

PETTS WOOD & DISTRICT RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

**MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY, 23rd MARCH 2010 IN THE MEMORIAL HALL**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mrs Mary Mason	Chairman	Mr Chris Harris
Mr Roger Barber	Treasurer	Mr Chris House
Mrs Janet Guntrip	Secretary	Mr Derek Marrable
		Mr John Pattenden
		Mr Paul Stanley
		Mr Philip Webb

GUESTS:

The Mayor of Bromley, Cllr Doug Auld	Mr John Horam MP
Mr James Cleverly GLA	Cllr Simon Fawthrop
Cllr Tony Owen	Inspector Kevin Smith
Sgt John Kemp & Safer Neighbourhood Team	Mr Tim Betts (National Trust)
Dr Bob Hadley (Crofton RA)	Mr Ray Vaughan (Knoll RA)
Mr John Charsley (PW Business Association)	Mr Richard Kirby (PW Business Association)
Mr Ralph Ambrose (May Fayre Committee)	Ms Sian Spencer Little (ArtsEnhance)
Ms Susan Willans (PW Library)	Mr & Mrs Ken Short

About 80 other Members were present

APOLOGIES:

Mr Sam Pettman (National Trust Warden)	The Chislehurst Society
Mrs Jan Abrahams (Crofton RA)	Mrs Hilary Robson (Knoll RA)
Petts Wood Churches Together	Mrs Margarethe Batteson (Vice-Chairman)
Mrs Anne Willatt (committee member)	Mrs Loretta Wright (committee member)

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The meeting commenced with the arrival of the Worshipful the Mayor of Bromley, Cllr Doug Auld, and the Chairman opened proceedings by welcoming all those present, and particularly our guests. Apologies had been received from those listed above.

1. MINUTES OF LAST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 24th MARCH 2009

The Minutes, copies of which had been available via the website and on the top table before the meeting, were taken as a true and accurate record. Mr Marrable proposed that they should be adopted, Mr Pattenden seconded the proposition and it was carried by the meeting.

2. CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT

Mrs Mason said that as the Annual Report had been published in the March Gazette she would like instead to cover some key points from the year and from the Vision for Petts Wood results. Her first year as Chairman had been an interesting one, with planning and traffic flow/parking remaining the main features of the changes taking place in Petts Wood and the retail area being the main focus of these proposed changes.

Planning Applications for change of use from A1 (retail) to A3 and A5, which allowed premises to be used as restaurants or food takeaways, had increased and many of late had been refused. In terms of the Vision for Petts Wood results, for which 298 people returned the questionnaire, 89% of our respondents felt that it was better to have a shop in use rather than empty. The most wanted shops were greengrocers / farm produce, DIY / hardware and haberdashery, most of which had existed in Petts Wood at some time in the past. More clothes and fashion shops, children's toys and even a department store were also suggested.

Members preferred not to see more takeaways and fast food, betting shops and restaurants appearing in Petts Wood and considered that there were enough hair and beauty, coffee and charity shops as well. The committee's coverage of planning seemed to be along the right lines, with many more references to Areas of Special Residential Character in applications and decisions. We monitored any proposed developments in the area including back garden development, with an emphasis on our comments relating to whether the proposals were in character with the surrounding area.

Traffic and parking 31% of respondents felt that we needed more traffic calming measures, but cycle lanes were liked and disliked equally. There were no conclusive answers with regard to improving traffic flow, although 11% suggested another railway bridge. Respondents were happy with our input on these issues.

Vision for Petts Wood In general members appreciated our links with our local SNT and our reporting on crime. On the whole it was felt that the Association was doing a good job and that the membership fee was good value for money. Full results of the survey would be published in the Gazette in the coming months.

The Gazette The magazine, our mouthpiece, continued from strength to strength, but following Ken Short's departure to pastures new he was proving a hard act to follow. Paul Stanley had stepped in to hold the fort until a permanent Editor could be found. Despite many requests we were still looking for an Editor to manage a team of assistants and continue the high standards we had enjoyed to date. The committee had been considering why we could not attract someone to take on this role and one reason could be the need to commit each month to producing to a deadline for the printers. In terms of hours committed to the role, an estimate was approximately 15 hours per month (approx half an hour per day every day). Mr Stanley had agreed to co-edit for a while to ensure smooth transition, but this still left the problem of finding someone.

