

LANGSTONE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING held at Bosmere School at 7:00pm on Wednesday 18 May 2016

Chaired by Mrs Elaine Kilbey

- **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The Chairman welcomed Councillors Ray Bolton – Hampshire County Council, Jackie Branson and Tim Pike – Havant Borough Council, together with twenty one members of the Association. Seven apologies for absence were received and recorded.

- **MINUTES OF THE 2015 AGM**

The minutes had previously been agreed by the Committee. Formal approval was requested and agreed. The minutes were then signed by the Chairman.

- **MATTERS ARISING AND NOT ON THE AGENDA**

None

- **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending, before reporting on her first year in office.

The **Langbrook Farm Restaurant** has proved a popular venue and at times has generated unpleasant odours. Improvements have been made and John Gowen monitors the potential nuisance, reporting as necessary to Mr Moss at HBC.

Latterly, the **Premier Inn** has opened and its affect on parking and traffic generation will be monitored. Planning Conditions about the landscaping and the footpath improvements west of Langbrook stream have been implemented. The remaining Conditions about road safety matters are under active review with officers of Havant Borough Council.

Safety concerns expressed about the dual use of the **Billy Trail**, at last year's AGM, were taken up with HBC. Signs have now been erected at a number of junctions to remind all users of the need for care. Some comments have been passed about their size, but the fact they exist indicates intent to achieve consideration of others.

The Committee organised one **Social Event** during the year, focussed around a talk by Colin Hedley. The subject was Three Harbours Beef and provided an in-depth view of the value of our open spaces and coastal marshes in terms of the environment, wildlife, plants and the rearing of animals. Held at Langstone Sailing Club and attended by some thirty members, it was deemed a success. The Committee will seek to arrange another event later in the year.

This year has seen the launch of the **LRA Website** – www.langstone.org We are indebted to Alyson Griffin, who has undertaken the task of designing and setting up the website. Your Committee has been discussing the project for many months and following several meetings about the content and format, it was launched. It is a live facility and

changes and updates do take place. Our Secretary acts as the filter for content and Alyson implements the alterations. Alyson Griffin lives on Hayling Island, so is not a member of the LRA. She continues to help us, but if there is a member who would be prepared to take on the role of webmaster, please contact one of the Committee members. We hope you enjoy the website and please feel welcome to suggest material, which might be appropriate to include.

Finally, thanks were expressed to all those members who go around collecting subscriptions each year and distribute hard copies of the newsletters. Their help and loyal service is greatly appreciated. Others are welcome to volunteer.

- **TREASURER'S REPORT**

"I am pleased to report that Owen Davies, our Honorary Independent Examiner, found the Association's financial statements presented a true and fair view of the state of its finances and the Committee has subsequently approved them. Copies of these accounts are laid before the members attending the AGM for their information.

Income and Expenditure Account

The first thing to note is that the Association made a surplus of £266 this year, which was £113 less than the previous year. The principle reason for this is the new expense line "website" at a cost of £138.30. It ought to have cost considerably more, but for the generosity of Alyson Griffin, its creator, who would not accept any payment. As a token of our gratitude we have paid a total of £100 to two charities of her choice. The only direct cost of the website is that of registering the domain name.

This was partly offset by a reduction in the cost of printing and stationery, compared with the previous year when we stocked up on ink cartridges and printing paper.

We continue to support the Friends of Chichester and Langstone Harbours, as well as the Havant Civic Society.

The other items of expenditure to note are the notice board, which required a new window after the original one was vandalised, and our newsletters. These expanded through the year from a page and a half of black print in the spring to four sides of full colour by Christmas. The newsletters are printed "in house", so their reported cost is a notional one transferred from printing and stationery based on what an outside agency would charge. I estimate the latest newsletter, (which will be included in the next set of accounts) with three colour pictures over four pages would cost 35p each. It is a considerable expense, but one your Committee feels is justified as they are much appreciated by our residents in their current form.

Income from subscriptions is a little down on the previous year at £680, but membership remains remarkably high at about two thirds of the total number of households in Langstone. Fortunately, in view of the current cost of printed newsletters and the efforts needed to deliver them, the number of members who now receive newsletters and other communications by email is now well over 90%.

Balance Sheet

The balance sheet indicates that the Association held £316 in its current account at year end, £4,622 in its business instant access account and £20 in cash.

There was an additional £1,077 in a special account, which the Association holds on behalf of its affiliate, the Langstone Conservation Group. These funds are credited to a designated reserve, the "Langstone Conservation Group Project Fund". Disbursements of £197 from this reserve were made for the LCG's membership of The Conservation

Volunteers and its insurance costs, which will be reimbursed under a new arrangement through The Conservation Volunteers by Havant Borough Council.

