

Chalfont Heights Roads Committee

Minutes of Meeting of the

Fifty Seventh Annual General Meeting

**Held at the Parish Church Hall, Chalfont St Peter
at 19.45 on
Friday 2nd March 2012**

Present:

Ninety-nine residents (representing eighty-five properties)

Members present: S Allright, R. Burge, P G Cassell, G Eykyn, J Garnham, N Marchant, Mrs. P E McNair, A R H Mellor, K Krokosz, K Quilter, M Simmons

Apologies for absence were received from: Kay and Ted Steadman-Trehear, Roy and Kim Weblin, Quenten and Jenny Pollard, Teresa and Charles Watters, Derek and Pam Bryan, Dr and Mrs Cairns, Deborah and Antony Elliott, Gretta and Jonathan Cole, Dr and Mrs Grieve, Mrs Lefone, Corrine and Ken Morrison

Guest speakers: Sgt Nicola Upton of Thames Valley Police's Chiltern area neighbourhoods policing team; Chas Staines of Integrated Risk Consultants Ltd

Holly Allright (Secretary) in attendance

57.1 Welcome

- 1.1 The Chairman welcomed everyone to the AGM, including guest speakers, and apologies were read out. Residents were asked to ensure that they signed the attendance list which would be circulated during the meeting.

57.2 Minutes

- 2.1 The minutes of the fifty-sixth Annual General Meeting, held on Tuesday 1st March 2011 were submitted for approval. This was proposed by Brenda Wickham and seconded by Denis Palmer and the proposal was carried.

57.3 Financial Report and Accounts – Keith Quilter (Treasurer)

- 3.1 The Treasurer stated that for the first time, every property had paid their subscription. The meeting clapped in a vote of thanks to Keith. The Treasurer's report advised that the annual subscription should remain the same as last year, £160 p.a., for which a standing order would be preferable. This was proposed by John Williams and seconded by Susan Marchant.
- 3.2 The meeting was invited to make comment regarding the Treasurer's report – no questions arose. Acceptance of the Financial Report and Accounts was proposed by Michael March, seconded by Jon McGowan.

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57.4 Committee Reports

57.4.1 Communications – George Eykyn

- 4.1.1 George reported that the number of residents opting in for the emails had continued to rise: 72 percent of residents receive the Committee's emails, 69 percent have the police emails and 36 percent have the new planning alerts. A new website would also help with the flow of information to residents and make key estate documentation easier to access. There had been strong demand from residents for the website and for online discussion about the estate through the year. The website being developed would be attractive, simple and easy to navigate. George invited Jon McGowan to give more detail about the website.
- 4.1.2 Jon McGowan showed some screenshots of the draft website, which was still under development. The URL would be www.chrc.org.uk. Content drawing on police alerts and local newspaper reports would be included on the home page, updated via RSS feeds. Other pages would include news from the estate, the history and life on the estate, an archive of documents and some general images of the estate. A private residents' forum was intended to go live at a later date; households wanting to participate would have unique usernames and passwords, and the forum was intended to be very secure and confidential – all posts would be moderated on behalf of the Committee before they were published. Content was likely to range from "lost and found", to "for sale" and "wanted" items, and there had been a suggestion to log wildlife seen in the estate. The website should be live by early summer, and the forum would follow later.
- 4.1.3 George explained that the website was being developed at relatively low cost after a competitive tender between several suppliers. He invited any resident who was not online, but who wished to be, to get in touch and ask for support.

57.4.2 Development – Robin Mellor

- 4.2.1 Robin stated that this would be his last AGM as he was standing down after the meeting. He had been on the Committee for 10 years and had dealt with exactly 150 planning applications. He asked for any questions – there were none. Terry Ansell called for a vote of thanks to Robin, and he was applauded.
- 4.2.2 Jonathan Pegler will be taking over Robin's position. Although he was not able to attend the AGM, the Chairman read out a passage that Jonathan had written introducing himself.

57.4.3 Roads – Rob Burge

- 4.3.1 Concerning snow, Rob said that the Committee would be investing in a few more grit bins; if there were any suggestions as to where these should be

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placed, then residents should email chalfontheightrc@aol.com. He stated that Chiltern Hill and Woodside Hill had been the focus of attention, due to their steepness. Rob thanked all the snow volunteers who had helped by clearing roads on the estate.