One option was to offer an honorarium in recognition of the commitment required and the importance we placed on the continuity of the Gazette to a high standard. The Gazette was much appreciated and our members would not want it to discontinue. An amount of £1,200pa was being considered and this was no less important in maintaining the Association's aims than the Secretary's honorarium. Mrs Mason urged members to come forward if they thought they could help and the committee would be happy to discuss the matter further. Similarly the committee was grateful to those people who had come forward to fill the vacancies on the committee.

In summary, Mrs Mason said that the last year had helped confirm the direction that the Association should be travelling in and it was hoped that with a strong committee we could continue to consult and engage with our partners and maintain our reputation as a respected organisation.

Mrs Mason commended her report to the meeting and asked that it should be adopted in conjunction with the proposal for an honorarium for the editorial role. Mrs Guntrip proposed that the Chairman's report should be adopted, Mr Webb seconded the proposal and it was accepted by the meeting.

3. TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer was pleased to present the Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2009 which were published in the March Gazette.

Mr Barber reported that in 2009 income had increased by 22% whereas expenditure actually decreased, albeit only marginally by 1.5%. The increase in subscriptions approved at last year's AGM provided a 50% uplift and advertising revenue increased by 9%, following the 63% increase the previous year. However, income from subscriptions still did not cover the cost of printing the Gazette but the shortfall was more than made up from advertising, with the excess covering general expenses and most of the donations. The Treasurer therefore proposed not to recommend any change to this year's subscription. Membership records were, to some extent, updated by the information passed on by our Road Stewards, without whom we would have great difficulty in functioning and Mr Barber wished to thank them all for their fine work on our behalf. The Data Protection Act, one part of which stipulates that any changes should be made in a timely manner, strictly controls this information and, with that in mind, the committee would be asking Road Stewards to collect subscriptions by no later than the end of July rather than September as previously.

Income from sales of *A History of Petts Wood* decreased by 61% but this was not quite what it seemed. The system Mr Barber inherited accounted for the total proceeds of sales as income but took no consideration of the supply of unsold books. As soon as the current edition went on sale, he implemented a new system of accounting whereby sale proceeds of books were apportioned between return of capital and profit with only the latter shown as income and thereby liable to Corporation Tax. Unsold books were valued at cost and now appeared on the balance sheet as an asset. Sales remained steady year on year and 2009 was no exception, but the change in accounting gave a more accurate position and accounted for the apparent vast drop in income last year. Record low interest rates also had an effect and income decreased by 44%. Mr Barber had anticipated a significant drop in interest rates, although not at the rate it happened, and he had taken steps to mitigate it by fixing as much of the reserve as he felt he reasonably could at 6.25%. However, the fixed account matured and he then had to contend with current rates. He was able to fix a further tranche of funds until later this year but at a considerably lower rate than previously.

The prime reason for the decrease in expenditure was that, although our printing contract was due for renewal, the anticipated increase in the cost of printing did not materialise as our printer decided that no change was necessary. Our provision for Corporation Tax increased partly because of increased advertising revenue and partly because donations to registered charities were fewer than the previous year. Donations to registered charities could be offset against liability to Corporation Tax. The main beneficiaries of our donations were the May Fayre, the Memorial Hall, Petts Wood Business Association, Petts Woodstock, Council for Music in Hospitals and National Trust. At our last meeting the committee agreed again to support the May Fayre, the Memorial Hall and Petts Woodstock with similar donations in 2009. Last year we paid for four concerts in the children's ward at the PRUH and this year this would be increased to five. Other donations which were made later in the year (e.g. the Business Association for Christmas festivities) would be considered by the committee nearer the time.

The difference between income and expenditure gave a surplus of £1,124 but after deducting donations this became a deficit of £1212 and resulted in a fall in the General Reserve to £14,533, of which £4,123 was represented by the stock of unsold books.

Mr Barber commended his report to the meeting. Mr Stuart Wood of Crescent Drive asked how the Treasurer ensured the propriety of the depository with which he placed the Association funds. Mr Barber said that he tended to use the larger more secure institutions, so that we were covered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme, rather than try to get a better rate elsewhere. Mr Wood said that he thought only individuals were covered under this scheme, but Mr Ralph Ambrose from Petts Wood War Memorial Trust confirmed that the Association would be covered in the event of a default. There being no further questions, Mr House proposed that the Accounts should be adopted and that the subscription should remain at £3 for a further year, Mr Stanley seconded the proposal and it was carried by the meeting.

