4.3 Trees, islands and Estate entrances – John O'Neill

- 4.3.1 Referring to the report for 2006, John O'Neill mentioned that our tree maintenance last year was well below budget with a minimum of maintenance work required.

- 4.3.2 Damage to grass verges, mainly by heavy vehicles driving over them, continues to be a problem. If any resident witnesses a vehicle damaging a verge and will let us have details of the date, time and the owners of the vehicle we can often successfully negotiate the cost of repair. Although verges are the property of the Estate, responsibility for their maintenance by house owners is specifically covered in the covenants. There were some problems with dog walkers parking on the verge at the top of Woodside Hill which was stopped by placing notices on the vehicles.
- 4.3.3 The shrubs on some of the islands require regular watering in dry weather and residents living close to these islands are asked to water the shrubs to keep them healthy, and not just let them die for lack of water. Some wild flower seeds were planted on the Lincoln Road island and we shall have to wait and see later this year if they have been successful.
- 4.3.4 The bollards were straightened, cleaned and repainted last year, but it helps to maintain the appearance of the Estate if residents keep bollards in front of their house washed and clean and the gutter clear to enable rainwater to flow and not form large puddles.
- 4.3.5 All the soakaways were cleaned out last year but a few are blocked beyond clearing and we shall have to undertake digging new soakaway trenches for these in 2007.
- 4.3.6 Mrs K B Wickham pointed out that some people appear to be dumping garden rubbish in the centre island of Winkers Close and residents should be reminded that garden waste should be taken to the tip. The Chairman said there have been a few incidents of residents dumping rubbish around the Estate which is an extremely unsocial and selfish act which just lowers the whole standard of the Estate. If those dumping rubbish can be identified then action will be taken.

51.4.4 Trustees and Development – Robin Mellor

- 4.4.1 Robin Mellor referred to the report which showed details of the seventeen applications received during 2006, which was three more than the previous year. He particularly thanked John Nesbitt for his continued valued assistance in providing professional architectural advice to the Development sub-committee and this was endorsed by the meeting. So far there have been fewer development applications in 2007.
- 4.4.2 The revised policy of increased charges for house owners undertaking development, to contribute towards the wear and damage caused to Estate roads by contractors' vehicles made a significant contribution to funds for road maintenance in 2006. With three demolition and rebuilds taking place currently plus two substantial developments also in progress there is a considerable amount of contractors' traffic on the estate this year so far. The Chairman pointed out that the heavy vehicles associated with construction work cause damage to the structure beneath the roads which may remain unseen for years but eventually results in expensive repairs, so we need to build up good reserves to deal with this. The surveyors who examined the Chiltern Hill subsidence in 2006 specifically warned us of the damage from high point loading caused by commercial vehicles and 4x4s taking the speed ramps at excessive speeds above 15 mph.
- 4.4.3 We are fortunate that most of the Estate is classified as a specially designated Established Residential Area of Special Character Policy H4 which means that the District Council must ensure that developments maintain that character. District Councillor J F Warder pointed out that there have been attempts by central Government to modify some of these areas to enable greater housing development, but this has been resisted by Chiltern District Council so far.

4.4.4 The Chairman thanked Robin Mellor for the very efficient way in which he deals with development applications and in securing the payment of the development fees.

4.4.5 There being no further questions on the Committee Report, the Chairman asked for a proposal to approve these sections of the report. Mrs A McAlister proposed adoption of the report and Mr K G Robey seconded the proposal which was carried unanimously.

52.5 Committee

5.1 The Chairman confirmed to the meeting that Barry Hulme is retiring from the Committee after nine years and referred again to the tragic loss of Janet Tindale in 2006. George Eykyn and Keith Quilter joined the committee during the year.

