



The Ashtead Resident



The Journal of the Ashtead Residents' Association
Working for Ashtead since 1945

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Spring 2021

Notice of Meeting

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

to be held via Zoom

Wednesday May 19th 2021

AGENDA

1. Chairman's Report.
2. Hon. Treasurer's Report.
3. Appointment of President and Members of Standing Committee.
4. Appointment of Hon. Examiner.
5. Amendment of Constitution
6. Any other business.

Join from 7pm for a 7.30pm start

Numbers are limited

**To register your interest in attending, please email:
secretary@ashteadresidents.org.uk**

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT PRESENTED TO THE ARA AGM on 19th May 2021

Good evening and thank for registering to attend to-night's meeting.

Let me first of all speak of Blanche Douglass who held the position of President of the ARA and who sadly passed away on January 12th after a short illness that was not Covid-related. Blanche was an active President and we will miss her input and advice, which was grounded in not only her many years as an Ashtead resident but also in her 25 years as a Mole Valley District Councillor for Common Ward. There is a full obituary in *Ashtead Village News*, which I hope you have all had a chance to read.

I'd like to thank Simon Ling, who is an ARA Vice-President, a long-time Ashtead resident and former MVDC Councillor, for agreeing to chair this meeting in Blanche's place.

Last year, the committee decided not to try and hold our AGM and Autumn Meetings via Zoom in favour of what we hoped would be a grand reunion in person at this year's AGM. That not being possible, and given that we have all become proficient at conducting our lives in the virtual realm, we have opted to hold the 2021 AGM via Zoom. The situation that we found ourselves in last year over the postponement of the AGM has led to an amendment to our constitution which you will all have received a copy of, and which will be voted upon later in this meeting.

Over the past year, our monthly Standing Committee meetings have carried on via Zoom and our work has continued as far as Covid restrictions allowed. I would like to thank all the ARA committee members for all that they have been doing in the face of a very difficult year.

Liaison meetings have also continued on screen with MVDC Officers and with the Chairmen of the Residents' Associations in Bookham, Fetcham and Leathrehead.

Finance

My thanks to ARA's Treasurer, Hannah Parkes who has continued in her role of monitoring ARA's finances which she will cover in the 2020 Treasurer's report.

Planning

The pandemic had an initial impact on the number of Planning Applications being submitted but things gradually returned to normal and Roger Bennett, our Planning Officer, has continued his scrutiny of all applications, making representation when deemed appropriate following discussions with the committee. Applications require very detailed analysis and scrutiny of the planning documents and my thanks go to Roger

who never fails in his commitment to doing that work and providing a full report on all aspects that the committee needs to consider.

Highways & Rail

In order to keep residents fully informed of plans and issues that might affect them, thanks go, as ever, to David Baker who has continued his liaison roles with Surrey Highways, Govia Thameslink, Network Rail (NR) and the new station car park operator APCOA Connect. The full closure of the level crossing in September was recognized by residents as having gone very smoothly and this was largely due to David's diligence in his discussions with NR that ensured that all aspects of the closure, including station car parking, were properly addressed in advance of the work beginning.

However, the biggest issue has been, and remains, the ongoing question of the Green Lane pedestrian crossing over the railway and its status, or not, as a Public Right of Way (PROW). The Association has provided evidence to the PROW Officer at Surrey County Council (SCC) to support our view that it is a PROW, while NR has provided its own evidence to the contrary. The PROW Officer has now determined that it is not a PROW and his report will be discussed at the Mole Valley Local Committee meeting on 9th June this year, at which ARA representatives will speak.

Website

In December, we began work on the redesign of our website, working with Les Huett of Pearl Bay Ltd in Bookham, who has created an excellent new look for us, along with an ease of access to all information carried on the site. I'd like to thank David Baker and Tony Mansell for their input to the redesign which was completed by the end of January when the new-look site went live. David Baker continues to manage the website and has mastered the new updating system and diary format. As part of the redesign, we have introduced the facility for members to pay their annual subscription online via the website and we hope that this will encourage wider membership and increased support for the Association.

