

BYFLEET, WEST BYFLEET AND PYRFORD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday, 12 January 2022 at 19:30

In the church hall at Our Lady Help of Christians Roman Catholic Church, West Byfleet

1. Welcome by the Chair, Stewart Dick

The Chairman welcomed around 70 Residents' Association (the "RA") members and guests and thanked them for showing their support under current difficult circumstances.

The meeting was quorate with the required minimum of 35 members present. The requisite notice of the date of the AGM had been given in The Resident Newsletter, on the BWBPRA website and via email.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received and were accepted from: Councillors Mary Bridgeman, Josh Brown and Steve Dorsett; Keith Creswell; Lisa Graae; Fui Ling; Carol Leong-Son; Mike Corbett; Jean & Alan Cox; Frank Pfeil; Bob Tilley.

3. Retrospective approval of the cancellation of the 2020 AGM after Notice had been issued

The Chair informed the meeting that the 2020 AGM had been cancelled as a consequence of Covid restrictions in force at the time. The constitution of the RA did not allow for the cancellation of the AGM after notice had been served and the Chair therefore asked for retrospective consent from members for the committee's decision to cancel the meeting. Cancellation was approved unanimously.

4. Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting held on 14 March 2019

The minutes of the 2019 AGM had been posted on the BWBPRA website and distributed to those present. The minutes were agreed as a true record as they stood. Proposed by Richard Thomas. Seconded by Cllr Amanda Boote.

5. Matters arising from the Minutes not covered by the Agenda

There were no matters arising which had not been actioned or covered by this agenda.

6. Treasurer's Report

Dharma Sivarajasingham, Treasurer, referred members to the accounts for the 12 months to 31 December 2020 which had been circulated.

Covid 19 pandemic restrictions had made the collection of subscriptions difficult during this period and as a result subscription income had been lower by 23.6% than in 2019. Street Representatives who delivered newsletters, collecting subscriptions at the same time, had not been able to do this safely through the lockdowns. Advertising revenue had also been down by 47.9%.

Following a question, Dharma explained that the Bell Cornwell payment was a contribution towards the cost of advice sought by the RA on behalf of the Neighbourhood Forums for the SADPD exercise.

Dharma confirmed that the reduction in subscription income and the payment to Bell Cornwell were the reason for the ca.£2k drop in the cash balance.

Eleanor Grady, Byfleet Village Representative, was asked to respond to a question about donations to the Friends of Byfleet. She explained that the RA supported activity in the villages ie for Christmas in 2021 and that in 2019 for Byfleet this had been a contribution to the Mother and Toddler Group. In 2020 recipients had been the Byfleet Amenities Group for new gazebos, and the Friends of Byfleet Parish Day for Godfrey Chapples' bench.

The accounts had been reviewed and agreed by Alan Fairlie, the Honorary Examiner, who was thanked and re-appointed for the following year.

Approval of the Financial Statement was proposed by Andy Grimshaw, seconded by Wade Pollard.

7. Membership Secretary's Report

Isabelle David, Membership Secretary, referred the meeting to the report which had been circulated.

She had taken over the role from Andy Grimshaw in 2020 just as the pandemic struck and noted the difficulties the pandemic had posed for the delivery of the Newsletter, the collection of subscriptions and the recruitment of new members.

However, thanks to the efforts of Robert Munford, the Newsletter Editor, a bumper electronic edition had been produced, published on the RA website and emailed to members. In total three editions 164, 165 and 166 had been published in this way. These had been well received but it was acknowledged that the format did not suit everyone and illustrated the importance of the hardcopy to the membership. Autumn 2021 saw the re-introduction of hardcopies and Isabelle thanked all the Street Reps who had collected magazines from the drop in or from their Village Representative and then distributed them.

Isabelle thanked those members who had agreed to pay their subscriptions by direct bank transfer and noted that this was now the preferred method of payment. Members were also encouraged to supply email addresses as this was increasingly how the RA were circulating information.

