

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE STRAWBERRY HILL RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION , HELD ON MONDAY, APRIL 11TH, 2011 AT STRAWBERRY HILL GOLF CLUB

<u>PRESENT</u>	Joint Chairman	Robert Youngs
	Joint Secretaries	Clare Phelps/ Pam Crisp
	Treasurer	John Naish
	Committee members	Teresa Read, Eugene Bacot Mike Allsop, John Armstrong
	Councillors	David Porter
	Police	PC Cameron McKenzie, Safer Neighbourhood Team
	Residents	approximately 25 present

APOLOGIES

Committee members	Bruce Duff
MP	Vince Cable
Councillors	David Marlow, Clare Head
Police	Sgt Rafael Nadal, SNT

Robert Youngs, who chaired the meeting, welcomed everyone to the 46th AGM of the association. PC Cameron McKenzie introduced himself and talked briefly about the role of the Safer Neighbourhood Team.

Robert then asked the meeting to approve the minutes of last years AGM. Charles Owens pointed out that on Page 3 the reference to parking in Wellesley Road should refer to Waldegrave Road. The minutes were signed with this amendment.

Chairman's report – Robert Youngs

In the last few years, it's become usual for someone in this position to report doom and gloom at similar meetings. I'm pleased to be able to tell you that your Association remains in rude health. Our finances are secure, we continue to run our annual events reasonably profitably, the Bulletin goes from strength to strength and the Committee has been exceptionally active fighting local issues on your behalf.

Events

We held our usual stall at the Friends of Strawberry Hill's Music and Fun day in July. We last had a stall at this event in 2008 and the takings were considerably lower last year. We believe that this was because the public entrance had been moved from the gate next to Strawberry Hill House to the College entrance, because the restoration was still in progress. This meant that people did not pass the food stalls (including ours) as they entered and left. We hope that normal service will be resumed this year.

I'd like to thank all those who donated cakes, pavlovas, tarts, millefeuille and also all those who gave up their Sunday afternoon to man the stall.

Our other annual event is the Christmas Carol singing in Wellesley Parade. We collected about £250 which is again considerably lower than last year because attendance was very low due to exceptionally cold weather. For the first time that I can remember, there was snow on the Christmas tree. Despite that, the Mayor, our own Councillor Marlow, opened the event and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves.

Andy Stephens, who leads The Strawberry Hill Singers, has told us that the choir is disbanding, so we will be looking to local schools to replace them this year. We have already had an offer from Alice Dallosso who lives in Grange Avenue and runs the junior choir at Archdeacon Cambridge School.

Despite these tribulations, we were able to make a donation of £250 to the Roy Kinnear Foundation.

The Bulletin

Our newsletter is unusual, possibly unique, for an Association like ours in that it is distributed without charge to every home in the area, three times a year. It is therefore a very effective means of communicating with all our residents, whether they pay the subscription or not.

Three years ago, we redesigned the Bulletin in full colour and took on advertising to finance the extra cost. Last year, such was the demand for advertising and the need for extra space for copy that we added 2 extra pages as an insert. Each issue costs just under £500 to print, we are now raising about £400 in advertising, so that the net cost is about £100 per issue – about 4p per copy. This is actually much lower than the cost of the old, 4-page, black and white Bulletin.

Without our volunteer distributors, this would, of course, be impossible to do at a reasonable cost and I want to thank them all for their uncomplaining assistance. We are still looking for replacement distributors for Pope's Avenue and Alexander Close.

Occasionally we are asked why we don't distribute the Bulletin electronically. Obviously, this would reduce costs dramatically, improve the speed of distribution and enable us to claim a few green credentials.

However, since many people do not regularly access the Internet, or would still prefer a paper copy, we would need to distribute the paper copy to a partial subset of homes in each road and this is very difficult to organise. But most importantly, we believe that paper copies are a far more effective means of communication than electronic documents and that our advertisers would not be prepared to pay so much, so we will continue with 100% paper coverage for the time being.

Planning

It is now exactly 4 years since we first reported the plan to redevelop the Gifford House site. The Contact Centre is now complete, but we are waiting for the Council to decide on the application submitted by Churchill Retirement Living for a block of 29 flats on the site of the derelict building. The design, though large and unimaginative, is at least sympathetic to the adjacent Victorian villas on the Green. The original submission showed a brick finish, but we, and others, have approached the developers, who will now consider an off-white rendered finish to match adjacent properties. We are concerned, however, that the exceptionally small number of 10 parking spaces in the plan will be inadequate, putting further pressure on residents' parking in the immediate area.

Early last year, MKG 3000 submitted an application to erect a 3 metre high illuminated sign on what we call the SHRA garden, next to the footpath to Platform 1 at the station. We believe such a large sign is inappropriate for a residential area and questioned the need for any new signage. Together with other concerned residents, we opposed the application and the Planning Committee rejected it. However, the applicants have again applied for a sign, although this one is slightly smaller and not illuminated. We again opposed it and we also contacted Volvo UK to express our concerns at a company policy which seems to encourage their franchisees to erect obtrusive and unnecessary signage. Their response was that they always cooperate with local planning authorities, but have agreed to meet with MKG 3000 to discuss this particular sign.

While we remain pleased that MKG 3000 continues to operate a successful business in our area and we have no wish to restrict their freedom to advertise as they see fit, we will continue to oppose any such developments in the heart of the village.