Events

The 2020 Spring Clean had to be called off as it was scheduled to take place just as lock down began in March 2020. The timing of the cancellation was too late to avoid all the hard work involved in organizing the event and we owe huge thanks to Chrissy Kerton for that work. Sadly, the 2021 Spring Clean will be Chrissy's last for the Association as she is stepping down from the committee and her duties as Spring Clean Coordinator, a role that she has undertaken and

performed brilliantly since she first introduced the event back in 2005.

Of course, no other events at all have been possible and my thanks go to Jean Bradley, our Events Secretary, for remaining on her toes to put something in place at a moment's notice if restrictions permitted or, as was sadly the case, to handle cancellations when hopes were dashed.

Graffiti

One thing that we have been able to continue with during the lockdown is cleaning off graffiti, and my thanks go to Janet Webber who has continued to handle this for Ashtead.

Communications

My thanks go to Pam Ventham-Smith for the work that she does as the Association's Hon Sec. and the very sound advice and guidance that she provides. In addition to her Hon Sec. role, Pam also manages the ARA's noticeboards, which in 2020 more often carried Covid warnings and advice rather than details of events. Pam is also the editor of *The Ashtead Resident*, the Association's formal record of proceedings.

We also published the 2020 Spring and Autumn issues of our newsletter *Ashtead Village News*, but we are still looking for a permanent editor for this publication.

Membership & Road Stewards

My thanks go to Tony Mansell for his work as our Membership Secretary during this particularly difficult year. Tony has been working with Moira Hamer of Excellence Training Ltd to develop a new EXCEL database system for managing the membership records more efficiently. We have also received help with this from Les Huett of the Bookham Residents' Association (BRA) who has developed BRA's own membership system. It has taken a great deal of Tony's time to populate the new database with our road lists but that has been completed and the new system is now operating.

The combination of the lockdown and the Covid-19 precautions had a big impact on our Road Stewards' ability to deliver our publications and to collect membership subscriptions which, as a result, dropped by around 30% in 2020. Given the year that we have had, that is an amazing success story and the committee is so very grateful to all Road Stewards for persevering throughout the year as they have done. They are vital to the Association and we thank them for their work on its behalf.

The care that we have all had to take during the pandemic has added to the growing reluctance to open our doors to unexpected callers and this, combined with a reluctance to handle cash, has increasingly made the Road Stewards' role of collecting subscrip-

tions more difficult. Although cash and cheques are still accepted payment methods, we are hoping that the use of electronic payment systems will increase either through our new website's online payment facility or through the option of paying by direct bank transfer.

Tree Wardens

Ashtead Tree Wardens (ATW) have continued their work as far as has been possible, but this has been mainly restricted to reviewing tree works proposed in planning applications. We had all hoped that they would be able to plant some trees in verges this past winter but Surrey County Council (SCC) did not approve any of ATW's applications to plant. This has been a great disappointment to them all, especially in light of SCC's stated aim to plant 1.2 million new trees by 2030.

Friends of the ARA

As ever, the committee is grateful to our "Friends" who, while not on the committee, provide invaluable support to the Association. Jenny Williams continues to bring her extensive skills to the proof reading of our newsletter. Di Stirling represents us on, and is chairman of, the Joint Residents' Associations Bus group.

Sadly, however, I must report the loss of two people who have been staunch ARA supporters over many years.

Yvonne Chappell died in 2020. Yvonne had been the Association's longest serving Road Steward (a role now taken on by her son Edwin) as well as being a volunteer for many of Ashtead's community organizations – you name it, and Yvonne will have been involved in it at some point in her life.

Geoff Jackson died in early 2021. He had at one time been a member of the ARA committee and was editor of *The Ashtead Resident* for ten years to 2008. He continued to play a vital role in our communications by being an Area Distributor for our newsletter packs and he too was involved in a voluntary capacity with other Ashtead organizations.

Both Yvonne and Geoff are a loss to our community and the Association offers its condolences to their families.

I'm sorry to end on a sad note, especially as we are all feeling more hopeful about getting back to some semblance of normal later this year. It has been a long time since we all met together at an ARA general meeting and we hope that by October we will be able to hold our Autumn Meeting in the usual way, sitting in the hall at the APMH, sharing a drink and enjoying each other's company.