A sterling effort by Street Reps had resulted in subscription receipts rising again and by the end of 2021 the money collected had exceeded that of 2019. Member levels had not quite reached pre-Covid levels and those members who had contributed more than the nominal amount were thanked for their generosity.

Isabelle noted that a number of Street Reps had or were retiring and recruiting replacements was proving to be a challenge, particularly in Byfleet. She encouraged members to see if they could identify new volunteers.

Isabelle had taken over the role of Membership Officer (MO) for Byfleet when the post had recently become vacant but was urgently looking for someone, preferably from the village, to take this role over so that she could concentrate on her other tasks. She was happy to talk through the role with anyone who might be interested.

Lisa Graae, MO for West Byfleet, had stepped down and David Bell had agreed to take this on. John Tiller had come forward to take on the MO role for Pyrford from Andy Grimshaw. Isabelle thanked them both.

8. Resolution re Constitution

A resolution to adopt an amended constitution had been put forward and the new version circulated.

The Chairman explained that changes had been made in a number of areas to improve the way the association worked including holding virtual meetings, the ability to cancel an AGM, proxy voting arrangements, reduction of membership age from 18 to 16.

The resolution was proposed and agreed by unanimous vote.

9. Chairman's Report

The Chairman kept his remarks brief noting that he provided a detailed report in each edition of The Resident.

He commented that, with the approval of the SADPD, the focus for the RA would be any proposals for the development of GB9 and 9a which would be coming out of the Green Belt. The demands this development would put on the local infrastructure would be significant and the RA would be working with Woking Borough Council (WBC) to ensure that the community had the necessary infrastructure, to include roads, health, schools, flooding etc, to support it before any works took place.

WBC would be reviewing their Core Strategy over the next 12 months with an expectation that this would include consultation with the community.

The Chairman thanked the Committee and Street Representatives for their important work and made particular mention of a number of people standing down from their roles.

Keith Creswell, West Byfleet Village Representative, had been an amazing member of the RA for many years and had taken on a number of roles during that time. A replacement was now urgently sought for this key role. He had also been instrumental in putting together vision statements on the use of public space and transport. These had been very ambitious in scope but were something to aim for.

Lisa Graae, Assistant Membership Officer, had carried out this role for both West Byfleet and Byfleet before Isabelle had taken it over. Lisa was thanked for her contribution over the years.

Penny Hoskyn, Joint Chair of West Byfleet Neighbourhood Forum, had been instrumental in bringing the Neighbourhood Plan for West Byfleet to fruition. A force of nature, she had been a tremendous support to Wade Pollard as joint Chair. Penny's contribution to the work of the RA and the Forum would be missed.

The Chairman also wished to thank Woking Borough Council employees in particular who he had found to be immensely helpful, approachable and accessible. He had seen this in action in the recent webcasts where roadshow feedback had been discussed. He also noted how they had ensured that not one homeless person in Woking had been on the streets during the pandemic; all had been found shelter.

10. Neighbourhood Forums

i. Byfleet

Andrew Weiss, newly elected Chair of the Byfleet Neighbourhood Forum, gave a brief summary of activity since the last meeting in 2019.

Lynn Cozens, as Chair, had worked with the Forum committee to bring the draft Byfleet Neighbourhood Plan to WBC in early 2020. WBC had responded with a 10-page letter containing 37 comments and a number of policies. Fiona Syrett had taken over from Lynn but work on amendments to the Plan had been slowed down by Covid and the designation had lapsed. Re-Designation had been applied for at the end of 2021 and a committee was now being put together with the aim of getting the plan to WBC for adoption by the end of 2022. An AGM would be held on 17 January 2022, following which work on the plan would start in earnest. Meetings had already been held with WBC and West Byfleet Neighbourhood Forum and one with Pyrford was also in the planning. Expert professional advice would be sought from planning consultants.

Andrew wished to thank Lynn and Fiona for all their hard work and input into Forum activities.

ii. West Byfleet

Wade Pollard updated the meeting on the work of the West Byfleet Neighbourhood Forum noting that detailed reports could be found in The Resident. He wished to thank Penny Hoskyn who, as the founding Chair, had done an enormous amount of work with the Forum and the Neighbourhood Plan.