4. ELECTION OF OFFICERS, COMMITTEE AND AUDITOR

Before proceeding with the election of the committee Mrs Mason mentioned some changes since the last AGM. There had been three resignations: Mrs Margarethe Batteson, Mrs Anne Willatt and Mrs Laurretta Wright, and as a result there were vacancies on the committee. Mrs Mason was pleased that several people had come forward to offer their help in the last month and the committee would be meeting them and co-opting those that still wished to join. All nominees had been proposed and seconded in the March Gazette and the officers were duly elected: Mary Mason (Chairman), Paul Stanley (Vice-Chairman), Roger Barber (Treasurer) and Janet Guntrip (Secretary). The rest of the committee was then elected en bloc: Chris Harris, Chris House, Derek Marrable, John Pattenden and Phil Webb.

Mr Fred Dale was prepared to continue as Auditor for another year and Mrs Mason proposed that he should be so elected, Mr Stoneham seconded the proposal and it was carried by the meeting.

5. ELECTION OF LIFE MEMBERS

Ken Short The Chairman reminded the meeting that Mr Short took over as editor of the Gazette in 2007 and remained in the role until August 2009. He expanded the Gazette by broadening its appeal to the wider community and he built up relationships with contributors from which Paul Stanley was now benefiting. He would be remembered for his warmth and enthusiasm and the Gazette had become a powerful medium under his guidance. The committee was recommending that Ken Short should be made a

Life Member and Mrs Mason put the proposal to the meeting. Mr Webb seconded the proposal and it was approved nem con. The Chairman presented Mr Short with a framed certificate and he thanked the meeting for the honour. He had been touched by the Association's farewell gift of a caricature by Colin Earl which had pride of place in his new home. He wished the Association and the Gazette well in the future.

Mrs Anne Willatt Mrs Mason listed Mrs Willatt's achievements on the committee which included a brief spell as Chairman as well as Vice-Chairman. She was born and brought up in Petts Wood which had proved invaluable to the committee and they wished to mark her tireless efforts for the Association over the last 12 years by recommending her for Life Membership. Mrs Mason put the proposal to the meeting, Mr House seconded it and it was approved nem con. Unfortunately Mrs Willatt could not attend tonight, so the Secretary would ensure that she received her framed certificate.

Before moving on to the next item the Chairman wished to say a few words about Mrs Laretta Wright who had recently moved to Locksbottom and was not standing for re-election. She joined the committee in 2007 as Editorial Assistant and had brought a younger perspective to our deliberations. She had set up numerous new advertisements for the Gazette with speed and efficiency and was adept at proof-reading the Gazette every month, which she had offered to continue to do. She had also represented the Association on the May Fayre committee and all her help and support would be missed. The committee had a bouquet of flowers and a small token to present to her, if she managed to get to the meeting later.

6. GUEST SPEAKER – THE MAYOR OF BROMLEY

The Chairman introduced the Worshipful the Mayor of Bromley, Petts Wood & Knoll ward councillor, Doug Auld, who spoke to the meeting on his experiences during the year as Mayor.

7. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Before throwing the meeting open Mrs Mason invited several guests to say a few words:

John Horam Mr Horam was standing down at the General Election after 18 years as MP for Orpington. He wished to congratulate the Association on being a formidable organisation which worked hard to maintain the quality of life in Petts Wood. As a former journalist he considered the Gazette to be an extraordinary publication and of an extremely high standard. A highlight of his 18 years was the Association's 75th anniversary when he was presented with a cartoon of himself which hung on his wall at home and remained frozen in time. He admired the standard which the Association achieved which was a model of what could be done and he wished the Association good luck in the future.

Sgt John Kemp Sgt Kemp said that he and the Safer Neighbourhood Team continued to work very hard to keep Petts Wood safe and secure. The SNT had pledged to visit every home in the ward over the next few months to offer a free crime prevention survey and also to give residents an opportunity to mention any problems or questions they might have.