There has been no call, so far, on the £100 held in the Langstone Flood Watch Fund, so it remains available for whenever it may be required.

Current assets less current liabilities total £5,930, which is represented by the general fund plus designated reserves.

With a general fund of over £4,750 represented wholly in cash, it is apparent that our Association is in a strong position to carry out its objectives. Your Committee sees no reason to change the current rate of annual subscription of £2 per household, which will therefore apply in the forthcoming subscription year. “

The accounts are appended in full to these minutes.

Questions were invited:-

- Felicity Coutts asked about the purpose of the flood watch fund. The answer: financial support if and when an emergency flood occurs.
- John Gowen asked what is the cost of monitoring the website. The answer: currently, simply the annual renewal of the domain name – www.langstone.org
- Derek Holmes referred to the loss of open space in Langstone and asked if the LRA could purchase the “Langstone Field”, the one between the Billy Line and the Mill. Associated questions arose. The answer was “no” – the LRA is not constituted to own land or buildings.
- Angela Armstrong asked about the exact field. The answer: as c) above. Councillor Bolton reported the field, east of Langstone Road, is owned by Hampshire County Council and leased to Mr Young. He has grazed cattle there, but not currently because the boundary is not secure. The fencing is damaged.
- Derek Holmes asked about the costs of the Venturi House, reporting an offer from the local Tesco Manager to provide grant funding. The answer: David Barrett will comment in his report later.

- **ELECTION OF COMMITTEE**

All current Committee members have indicated their willingness to serve for the coming year. The re-election of the Committee en bloc was proposed by Cecily Hughes, seconded by Jane Thurstan and then carried unanimously. The Secretary noted that a vacancy exists on the Committee and asked members to consider volunteering.

- **ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND INDEPENDENT EXAMINER**

The current post holders, Elaine Kilbey as Chairman, David Pattenden as Secretary, Neil Paterson as Treasurer have offered to remain in post and Owen Davies has agreed to continue as the Independent Examiner. There were no other nominations.

David Barrett announced he is to stand down as the Langstone Conservation Group Co-ordinator after this meeting and that Mike Combes has volunteered to take over this role. The re-election of these Officers of the Association was proposed by Angela Armstrong, seconded by John Gowen and then carried unanimously.

- **LANGSTONE CONSERVATION GROUP REPORT**

David Barrett reported that our main activity is litter collection – on the first Monday morning of the month along Langbrook Stream (Tesco) and on the third Monday along the Billy Trail and Langstone Harbour Foreshore. The quantity of litter collected has decreased, but we have recovered tyres, wheels, a mountain bike, credit cards and recently a ten pound note. The task usually takes around two hours and new volunteers are welcome to join us.

The Venturi House (VH) remains our main project. Our interest to open it began in 2013 as a possible rest/information point where three long distance paths and the Billy Trail meet just before it. Inspection was promising, but conditions of the owners, HBC, were not practical. Contact with HBC was resumed last year when it was clear that they wished to dispose of VH completely. Reinspection of VH showed more water penetration from the roof. Our plan was to leave the building open to dry out the structure. The public toilets adjacent to the Ship Inn had been left open for some thirty years without problem, but they were vandalised over the Christmas period.

Recent events, with the help of Vicky Offen of HBC Estates Department, are more positive. The Borough wishes to dispose of the building and has offered it to the LCG for a four month probationary period on a free licence, provided that a lockable gate is fitted to restrict access. This will allow some basic work to be done with the building insurance continued by HBC and after the four months we can decide whether to accept it as a gift from HBC or return it to them.

A lockable gate has been sourced and this will be fitted when the licence is signed, so that the project can move forward under the expert guidance of Mike Combes and J J Price.

At the conclusion of this report Derek Holmes stood to express thanks to David for his work as leader of the group for the last eleven years and as a member for sixteen. He recalled a long list of successful projects undertaken for the benefit of Langstone. In presenting a gift to David, Derek Holmes described him as a stalwart member of all conservation groups continuing a tradition set by the founder Peter Turnbull.

The gifts were: a glass bottom pewter tankard, photographs of the group by Felicity Coutts and a bouquet of flowers for Deidre Barrett.

- **HCC/HBC COUNCILLORS**

The councillors were offered the opportunity to inform members of current developments in the Langstone area of St Faith's Ward. David Pattenden prompted discussion by referring to recent correspondence with both Hampshire County Council and Havant Borough Council expressing residents' worries about traffic on the A3023 Langstone Road. He reminded the councillors about the Section 106 Agreement, part of the planning approval for the former Bosmere Field, which required a traffic survey and road safety improvements.