Liaison with the developers of the Sheer House development had taken place over the last 18 months and would continue with the next meeting planned for the end of January 2022. Wade informed the meeting that the development would be called 'Botanical Place'.

The Forum had been disappointed to have lost the argument over the removal of the land at West Hall from the Green Belt but would work with the landowner and developers to ensure the best possible outcome.

The Forum were working on plans for using the NCIL money and had already tested the process by making some improvements on the recreation ground eg picnic tables. The provision of a community centre in West Byfleet had long been a passion of both Wade and Penny and, with developments in the village expected to increase the population by 50%, would be much needed. The Forum would be meeting with Julie Fisher, WBC Chief Executive, to discuss progressing this project.

iii. Pyrford

Andy Grimshaw had taken over from Geoff Geaves as Chair in 2019. He thanked Geoff for his hard work with the Forum.

Andy thanked the RA for the annual grant which covered the day-to-day costs but noted that fundraising activities had also been organised, the most recent of which had been the Wildside Tea Party in October 2021. This had proved immensely popular with tickets selling out very quickly. Another was planned!

Andy noted that the Pyrford Neighbourhood Plan had been re-designated in 2020. The key activity of the Forum had been the Heritage Conservation Assessment which it was hoped would be completed by the end of 2022. The Forum also monitored planning applications within the village and commented as appropriate.

The Forum had ca £28k of NCIL money to spend in the village, some of which had been put towards the recent, very successful, refurbishment of Pyrford Cricket Club.

11. Elections

Notification of the Annual General Meeting having been printed in The Resident, on the RA website and via email to members, the following, nominated and seconded, have offered themselves for election:

Chair	Stewart Dick
Vice	Ian Mason
Secretary	Lynette Davies
Membership Secretary	Isabelle David
Treasurer	Dharma Sivarajasingham
Editor	Robert Munford
Planning Officer	Stewart Dick
Rights of Way Officer	Marion Malcher
Health & Wellbeing Officer	Carol Leong-Son
Committee member	Sheila Carroll
Environment Communication Officer	vacant

Village Representatives:

Byfleet:	Eleanor Grady	Deputy	Jean-Pierre Frossard
West Byfleet:	vacant	Deputy	Liz Leese & Emma Slaymaker
Pyrford:	Andy Grimshaw	Deputy	Ernie Elliott

These appointments were agreed without contest.

As a matter of record (not being elected):

Ex Officio Committee members:

Byfleet Neighbourhood Forum	Andrew Weiss
West Byfleet Neighbourhood Forum	Wade Pollard
Pyrford Neighbourhood Forum	Andy Grimshaw

Other Officers:

Website Officer	Anita Flavell
Village Membership Officers	Isabelle David (Byfleet), David Bell (West Byfleet), John Tiller (Pyrford)

12. Any Other Business

There were no items of other business. The above formal meeting was closed.

The meeting's Guest Speaker, Julie Fisher, Chief Executive of Woking Borough Council was introduced and warmly welcomed.

Julie gave a very interesting talk on a range of issues, including the green belt, waste, finances, developments, environment, town centre masterplan, climate, and regeneration projects. Council priorities included the community's mental health and wellbeing.

She explained her ambition to develop a corporate strategy with a clear direction informed by residents. To this end a Residents Panel had been set up and a Community Forum created. These had been well supported with both face-to-face meetings and online events. Feedback would be presented to the Executive with the aim to have the strategy approved in March 2022. It was pleasing to note the Council intention to focus on local communities.

As far as finances were concerned, the Council was looking to make savings and proposed to do this by delivering services more efficiently. She noted the high borrowing levels but stressed that these were for investment within the borough.

Julie answered a number of questions on finances, the council's approach to climate change, town centre masterplan and local developments.

Ian Mason, newly elected Vice Chair, thanked Julie for her engaging talk and proposed a vote of thanks.

The meeting closed at 21:05