Ralph Ambrose Mr Ambrose was on the May Fayre committee and was Events Manager for the Petts Wood War Memorial Trust. He had been involved with the May Fayre for 3 or 4 years and it was a great community event. It had been growing for over a quarter of a century and was originally organised by the Ways and Means Committee of the War Memorial Trust. When the committee disbanded, five organisations came together to put on the next May Fayre. There were now seven involved: PWDRA, Petts Wood Business Association, the May Queen Group, the Safer Neighbourhood Team, Bromley Council, the RNLI and Petts Wood War Memorial Trust. This year's Fayre would be bigger and better with many different events, including a hog roast. The whole event was organised by an army of volunteers and he urged members to spend some time at the Fayre on the day.

Richard Kirby As a member of the Business Association Mr Kirby said a few words about the Petts Wood Gold Card scheme. The Gazette had been very helpful in publicising the scheme and a small feature was appearing each month. Businesses would be rotating offers and each month there would be a new offer. The winner of the first monthly draw would be announced in the April Gazette which was out at the weekend. The Gold Card helped to keep the high street vibrant and Mr Kirby urged residents to continue with support and input of ideas.

Lisa Allen Ms Allen from the Council was in charge of the parking review in Petts Wood. It was six months since the results of the parking survey were put into practice and the Council was about to start a

review of the changes. They were consulting with the Association and ward councillors to formulate a questionnaire which would be delivered to every house in the area. All decisions would be made on what residents said, as the Council had no agenda of its own. Once the amendments had been decided, there would be an exhibition in the Memorial Hall. Mrs Mason thanked her and said that we would keep our members informed via the Gazette.

Sian Spencer-Little Ms Spencer-Little was delighted that the Association was prepared to continue funding concerts for the children's ward at the PRUH. The concerts were arranged for children from 0 to 16 years of age and were designed to make their hospital experience as pleasant as possible. There was a display of photographs from a recent concert on the board at the back of the hall which showed children who had been bed-bound for some weeks. A harpist and flautist had taken their instruments along and one of the children communicated for the first time since he had entered the hospital. Ms Spencer-Little thanked the Association for their support and for agreeing to fund an extra concert.

Susan Willans Ms Willans said that the library continued to introduce new initiatives. They had started Books Aloud for Key Stage 1 children after school and a reading group for Key Stage 2. Ms Willans thanked the Association for the publicity in the Gazette for the coffee afternoons. Since they had been publicised both in the Gazette and through posters displayed in the local business premises, numbers attending had risen to 20-30 people. An armchair Pilates class was scheduled for this Thursday at 3 pm, and there was also a computer club which gave older people a chance to learn basic computer skills one-to-one or in groups. Ms Willans reported that there were to be further changes in the coming year and they hoped to introduce extra initiatives.

At this point Mrs Mason thanked all the speakers and asked members for questions to the committee or our guests.

Public toilets Mr Murphy of Sherborne Road asked about the proposed closure of the public toilets in Station Square. Cllr Fawthrop assured the meeting that our ward councillors were determined that the toilets would remain open and had opposed closure, as long as there was nothing better available to replace them. The suggestion was that local businesses should make their toilets available to residents, so that the public toilets could be closed to save the Council money. Mr Charsley from Petts Wood Business Association said that 95% of local businesses were totally opposed to opening up their toilets to the general public, so it was unlikely that anything would be happening for the foreseeable future. Mr Gillies of Chislehurst Road was adamant that the toilets should not be closed and Mrs Williams of Beaumont Road said that they were in the heart of Station Square and ideally situated. Matters were not helped by the fact that the toilets on the station platform were permanently closed. Mr Wood of Crescent Drive pointed out that there would be no facilities available anyway, once the shops closed at night. Mrs Mason promised to keep our members up to date with the situation through the Gazette.

Petts Wood Road Mrs Crickmar of Petts Wood Road was concerned that under the new scheme parking was being allowed in Petts Wood Road which was a main thoroughfare. Cars had problems negotiating their way between the parked cars and she was sure that emergency vehicles would have a problem finding a way through. Cllr Owen said that residents in Petts Wood Road were not happy with the new parking scheme and he suggested that there should be a road meeting with Lisa Allen to discuss what they would like. He was concerned that residents' views were obscured when they came out of their drives because of parked cars and traffic bays might be an advantage, making sure that cars were parked well away from the drives. It was a dangerous road because of the speed which some cars reached - up to 60 mph. Mrs Crickmar pointed out that some of the parked cars had come from as far away as Sevenoaks and were there all day. Cllr Owen reminded the meeting to complete the Council questionnaire when it was available so that Ms Allen knew what the majority wanted. Unfortunately residents in Petts Wood Road had differing views.