Thank you again for your attendance this evening.

Glynis Peterkin

HON TREASURER'S REPORT (2020 ACCOUNTS)

This year we incurred a deficit as income was reduced due mainly to the pandemic restrictions in place and also to some exceptional payments as noted below.

Income.

Subscriptions and Donations were down again, year on year – from £6,915 to £5,419. Although the retirement and non-replacement of a number of our Road Stewards factored into the decrease in revenue, it was mainly caused by the restrictions placed on the Association and its Road Stewards by the Covid-19 pandemic, which prevented the physical collection of subscriptions. The introduction last year of the option for members to pay subscriptions directly through their bank has not yet taken sufficient hold to compensate for the door-to-door collection, but we are hoping that use of this electronic facility will gradually increase. Later in 2021, we will also be expanding the electronic payment facility to include card payments through our website and this too may encourage greater use of online payment methods which may help to offset the lack of a Road Steward.

The average membership level across roads which have a Road Steward available to collect subscriptions is 48% but with an increase in the number of roads that are now without a Road Steward the average membership level across Ashtead amounts to 36%. Because of the lockdown restrictions preventing collection of membership subscriptions, these numbers are lower than in previous years and we anticipate that they will return to more normal levels during 2021.

Miscellaneous receipts at £141 consist of book sales and money raised from bar takings at the 2019 Autumn Meeting. No revenue-generating meetings have been held this year.

Expenditure.

Communications continued to be our major outgoing. £2,295 covers the production of *The Ashtead Resident*, the Spring and Autumn editions of *Ashtead Village News* and the printing of ARA leaflets.

Other Items include legal expenses and a new laptop (as itemised below) plus pebbles for the garden at Ashtead Station which is maintained by the Association, and a subscription to the Open Spaces Society.

Exceptionally this year, there was an outlay of £532 for a replacement laptop, as Microsoft was discontinuing support for its Windows 7 operating system and the old laptop did not have the capability to run the upgrade. £800 was for the creation of a new, more efficient database to maintain membership records and £792 for legal advice on the existence or not of a Public Right of Way at the Green Lane pedestrian crossing over the railway tracks, in light of Network Rail's potential closure of the crossing.

The deficit for the year is £702. Our reserves remain very healthy with bank balances at the end of 2020 totalling £32,049, of which £30,000 is held in a deposit account as a contingency against potential legal costs should an Ashtead-wide issue need to be fought on residents' behalf. The total figure excludes £735 held in a separate account on behalf of the Ashtead War Memorial Fund – covered in the footnote to the Accounts Summary.

Finally, my thanks go to our Road Stewards and to Tony Mansell, our Membership Secretary, for all their support and hard work during this past very difficult year. Also, my grateful thanks to Tim Tennent who is the Examiner for these Accounts.

Hannah Parkes January 2021

ASHTeAD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Financial Statement for the year ended 31st.December 2020

	2020 £		2019 £	
<u>INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT</u>				
<u>income</u>				
Subscription & Donations	5419		6915	
Interest	11		13	
Miscellaneous Receipts	<u>141</u>	5571	<u>364</u>	7292
<u>Expenditure</u>				
Communications				
"Ashtead Village News" &				
"The Ashtead Resident"	2295		2027	
Website,PC,IT	148		93	
Other Data Base	800		0	
Meeting Expenses	259		414	
Insurance	922		922	
Membership Administration	127		801	
General Administration	78		418	
Notice Board	0		1514	
Gifts & Donations	250		0	
Other Items	<u>1394</u>	6273	<u>690</u>	6879
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR		-702		413

BALANCE SHEET

General Fund

Balance brought forward		32751		32338
Surplus for the Year	Loss	-702		413
Total Net Funds at Year End		<u>32049</u>		<u>32751</u>
<u>Represented by</u>				
Bank Balances		32049		32751
Sundry Debtors/Creditors				0
Totals		<u>32049</u>		<u>32751</u>

At 31st December 2020 in addition to the funds held in the bank, the Hon. Treasurer holds a stock of second class postage stamps. (Purchase price in April 2012 was 36p now worth 65p each.

