

WELWYN PLANNING & AMENITY GROUP

(Registered Charity No. 272277)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

THURSDAY 3RD FEBRUARY 2022

The Pavillion, Ottway Walk, Welwyn at 7:45PM

Present: WPAG committee: Sandra Saunders (Chair), Russell Haggar (Vice Chair), Howard Norfolk (Treasurer), Karen Chater, David Cheek, John Roper, Caroline Tinner, Geoffrey Yates,

Guests: Graham Baskerville, Andy Chudzik, Heath Cooper, Raul Curiel, Keith Norman, Karen Springthorpe, Mary Williamson.

1. **Apologies** for absence were received from: Leo Boon, Linda Norman, Dan Ramasamy.
2. **The Minutes** of AGM held on 13th January 2021 via Zoom were agreed.
3. **Matters arising** (Appendix 1)
These were the Local Plan, Neighbourhood Plan, Singlers Marsh, Planning Enforcement and the Welwyn Heritage Trail. These matters were fully covered in the submitted by the Chairman (Appendix 2) and Vice Chairman (Appendix 3).
4. **Local Plan:** SS and RH reported that WHBC had readopted and repropoed the 2020 Plan to the Inspector for 13,279 houses and was awaiting his decision. If not approved this could leave the way open to developers to make speculative Planning Applications with no control over where the developments should go. The meeting discussed the ramifications of this. RH to monitor
5. **Singlers Marsh Village Green application:** SS and RH reported that HCC had decided to set up a non-statutory Public Inquiry to determine this. Originally the time-scale was thought to be up to two years but it is now potentially within the next two months. Since the two objectors were both likely to have legal representation, there would be an urgent crowd-funding appeal under WPAG's umbrella to provide legal representation. RH to progress. The meeting discussed ways to promote this including greater media coverage. DC to progress.
6. **High Street:** RH reported that a response from WHBC is still awaited with regard to the planters and 20mph speed limit. The meeting discussed the 20mph zone and it was agreed that we should lobby for it to start further up the London and Hertford Roads to slow traffic approaching the School Lane junction.

7. **Heritage Trail:** RH explained that this had to stay pending as there were so many other issues taking precedence at this time. RH felt unable to delegate as he has all the information required to set this up. The suggestion was made that WPAG should advertise on its website/Facebook page for a volunteer with the level of technical expertise needed to administrate this project. RH would then liaise and co-ordinate. RH thought the task could be divided and shared and Mary Williamson kindly offered to assist with creating the content for the Heritage Trail website. RH to liaise further. **ACTION: RH/DC/MW**

8. **Enforcement:** SS explained the difficulties encountered by WHBC in the enforcement of planning breaches by the travelling community. The meeting then discussed the fact that the North Ride field opposite Danesbury Fernery had recently been purchased by Travellers and the potential implications. CT reminded the meeting that this is also a designated Wildlife Site. GY asked whether a Section 4 notice could be placed on the site and SS explained that this was applicable to prevent building on land that would affect a view or outlook. This land was privately owned and any building would require a planning application, at which time WHBC could get involved. SS said that local councillors would continue to monitor developments on the site.

9. **Neighbourhood Plan:** SS outlined the progress made with the Neighbourhood Plan but understood it was dependent on an approved Local Plan for it to be effective. Andy Chudzik reported that the Harpenden NP was in use although St Albans DC did not have a Local Plan. SS to make enquiries as to whether a NP can be officially registered when there is no approved LP. **ACTION: SS**

8. **The Treasurer's report** was accepted.

9. **Election of Officers:** The nominations were unanimously agreed by all present
Chair: Sandra Saunders – proposed by DC, seconded by HN
Vice Chair: Russell Haggart – proposed by HN, seconded by GY
Hon. Treasurer: Howard Norfolk – proposed by SS, seconded by RH
Hon Secretary: vacant position.
(Post to be advertised on Facebook and website)

SS announced officially that this would be her final year in the Chair.

10. **AOB:** The committee invited the guests to ask questions. The following issues were raised:

10.1 Karen Springthorpe asked if the results of the NP survey were available. SS to check and advise.

10.2 KS asked whether Welwyn had a quota for housing. RH explained that Welwyn has had more development over the years than other parts of the borough. Other areas have gradually caught up and Welwyn will need to take some building even though what we already have is higher than most by comparison.

10.3 KS asked whether requirements for basic amenities were taken into consideration. RH said that local authorities, e.g. HCC, water company, etc. were under an obligation to provide all necessary amenities regardless of whether or not they are sustainable or supported by existing infrastructure.

10.4 KS asked whether air pollution was taken into account. RH said not much attention appeared to be given to air pollution. DC said that he had looked at water pollution and the effects building on Singlers Marsh sites would have on the Mimram chalk stream, including road run-off. KS asked whether it might be possible to interest the media in making a programme about Singlers Marsh. DC explained that this would be unlikely as there had to be a definite angle of interest and the issue wasn't of sufficient national importance.

10.5 Andy Chudzik asked who would pay for changes, i.e. to the roads and bridge. RH said this would all be paid for by the developers.

10.6 There was general discussion about speeding and the need for speed bumps to control speeding traffic.

10.7 Raul Curiel said that speed restrictions were vital to slow traffic coming down the hill on London Road approaching the junction with School Lane, which is a blind corner and extremely dangerous. SS to make enquiries as to what could be possible, e.g. rumble strips, smiley face, speed bumps. **ACTION: SS**

The meeting closed at 9:20pm

Signed:
CHAIR

Date: