

**HEVER RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
FRIDAY, 25TH JANUARY 2008**

Present:- Alan Townsend (Chairman), Jan Ryan (Secretary and Treasurer)
Committee Members John Scott, Ellie Heard, Andy Barnett, Gerry Ryan
The Meeting was also attended by a further 30 members and guests, including
Anne Roberts (Vice Chairman of Hever Parish Council)

1) Chairman's Welcome and Introduction to Jane Davis of the Rural Housing Trust.

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming all present and thanking the Guest Speaker for agreeing to attend the Meeting and give a short talk. He gave a brief résumé of Jane Davis' background and the work of the Rural Housing Trust.

Jane Davis began by complimenting the HRA web site for its content and for being user friendly. She then went on to explain the slogan "Village Homes for Rural People' and how 'Exception Sites' can be identified even in heavily protected areas such as Green Belt AoNBs. The RHT works with and through Parish Councils in identifying local need for low cost housing and potential building sites.

There is a recent RHT development in Leigh.

During a lively question and answer session, Jane Davis clarified other points. Housing costs are kept low by RHT retaining ownership and either renting out or selling only up to 50% of the freehold. Properties are priced at the cost price of the build. Beneficiaries are identified on the basis of need using a points system. The catchment area is determined by the Parish Council. As RHT never sells more than 50% of a rural property, it retains control over subsequent changes of householder. Beneficiaries can be and are of all ages and demographic types – they are chosen purely on need. RHT was originally founded to help rural workers who lost their tied housing when they retired.

The Chairman thanked Jane Davis for her presentation and extremely interesting information. He then conducted a straw poll amongst those present, and the response was overwhelmingly positive for the scheme, given the very strict checks and balances already outlined. The Chairman then moved the Meeting on.

2) Apologies for Absence

These had been received from Laurie Rutman, Chairman Hever Parish Council; Committee Members Jeanette Fahlbusch and Katherine Storey; and a further 10 HRA members.

3) Minutes of the 2007 AGM

Copies of these had been distributed in advance of the Meeting, and were accepted without amendment. Proposed; Terry Dell, seconded; Pat Humphreys.

4) Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

5) Chairman's Report

The Chairman was pleased to report that HRA had been instrumental in resolving many local difficulties, although others remain on-going. The Hotel had installed a children's play area, which was so close to residential properties that it became a highly intrusive nuisance. After HRA intervention, the play area had been re-sited. There are now two benches installed on the Parish field, for the benefit of local people and visitors alike. The bus shelter area is kempt and attractive, and spring flowers will soon be in bloom there. Following complaints, HRA had been able to arrange for warning notices about dog fouling on footpath SR581 that runs past the School. HRA

had also intervened where planning infringements had taken place, and had reported numerous instances of fly tipping.

Aircraft noise was an ongoing problem, and on this point the Chairman asked David Baron to give a report. David confirmed that a newsletter had recently been issued. GATCOM were due to make an announcement. Complaint forms had been distributed and could also be downloaded from the Web Site.

6) Treasurer's Report

Copies of this had been distributed in advance of the Meeting. During the year the Landrover 101 had been sold and a trailer had been purchased, thus increasing the balance in the bank. A reserve account had been opened, resulting in receipt of bank interest of £86. There were no questions from the floor.

Both reports were adopted on a show of hands, proposed by Terry Bayford, seconded by Pat Humphreys

7) Election of Officers and Committee

The Chairman, Alan Townsend and the Secretary / Treasurer, Jan Ryan were willing to stand for re-election. Committee Members Andy Barnett, John Scott, Ellie Heard, Katherine Storey, Gerry Ryan and Jeanette Fahlbusch were all willing to stand for re-election. Terry Dell volunteered to rejoin the Committee, and was welcomed by the Chairman.

The Committee was then voted in en bloc, on a unanimous show of hands, proposed by Gill Ford, seconded by Terry Bayford.

8) Any Other Business

Bottle Bank

This is currently situated in the car park of the Henry VIII Inn.

This is not a popular site, and it was generally felt that the best site would be in the Castle Coach Park, adjacent to the big wheelie bins. This had been vetoed by the Castle day visitor manager. The Village Hall paddock had been volunteered, but was unsuitable for practical reasons. Those present felt that although the bank was an asset to the Village, the present site was widely unpopular, and there were no other suitable sites in the centre of the Village. It was agreed that the Castle would be approached again.

Summer Event

Attendance numbers for this had been disappointing for the last 2 years. The Chairman said that Hever Arts had successfully taken over the music front, and asked if there was another format that people would like to see. It was generally felt that the most important element was the social get-together with food and drink. This is, however, unlikely to attract many young people.

Signage

HRA was asked to organise re-instatement of the finger post sign at the far end of Rectory Lane. Also signs at either end of footpath SR581, which has been used as a bridle path, although it is unsuitable for horses.

Late Night Train

There were more calls for a later stopping train at Hever. Southern Railways have been resisting this for years despite constant pressure. Letters of complaint should be sent. Gerry said that SDC's Environment Select Committee have 'trains' on the agenda for the 18th March, and he would reintroduce the problems of the 'Cinderella Stations'.

Stanford Water Lane

Kent Highways are still refusing to repair the surface, and the PROW Manager is investigating the history. This will be followed up.

Fence between Parish Field & Henry car park

This had broken down again despite repairs by Shepherd Neame. They need to be chased again to effect a more robust repair

Fireworks

Although horses are frightened by the noise, it was felt that the HRA display is such a well-appreciated, well-entrenched event that to cancel it would be deeply unpopular.

Parsons Croft Parking

This is becoming more of an issue with increased car ownership. The area in front of the houses is not used for any other purpose, and residents would be willing to put in labour. The previous plan put forward by SDC was far too intrusive, with lit bollards etc, but a simpler solution would be welcomed. SDC should be approached again.

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the Meeting and invited all present to partake of the food and drink on offer at the back of the Hall.

Finger foods are provided by Committee Members, each of whom contributes a dish. Each year the Most Popular Platter is recorded. For 2008, the honour goes to Andy Barnett for his mini-yorkshires