4.3.2 The high price of oil had put up the cost of repairs to our roads this year. The next priority for repairs, Rob said, was lower Chiltern Hill below the roundabout. Some bollards still needed attention or repainting. On Lincoln Road drainage problems had necessitated more soakaways. The main work completed this year was the resurfacing of Lewis Lane and Winkers Close. Some speed ramps had been replaced and minor repairs conducted on other roads.

4.3.3 Paul Downs questioned the resurfacing of Lewis Lane, which he said had been unsatisfactory. There had been loose material and insufficient tar, as well as bare patches left. Rob replied that the company would be asked to come back and fix the problem.

57.4.4 Trees, Islands, Verges & Gates - Jasper Garnham

4.4.1 Signs that need replacing or repairing would be put right soon. The 'e' missing from the Upway entrance would be replaced imminently.

4.4.2 Jasper said that there had not been many storms causing damage to trees.

4.4.3 He told the meeting that a tree surgeon working for Paul Morris had had a bad accident on the estate, whilst pruning a tree at the Sandy Rise junction with Chiltern Hill, but happily he had recovered and had since returned to work.

4.4.4 Mike Greaves asked about the island on Chiltern Hill: a bench had been dumped there which was rotting and seemed dangerous to sit on. On a show of hands the meeting decided that the bench should be removed, and that a new one would be bought by the Committee and concreted down in the same position.

4.4.5 Alastair Graham questioned the height of the trees at the junction of Chiltern Hill and Lincoln Road – branches were overhanging, and since vehicles often didn't stop properly at the junction he felt the trees should be pruned to improve visibility at that spot. Jasper agreed to speak to Paul Morris.

57.4.5 Crime and Policing

4.5.1 Nick Marchant delivered a presentation to the meeting about the nature and frequency of crime reported on the estate, drawing on the official police statistics and on the list of incidents reported to the Committee by residents.

4.5.2 Nick introduced Chas Staines of Integrated Risk Consultants Ltd, who had briefly reviewed security on the estate in January 2012, after demands from some residents that security be professionally assessed. Mr Staines said that he had visited the estate and its surrounding area and had been impressed by the level of security that individual houses had in place, and by the strong community spirit in the estate. As a consultant he had considered the points of vehicle and pedestrian access, levels of through traffic, and the road calming and street lighting in the estate. His professional conclusion was that

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residents need not have great concern. Residents should continue to do the basics to care for their property, he said, such as ensuring that they kept security lights on their house in good order, and that they serviced their alarm at least annually. Reasonably low and well trimmed hedges also assisted with security, Mr Staines said, so that anyone trying to gain access to a property could be seen by neighbours. Residents with gates on their properties might consider using them rather than leaving them permanently open. He recommended that the estate consider forming a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, and urged us to engage more with the Thames Valley police neighbourhood policing team covering Chalfont St Peter. A formal report from the security review was being sent to the Committee.

- 4.5.3 Sergeant Nicola Upton from the Thames Valley police neighbourhood policing team explained their work. Her team was trying to pay more attention to the estate. If people see a police car on the estate it is only patrolling, she said, and residents should be reassured. She explained what her team does in order to try to minimise crime, including survey and advice visits after incidents such as burglaries, and leafleting houses in the immediate area after an incident such as a theft from a vehicle. Sgt Upton urged residents to come to the local police “Have Your Say” meetings which were held regularly in the village, often at Budgens. Officers were working with Chiltern District Council and others, and in this part of Chalfont St Peter they paid close attention to the youth club, and Winkers nightclub among other venues.
- 4.5.4 Brenda Wickham thanked Sgt Upton for patrolling through the estate. Sgt Upton replied that residents should never feel they were wasting officers’ time if they made contact via the new non-emergency number, 101, to report an issue or concern.
- 4.5.5 Rob Burge said he had reported a crime and a police car had arrived immediately, which was very good. Mike Greaves mentioned a theft of builders’ equipment on Chiltern Hill. Sgt Upton stressed the importance of not leaving anything valuable in cars or vans. Residents could remind contractors working on their house not to leave equipment unguarded or on display.
- 4.5.6 Nigel McAlister said that door-to-door cold sellers were annoying. Sgt Upton responded that she had stickers available for free to deter sellers. If we wanted to be a formal “zone” where doorstep selling was prohibited (with signage), residents of each road would need to be consulted. The Committee agreed to look further into this.
- 4.5.7 James Ballantyne said he received many fake letters or calls. Sgt Upton said to bin them straight away, and if the problem persisted to contact the police on 101.
- 4.5.8 Steve Malins said that the best security was a strong community like those in the audience, where residents knew each other and looked out for each other.
- 4.5.9 The Chairman said there had been many phone calls from residents and others concerned about crime asking Committee to take more action on improving security.

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- 4.5.10 Granville Camsey said he was amazed there had been 20 crimes; he felt uneasy. He asked Sgt Upton whether this was a large number or not. She said it was 20 too many, but around the area it was not high, adding that quite a few of the incidents had been perpetrated against contractors visiting the estate rather than against residents.
- 4.5.11 Kris Krokosz said he found the figures high. Prime targets, he said, had been contractors, people with BMWs, and garden sheds.
- 4.5.12 Granville Camsey said the task now was to marry up the assessed risk, with police and expert opinion, and with the costs that would apply to any measures adopted.
- 4.5.13 Judith Dunn said that years ago residents used to conduct a one-day survey of all the people driving in and out of the estate. Barry Bradbrook also recalled the vehicle checks that used to be carried out. Rob Burge cautioned, however, that people these days became aggressive very quickly, and another risk was of vehicles backing up to Joiners Lane. Surveys had shown that the estate did not suffer from particularly high traffic volumes. An informal show of hands indicated some support for occasional checks, though the risk attached to these was not further discussed.
- 4.5.14 The Chairman took informal soundings on a range of suggestions that had been made. Joining a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, as recommended by the security expert in his presentation, commanded strong support.
- 4.5.15 John Williams said that he would be happy to be a volunteer Neighbourhood Watch organiser representing Winkers Close, and other roads would need volunteers too. John believed insurance companies might offer a discount on premiums for properties in a formal NHW area. The Committee agreed to collect names of volunteers, some of whom signed up immediately after the meeting; a further opportunity to volunteer will go out with the AGM Minutes.
- 4.5.16 Steve Flynn said that if any security or crime prevention measures were to be adopted which had substantive cost attached, residents should be consulted and the proposals set out for them in more detail, with the attendant costs. The Chairman agreed; the informal soundings taken at the AGM would simply help guide the Committee as it discussed the protection of the estate and its roads, taking account of residents' concerns.

57.5 Committee

- 5.1 The Chairman referred to the team of committed volunteers who are available for re-election for the year 2012-13 as follows:

Steve Allright (chair)

Rob Burge (roads)

Paul Cassell (vice chair)

George Eykyn (comms)

Jasper Garnham (trees)

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Kris Krokosz (development)

Nick Marchant (finance)

Jonathan Peglar (development)

Mark Simmons (roads)

Keith Quilter (finance)

5.2 Formal thanks and applause were offered to Robin Mellor and Patricia McNair, who are standing down from the Committee after many years' service. Re-election of all other Committee members was proposed by Denis Palmer and seconded by John Williams, and approved by the AGM.

57.6 Any other business

6.1 The Diamond Jubilee takes place this year. For the estate to have a good party, as with the Royal Wedding last year, volunteers were needed to organise it. The Chairman asked people who were willing to help to add their email addresses to a list.

6.2 A proposal for house numbering on the estate was raised again. Michael March described how it was sometimes difficult for the police and emergency services to reach a property which was named, but not numbered. He also argued that mail arrived more quickly when house numbers were used on the address. Residents of Upway and Ellis Avenue recalled occasions when the emergency services had needed to reach them, their relatives or neighbours in distress: house numbers definitely helped, they said. Sgt Upton answered a query from Richard Dunn to clarify that the emergency services would never refuse to attend a callout because a numbered address couldn't be provided. They had excellent technology which even extended to tracing the origins of a 999 phone call. She added, however, that residents should ensure their house name was clearly visible from the road. Brenda Wickham said it was easier for her shopping to be delivered, and day helpers who had limited time to spend on each elderly person they were caring for would waste less of it trying to find the house, so could spend more time helping that person. Mrs Wickham said people were free to have both a house name and a house number. Terry Ansell said that the people who wanted numbers had them, so what was the problem? Since a majority is needed on each street before house numbering can be introduced as a requirement, the AGM voted on whether to repeat the survey of residents' wishes conducted in November 2009. Residents voted not to repeat the survey at this time, though it was noted that anyone is free to consult their own neighbours on this topic at any time, with a view to gaining the requisite majority consensus.

6.3 James Ballantyne proposed a formal vote of thanks to the Chalfont Heights Roads Committee. The Chairman then closed the meeting.