There is also an account held for the Ashtead War Memorial Fund. This account at 31st December 2020 has a balance of £735.14 which amount is excluded from the figures above.

The above Financial Statements were approved by the Association's Standing Committee.

Signed by G Peterkin Chairman

G Peterkin

H.Parkes Hon. Treasurer

H Parkes

I confirm that I have examined the above accounts, and that they accord with the vouchers, documents and information supplied to me

Signed by T Tennent on the

T Tennent, 4.2.2021

ADDENDUM TO THE TREASURER'S REPORT

With the cancellation of the 2020 AGM, the accounts for 2019 were not subject to consideration and acceptance. In 2019 the Association almost broke even, and my report as published in *The Ashtead Resident* Spring 2020, included the following explanations:

Income:

Subscriptions and donations were slightly down year on year, due mainly to the retirement and non-replacement of a number of Road Stewards.

Miscellaneous Receipts comprised a contribution from Govia Thameslink towards the upkeep of the flower beds at the station and bar takings at the Spring and Autumn meetings.

Expenditure:

Communications continued to be the major outgoing.

General Administration included the cost of Christmas cards, stationery and the monthly charge for the mobile phone.

Membership Administration included the Road Stewards' Summer Meeting and the AGM/Spring and Autumn Meetings.

To coincide with the refurbishment of the APMH car park, the ARA notice board was replaced and repositioned .

Other items included expenses incurred for Ashtead Village Day, the Annual Spring Clean and maintenance of the station flowerbeds.

Acceptance of the 2019 and 2020 Accounts will be sought at the AGM on 19th May 2021.

Hannah Parkes

BLANCHE DOUGLASS 1932-2021

Blanche Bartlett, as she was born, moved to Ashtead with her family at the age of six. Apart from being evacuated to Wales during WW2 after a bomb dropped in Gaywood Road, and a short spell in Somerset running a nursing home with her husband Norman in the 1970s, she made Ashtead her life-long home.

She enjoyed various careers including banking, district nursing, running that nursing home and commercial catering, and became a leading light in many of Ashtead's organizations and societies, but is probably best known as a long standing and very hard working Ashtead Independent District Councillor for Common Ward, a position she held for 25 years before retiring in 2004. Having served with distinction on virtually all the MVDC committees, she became Chairman of the Council for the period 1999-2000.

She was a long term member of the Ashtead Residents' Association and a member of its Standing Committee for some years. She became a Vice President in 2006 and was elected President in 2015, a position in which she was very active, still giving generously of her time, advice and support until her untimely death in January.

Blanche was a talented, efficient, wise and much respected lady, known to very many residents of Ashtead, "a legend in her lifetime" who will be greatly missed. A full obituary for Blanche can be found in the Spring 2021 edition of *Ashtead Village News*.

GREENING THE DISTRICT

TREES AND HEDGES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND HUMAN HEALTH

Mole Valley District Council (MVDC) revises its Strategy every five years. In 2019 we were successful in getting the inclusion of *“Protect and enhance the natural and built environment, and ensure our areas of natural beauty and wildlife are well looked-after”* – the first time the natural environment and wildlife had featured. We also secured the appointment of MVDC’s first ever permanent dedicated Tree and Countryside Officer.

Global warming has led to announcements of a climate change emergency at global, national and local levels since the 1980s. It was only in June 2020 that the new Administration issued its *Climate Change Strategy*. Apart from mentioning Surrey Council’s aim to plant 1.2 million trees by 2030, it only described a potential project of *“Facilitating tree planting schemes in the District, through direct MVDC activities and supporting community initiatives”*. At the Council Meeting in February 2021, our motion that there should be plans to plant trees wherever possible on MVDC-owned land was not accepted, but March saw the announcement that *“work started this month”* to seek opportunities to plant on Council-owned land.