Former Woolworths site Mrs Waters of Crescent Drive asked what was to happen with the former Woolworths site. Cllr Fawthrop said that he understood that the current plan was to rebuild the premises and have shops on the ground floor and offices above, but there was no information available so the councillors did not actually know whether there was a buyer or not. Mrs Williams asked whether they had permission to demolish the premises before there was a buyer, as it was a potential danger to the public. Cllr Fawthrop said that planning permission to demolish the building had been approved. Mr Kirby of Smartypants asked if there was anything that could be done about the site as it was presently an eyesore and was detracting from the general street scene. Cllr Fawthrop promised to look into this.

Former Dunstonian garage Mr Button of Petts Wood Road asked what was to happen to the site since the garage closed. Cllr Owen said that there was no news as yet but he understood that it was intended to build social housing there. Mr Stanley queried 'social' housing, as Jack Kemsley had told him that it was to be 'affordable' housing, but Cllr Owen thought they were the same. Mrs Guntrip asked if the plans which had been approved a few years ago were still valid and Cllr Owen thought that they were out of date. Mrs Jeffery of Sutherland Avenue asked about the right of way which had been enjoyed by residents for many years. Cllr Owen said that if it was an established right of way (which was in use for more than 20 years) then residents would have a case to keep it. He suggested that it would be worth the committee's while to approach the Council and inform them that there had been a right of way through the Dunstonian premises for over 20 years without any gate having been installed at any time. Mrs Mason asked assembled members if they would like the committee to pursue this and the meeting agreed.

Colin Earl Mr Paine of Grosvenor Road recommended Colin Earl as one of Petts Wood's 'unsung heroes'. He had delighted us for years with the front covers of the Gazette and he also ran the Petts Wood Art Group which was to have an exhibition at the May Fayre. The meeting was in complete agreement and Mrs Mason said that he had been a good friend to the Association.

Road resurfacing Mr Waters of Crescent Drive wished to congratulate the Council's contractors on doing a good job of resurfacing the roads since the harsh winter. The surface was extremely smooth. Cllr Fawthrop said that some of the resurfacing was being done with money which had been set aside in last year's budget for the work.

Recycling Mrs Imhof of Wood Ride said that she was part of the borough's food waste trial and had found maggots in her food waste during the hot weather last summer. Cllr Fawthrop said that the trials had been very successful and recycling had gone up considerably as a result. Councillors were anxious to get comments from residents about the trials which had been welcomed. Mrs Thompson of Woodland Way said that she had had to buy another green box because it was only collected once a fortnight and she found she had too much waste for one box. This meant that she had a lot of containers and there had been general comments about the proliferation of boxes. Cllr Fawthrop said that the food waste trial involved collecting non-perishable waste once a fortnight and the perishable food waste and paper once a week. He suggested that residents should crush as much of the green box waste as possible so that it took up less space. Mrs Leyland of Birchwood Road said that since the Council had gone over to compostable bags from the original brown paper bags there should not be such a problem with maggots. It was pointed out that plastic, tins and glass were no longer separated in the green box and Cllr Fawthrop explained that they were sorted by machine at the depot.

GLA Mr James Cleverly reported that he had been given a new job since last year when he was Youth Ambassador for the Mayor of London and he was now Chairman of the London Waste and Recycling Board. Bromley was in the top five boroughs for recycling and the food trials had been very successful. Mr Cleverly offered to write an article for the Gazette explaining what he would be doing in his new position and where our rubbish was to be sent. The GLA wanted to deal with all of London's waste and not ship it off to distant landfill sites or to the Far East.

Chislehurst Road bridge Mr Taylor of Heathside asked for an update on the Chislehurst Road bridge. There were plans to start work on the bridge but the scheme would not be in place until the end of 2011 if funding became available. There had been an application to park some of the work vehicles in the woods on National Trust land.

In conclusion the Chairman thanked our Road Stewards and Distributors who gave their time freely to the Association and particularly Richard Doré, our main Distributor. She also thanked the committee who had given her such support during the year and had worked tirelessly for the good of the Association. She thanked guests and members for attending the meeting and invited them to enjoy the wine and refreshments which had been supplied by a local resident, Nicky Holmes. The formal business of the meeting closed at 9.43 p.m.