5.2 The following nine existing members of the Committee are available for re-election for the year 2007. Mrs D B Palmer proposed that all nine members of the Committee should be re-elected en-bloc, seconded by Mr B G Allen, and the motion was carried unanimously. Those elected for 2007 are:

Derek Bryan	Chairman & Trustee
Rob Burge	
Paul Cassell	Trustee
George Eykyn	
Jasper Garman	
Patricia McNair	Trustee
Robin Mellor	
John O'Neil	
Keith Quilter	Treasurer

52.6 Any other business

6.1 The Chairman outlined what had happened during the last year so far as a traffic control barrier is concerned. 128 residents requested remote controls which is a large majority of 66% of the Estate. After seeking advice from numerous experienced sources and consultants the committee agreed that Upway was the best location for an automatic bollard barrier. However, there are currently two major building projects taking place adjacent to the location and it will not be possible to consider installation until these are completed which will not be until late summer 2007. Observation of traffic levels since Chiltern Hill was re-opened appear to indicate that there has only been a small increase in traffic most of which is thought to be residents. The committee therefore decided to defer installation and in the meantime monitor the traffic levels. If traffic levels do not increase we may need to reconsider whether or not a traffic barrier is necessary.

Some considerable discussion took place on the need for a traffic barrier within the Estate all of which was in support of controlling traffic using the Estate roads. Mr R Dunn expressed his disappointment that the remote control deposits were returned and felt that they should have been retained until a barrier can be installed. Mr T Ansell suggested that a traffic census should be taken now and again in a couple of months time to determine whether or not more traffic is using the Estate. Mr B G Allen said he is in complete agreement that a barrier should be installed and offered possible assistance in installing traffic counters at the entrances to monitor traffic. Mr R Weblin said that if 128 residents had paid deposits for remote controls that demonstrated an overwhelming majority in favour of a traffic barrier and the scheme should go ahead as soon as possible. Mr J W Williams asked if there had been any legal reasons why a barrier should not be installed. It was explained that two or three residents had indicated they would be prepared to take legal action to prevent a barrier being installed in a location close to them which they considered unsafe. Private Roads Services' view is that the committee have taken very comprehensive steps to obtain advice on location and

installation and PRS can identify no valid legal reason for objecting to a recommended location. We would regard taking legal action as a last resort. Mr D Palmer suggested that, once the building work has been completed and measurements of traffic density taken, a meeting should be held for a presentation of full details of the proposal to enable residents to see the appearance and operating system for the barrier and have an opportunity to ask questions.

A vote was taken to establish how many were in favour of a traffic control system with forty-two in favour and two against, a majority of 95%. One of the two against said he was not necessarily against traffic control but would like to have more details before making a final decision. The Chairman said that the committee would pursue the proposals made and arrange to present more details to the residents before any final action.

- 6.2 District Councillor John Warder advised the meeting that, following further representations concerning the parking of vehicles on Chiltern Hill bridge, the problem will be considered at a meeting on 6th March. There are now two factors: a) the obstruction caused by parked vehicles, restricting the roadway to a single lane over a blind, hump backed bridge which is completely against the Highway Code and b) the build up of debris which cannot be cleaned and causing local flooding after heavy rain.
- 6.3 Mrs D Palmer asked if residents could have details of the history of the Estate as there was interest about development since its creation in the 1920s. The Chairman said that an abbreviated history was sent to all new residents when they move into the Estate with a welcome letter. The Estate was formed from land owned by *Swan Farm* including *Winkers Farm* which was bought by the Stroud family. Only the Tithe Barn (opposite the Greyhound) and one house in Joiners Lane remain of the original buildings of *Swan Farm*. A more comprehensive account of the Estate was given in a booklet distributed to all houses in 1978, the 50th anniversary year. The main history part of the booklet was written by the actor John Laurie (the undertaker in *Dad's Army*) who lived in Woodside Hill for many years. The committee considered producing a revised edition for the 75th anniversary in 2003 but were unable to find volunteers to do the revision. As there is obvious interest the committee will consider producing a revised copy. Barry Hulme said that he had a full history of *Swan Farm* for inclusion in any revision.
- 6.4 Mrs K B Wickham expressed her thanks to the Committee on behalf of the residents for the considerable work they do in managing the Estate and particularly during the past year dealing with the road subsidence and planning for a traffic barrier. This was seconded by Mr D Palmer and supported unanimously by the residents present.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 22.15.