Surrey has more trees than any other county in England (24% land cover) but it also has precious open habitats - such as chalk grassland, heathland, wetland, and old field edges, with species that are important nationally and internationally. This means that great care must be taken in choosing sites for tree planting; we should consider parts of parks, recreation areas, around playing fields, and along roads. MVDC owns many sites where, as well as taking carbon from the atmosphere and releasing oxygen, trees and hedges could obscure unattractive buildings, prevent unauthorised encroachment, and mitigate noise and air pollution.

We have been urging the planting of native species for several years, and now this is an almost routine condition placed on developers where trees and hedges are removed. Native species support our native species of small mammals, fungi (including lichens), and invertebrates. Hedges trap carbon and are also marvellous reservoirs for diverse wildlife, even in the absence of trees. The older the hedge the more species-rich it will be. Some on the Downs to the south of Ashted date from the Bronze Age, and others in Ashted Village are remnants of field boundaries going back to the Middle Ages. At last, we are now seeing their importance also recognized when planning decisions are being made.

Ashted is lucky to have kept many Victorian and Edwardian properties with large gardens, often with mature trees and old hedges. They are so precious for keeping high species richness; they provide corridors for the movement of increasingly endangered animals such as frogs, hedgehogs, and badgers, from garden to garden. We will continue to argue for their protection in the planning process, and for Tree Protection Orders (TPOs) to be issued more proactively to prevent trees being felled by developers before planning applications are even submitted.

There is still much to be done but, after our years of agitating, we are pleased that at last some progress is being made towards appropriate tree planting in the District. Hopefully, MVDC will set a good example by planting on Council-owned land. This needs to be an ongoing process which will provide a legacy for future generations of which we can be proud.

Cllr David L Hawksworth CBE (Leader Ashted Independents)

Cllr Patricia Wiltshire (Vice Chairman MVDC)

Amendment to the Ashtead Residents' Association Constitution

Covid-19 lockdown restrictions precluded the holding of the Association's 2020 Annual General Meeting. The Officers and Committee members remained in post to serve the needs of the Ashtead community. Continuing restrictions in 2021 have necessitated moving the AGM beyond April, currently required by the Constitution. An amendment to Clause 15 of the Constitution, set out below, will be proposed at the AGM on 19th May.

15. The Annual General Meeting, at which the formal business of the Association shall be conducted, shall be held before the end of April in each year at such place and time as may be decided by the Committee.

Should extraordinary circumstances prevent it being held before the end of April, the Standing Committee, deciding by majority vote, may postpone or cancel the AGM providing that:

- a) as much notice as possible is given by posting notices on the Association's boards, on its website and through social media;***
- b) the Chairman's Report and Annual Accounts are published on the Association's website; and***
- c) Officers remain in post until elections can be held at the rescheduled AGM or at the next ordinary meeting of the Association, whichever is the earlier.***

At least one other ordinary general meeting of the Association shall be held, but extra meetings maybe held if the Committee deem it necessary. At least twenty-eight day's notice shall be given of all general meetings.

ASHTEAD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

President: Mr Simon Ling

Vice Presidents: Mrs Janet Marsh and Mr Larry Unthank

STANDING COMMITTEE

Chairman: Mrs Glynis Peterkin, 2 Kelmscott Place, KT21 2HD	270138
Hon. Secretary: Mrs Pam Ventham-Smith, 5 Warwick Gardens, KT21 2HR	277154
Hon. Treasurer: Mrs Hannah Parkes, 10 Stag Leys, KT21 2TD	811891
David Baker, Brookside, Ashtead Woods Road, KT21 2EQ	276158
Roger Bennett, 5 Woodlands Way, KT21 1LH	274925
Mrs Jean Bradley, 5 Berkley Lodge, Highfields, KT21 2NL	272550
Tony Mansell, Cashio Berry, Ashtead Woods Road, KT21 2EQ	877438
Peter Stanyard, Moonfleet, Farm Lane, KT21 1LW	07785 243988
Mrs Janet Webber, Kerria, Highfields, KT21 2NL	278221

Hon. Membership Secretary: Mr Tony Mansell 0300 030 9980

The views expressed by contributors to this magazine are not necessarily those of the Ashtead Residents' Association.