Councillor Ray Bolton responded by asking if residents think the traffic is worse, if there is a greater volume of traffic and whether we think speed is greater. The answer was in the affirmative. He agreed to ask officers about the survey requiring one that is not simply a vehicle count, but one looking at use patterns and speed. He noted the speed limit is 40mph on this road and only 30mph on the A259 to Emsworth commenting that the speed of vehicles, at times of low volume, is above the speed limit. The relative accident rates and the need for police enforcement will also have to be considered. Nigel Armstrong reiterated concerns about the problem of speed and the dangers inherent in joining the main carriageway from side roads.

Angela Armstrong commented that the recent resurfacing work on the slip road had reduced road noise considerably. However, it does not extend fully to the roundabout and she asked why. Councillor Bolton said this was a Highways England matter and that perhaps the LRA should direct a question to that organisation.

The Chairman made reference to a consultation about closing the Hayling Island Amenity/Recycling Centre. She expressed concerns that this would add further traffic to the Langstone Road, overload pressure on the Harts Farm Way site and lead to an increase in fly tipping on Hayling Island.

Councillor Bolton replied saying the subject was under review at the highest level involving relevant members and members of Parliament. He reported one idea of making a small charge for using the facility. John Gowen remarked this seemed a disguised method of raising more Council Tax.

Councillor Bolton next gave an update of current major issues exercising members at County and Borough level. Firstly, however, he expressed his pleasure at the general appearance of the Langstone area, reflecting he said the pride and care taken of it by the residents.

The main issues reported upon were:-

- The Boundary Commission review of Hampshire County Council's divisional boundaries and
- The County Council backing of the formation of a new Unitary Authority, which would see District and Borough Councils amalgamated with Hampshire County Council.

The Boundary Commission is seeking to balance more evenly the electoral divisions across Hampshire. St Faith's is the third largest and predicted to get larger. By redrawing the boundaries, numbers could be better distributed. Details are available on the Boundary Commission website reviews@lgbce.org.uk and the consultation closes on 6 June 2016. Councillor Bolton urged members to read the proposals and comment.

The proposed Unitary Authority is part of the Government's wish to devolve more powers to larger Authorities and thereby reduce the cost of Local Government. A formal publication is planned for later in the year.

Councillor Bolton commented that both sets of proposals are still changing week by week and no conclusions have yet been reached.

From the floor John Gowen commented the idea's a nonsense. They are intended to save costs, but will they?

- **OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS**

There were no other formal matters, but several LRA members asked questions:-

Henry Thurstan asked if planning approval had been granted for the works at No 1 Woodbury Avenue. Councillor Pike confirmed approval is granted for the works to the house, but not for the other detached buildings, fencing or pavement crossover. The Chairman advised, since this a private application the LRA has not involved itself in this issue. Councillor Branson pointed out that works must start within a 3 year period of the grant of Planning Approval but, once commenced, there is no fixed end date.

Councillor Pike referred to the vandalised public toilets by the Ship Inn and asked all members to be vigilant and to report any suspicious behaviour to the police. David Barrett expressed concern that this vandalism will have a knock-on effect on plans for the Venturi House.

Asked about the "Railway Cottages" Councillor Pike stated there has been no change to his last report. The Owner intends to carry out full repairs.

Jenny Paterson asked if the Langstone Roundabout is still occupied by a vagrant. Councillor Pike confirmed that it is and that efforts are being made to relocate him.

Nigel Armstrong asked about the structural integrity of the Langstone Road Bridge following the collision it suffered, by an unmanned barge, during the recent storm. Councillor Branson advised HCC had inspected the bridge urgently and confirmed it remains perfectly safe.

Councillor Branson spoke to remind members the litter bins placed around Langstone footpaths are also to be used for dog waste. This needs to be publicised and, if they become full, that should be reported by telephone to Customer Services (telephone number: 023 9244 6019).

Jane Thurstan asked about the roots damaging footpaths. Councillor Pike confirmed the matter is in hand. In many cases there is a legal question of ownership of the path, which needs to be established prior to action. He urged members to report any location where problems are apparent by calling the HBC Customer Services number, as above.

Councillor Branson emphasised the need to report any concerns directly to Customer Services at the Public Plaza, not their local councillor.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 8:41pm

David Pattenden
Secretary
Langstone Residents Association
DGTP/JRP/27 May 2016