We have recently been told of a plan by St James' Primary School to erect a hall in their grounds. Details are sketchy, to say the least but there is a consultation document on their web site. It's well away from Wellesley Road, but some residents in Shaftsbury Way may be affected.

Traffic, parking and travel

Traffic and parking seem to be constant worries to our residents. Here are some of them:

Parking:

- Wellesley Parade and nearby
- Pope's Avenue
- Gifford House (during construction and when complete)
- Shacklegate Lane (student parking)

Traffic:

- Pope's Avenue
- Orford Gardens (possible one-way streets)
- Shacklegate Lane

Road Safety

- Junction of Cross Deep, Waldegrave Road and Strawberry Vale (see recent Bulletin)
- Potholes
- Hatch marks at road junctions and enforcement thereof
- Repainting of yellow lines

Public Transport:

- Campaign for a direct Twickenham to Kingston bus route (ref: Ellen Purton)
- Station booking office opening hours

Cllr Head, who is, as you will know, is currently Cabinet Member for Traffic and Transport, has been invited to our next Committee meeting on 20th June, where we intend to discuss all these issues and any more that you may have and she has accepted. However, I understand that Clare will be the next Mayor of Richmond and will be relinquishing her current responsibilities. We hope that her replacement will be able to attend instead.

Finally, the refurbishment of the station footbridge, which began in September 2009, appears to be complete after refitting the side panels, but you never know.

Subscriptions

In December, we raised our minimum subscription from £3 to £5 per annum. We last raised it in November 2003 so that if we had raised it according to the Retail Prices Index, it would now be about £4. However, an analysis of our costs, which mainly consist of services, shows that they have risen by rather more than the RPI, so we have chosen to avoid another rise in the immediate future and go straight to £5. You can be sure that the Committee is attempting to keep costs down as much as possible and that we will do everything we can to delay another rise for as long as possible.

Local History

Our small area is exceptionally rich in local history. In particular, two of the most important literary figures of the 18th century chose to live here. Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill House has been welcoming visitors from all over the world since the restoration of his "little Gothick castle" was completed last year and it has just reopened after further work over the winter closure.

Our other world-famous monument is Pope's Grotto. Until recently, it was in the ownership of St James' Independent School. Some years ago, they created a Trust to "preserve [it] for the benefit of the people of Twickenham and of the nation". The Trust had commissioned, with the financial assistance of English Heritage, an extensive report to be used as a framework for a possible restoration project.

Ownership passed to Radnor House School last year and they are keen to continue the Trust's activities and in particular to begin restoration and to improve public access, which has been limited to one or two days a year. To this end, the Trustees have been changed to reflect the new

ownership and a working group has been formed to begin fund raising, under the chairmanship of ex-SHRA chairman, Tony Beckles-Willson.

The Trustees are particularly keen to involve the local community so an SHRA Committee member will become a Trustee, together with another resident who is like Tony Beckles Willson, also a local historian. We will be assisting the Trust to raise money in any way that we can, probably in the same way that we have supported to restoration of Strawberry Hill, with publicity and the occasional donations. Although not as spectacularly appealing as Strawberry Hill House, it is world-famous and is the last remaining part of Pope's original villa and we hope that the Trust will be successful in achieving its aims.

And finally, after 19 years of publication, we revised and reprinted our ever-popular history book last year. This cost us £1750 for 500 copies – the largest single item of expenditure for many years. I am delighted to be able to tell you that sales are forging ahead that we are already well on the way to recouping this cost. It is a very profitable venture and this should be apparent in the accounts in future years. Copies are available from the Secretary, Clare Phelps.

Comments on Chairman's report

Charles Owens commented on the options re plans for a new hall at St James's School. He said that some residents in Shaftesbury way would be affected but generally they were sympathetic to the development. He also mentioned parking in Wellesley Parade and suggested this should be restricted early in the day. Finally Charles said that the Twickenham Green Fair would be held on 3rd July and he hoped this would not clash with the Strawberry Hill Fun Day.

John Armstrong referred to the numerous parking sign posts in Pope's Grove and asked if this could be included for discussion with councillors.

Willie Turner commented on the increase in the number of parking spaces on Tower Road and said this makes the road more dangerous. Wellesley Road is also dangerous and he suggested parking should only be allowed on one side. Two CPZ consultations have rejected any controlled parking in the road.

Treasurers Report – John Naish

John pointed out that the accounts are prepared on a cash basis not an accrual one. This has again been a very good year. Cash reserves have fallen by £120 but costs for the reprint of the history book are included. Our contingency was reduced by the printing costs but it is now on its way back up with good sales of the book. Subscription levels have been maintained and the success of the bulletin helps maintain revenue. Variation in timing of council donations makes annual comparison difficult. John proposed thanks to Carol Ruddock for her first class job in auditing the accounts and recommended her re-election. This was approved, seconded by Ros Armstrong. Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Joe Brett and seconded by Margaret Edwards.

Election of SHRA committee

Re-election of the current chairmen was proposed by John Armstrong and seconded by Charles Owens. Robert Youngs proposed the re-election of the rest of the current committee, seconded by Ros Armstrong. Election of two new committee members Sheila Horsham and Charles Owens was proposed John Naish and seconded by Joe Brett.

Any other business

Willie Turner proposed a vote of thanks to the current committee for all their work on behalf of the association.

The meeting closed at 8:20 pm