



# The Ashtead Resident



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

Number 224

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[www.ashteadresidents.org.uk](http://www.ashteadresidents.org.uk)

Spring 2022

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## Notice of Meetings

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### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND SPRING MEETING

Wednesday April 20th 2022

Ashtead Peace Memorial Hall, Ashtead

#### 7.30pm AGM

1. Approval of the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held by Zoom on Wednesday May 19th 2021, published in The Ashtead Resident, Spring 2022.
2. Matters Arising from the Minutes.
3. Chairman's Report.
4. Hon. Treasurer's Report.
5. Appointment of Vice Presidents, Officers and Members of the Standing Committee.
6. Appointment of the Hon. Examiner
7. Any other business.

#### Interval

#### 8.15pm SPRING MEETING

"My Wild Life"

Simon Cowell MBE

Wildlife Aid CEO/Founder

Bar open from 7.15 until 8.15pm

Annual membership subscription is £2.50 per household

# MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ASSTEAD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION HELD VIA ZOOM ON 19th MAY 2021

## Context

In the Spring of 2021 the country remained in the grip of the Covid-19 pandemic and was again in lockdown. The AGM of 2020 had been cancelled and the committee agreed to hold the 2021 AGM via Zoom. Residents registered their interest in attending by emailing The Secretary, as advertised in the Spring 2021 edition of The Asstead Resident, and on the ARA's website and notice boards.

Apologies for absence were received from Chrissy Kerton.

## Amendment to the ARA Constitution

Continuing restrictions in 2021 necessitated moving the AGM beyond April, as required by the Constitution. An addition to Clause 15 of the Constitution, was thus proposed:

"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 may be held if the Committee deem it necessary. At least twenty-eight days' notice shall be given of all ordinary meetings."

The amendment was proposed by Chris Townsend, seconded by Rosemary Stark and carried nem con.

## Chairman's Report

Glynis Peterkin began by welcoming residents to the meeting. She then paid tribute to Blanche Douglass who had been President of the ARA but sadly passed away on January 12th, following a short non-Covid related illness She had been an active President whose advice that had been grounded in a lifetime's experience as a long term resident and 25 years as an Asstead Common Ward Councillor on the Mole Valley District Council (MVDC). Thanks went to Simon Ling, an ARA Vice-President, for agreeing to chair the meeting.

During the past year, the Committee had continued to meet via Zoom and the ARA's work had continued as far as Covid restrictions allowed. She thanked the committee members

for all their efforts. Liaison meetings had also continued virtually with MVDC Officers and the Chairmen of the Residents' Associations in Bookham, Fetcham and Leatherhead.

Hannah Parkes was thanked for continuing her role of monitoring the Association's finances. Roger Bennett, the Planning Officer, had continued scrutinising all planning applications, preparing full reports on all aspects requiring committee consideration and making representations to MVDC when the committee deemed it appropriate. He was thanked for his continuing commitment to this time-consuming work.

David Baker had continued his liaison roles with Surrey Highways, Govia Thameslink, Network Rail (NR) and the new station car park operator, APCOA Connect. The success of the closure of the level crossing for maintenance work in September 2020 had been largely due to his diligence in discussions with NR, ensuring all relevant issues were addressed and resolved before the event.

The biggest issue continued to be that of the status of the Green Lane pedestrian crossing over the railway line. The Association had provided evidence to the Public Right of Way (PROW) Officer at Surrey County Council (SCC), supporting its view that the crossing was a PROW. NR had provided evidence to the contrary. The Officer had determined it was not a PROW. The ARA was to speak at the Mole Valley Local Committee the next month, at which his report was to be discussed.

A new look ARA website had gone live in February, following two months' work in collaboration with Les Huett of Pearlbay in Bookham. Thanks went to David Baker and Tony Mansell for their input. David Baker continued to manage the site. Members could now pay their subscriptions on-line which, it was hoped, would encourage wider membership and increase support for the ARA.

The cancellation of the 2020 Spring Clean, due to lockdown, had come too late to avoid all the hard work organising the event. Thanks went to Chrissy Kerton, for whom the 2021 Spring Clean would be the last as she was stepping down from the Committee and the role she had undertaken brilliantly since first introducing the event in 2005. Whilst no other events had been possible, Jean Bradley was thanked for remaining prepared to organise something had the restrictions allowed. It had been possible to continue the cleaning of graffiti, and thanks went to Janet Webber who had continued to pursue this for Asstead.

Thanks went to Pam Venthams-Smith for her work as the ARA's Hon Sec. and for managing the ARA notice boards, which in 2020 often carried Covid warnings and advice rather than details of events. Pam was also editor of The Asstead Resident, the ARA's formal record of proceedings. 2020 had also seen the publication of Spring and Autumn issues of the newsletter Asstead Village News, for which publication a permanent editor was still being sought.

Thanks went to Tony Mansell, Membership Secretary, for his work in a difficult year. He had been working with Moira Harmer of Excellence Training Ltd developing a new efficient Excel database system for managing the membership records. Populating the database had taken a lot of Tony's time but it was now operating.

Covid-19 precautions and the lockdown had seen subscriptions drop by around 30% in 2020. In the circumstances that was an amazing success story and the ARA was very grateful to all the Road Stewards who were vital to the Association. Although cash and cheques were still accepted payment methods, it was hoped use of electronic payment methods would increase, either via the website's on-line facility or through direct bank transfers.

Ashtead's Tree Wardens' work had been largely confined to reviewing tree works proposed in planning applications. SCC had not approved any of the Wardens' applications to plant trees in verges. This had been a great disappointment, particularly in view of SCC's stated aim to plant 1.2 million new trees by 2030. The Committee remained grateful to its "Friends" – Jenny Williams, for proof reading AVN, and Di Stirling who was ARA representative on and chairman of the Joint Residents Associations' Bus Group.

The Chairman concluded by paying tribute to two people who had been staunch supporters of the ARA and who had sadly died during the period of the pandemic. Yvonne Chappell had been the longest serving Road Steward whilst Geoff Jackson, an ex committee member, had been editor of The Ashtead Resident for 10 Years.

She hoped that by October it would be possible to hold the Autumn Meeting in the usual way, in the hall at the APMH, sharing a drink and enjoying each other's company. GP again thanked members for their attendance.

The report was proposed by David Baker, seconded by Peter Williams.

### **Treasurer's Report**

The Financial Statement and the 2020 accounts had been published in The Ashtead Resident Spring 2021. Data pertaining to 2019 had been published in the Spring of 2020.

Hannah Parkes noted that in 2020 the ARA had incurred a deficit of some £702. Income had reduced due mainly to the imposition of pandemic restrictions. It was hoped the expansion of electronic payment options would help to offset the difficulties of collection by Road Stewards. Whilst communications, particularly printing costs, continued to be the major outgoing, there had also been £532 for a new laptop with the ending of Windows 7 support, £800 for the new membership database, and £792 for legal advice concerning the legal status of the Green Lane crossing.

Her thanks went to Tony Mansell, the Road Stewards and Tim Tennant the Examiner of the Accounts.

Adoption of the accounts was proposed by Di Stirling, seconded by Chris Townsend and passed nem con.

### **Election of President, Officers and Members of the Standing Committee**

Simon Ling had been proposed and seconded as President of the Association. He was duly elected nem con. Nominations had also been received for Chairman Glynis Peterkin, Hon Secretary Pam Ventham-Smith and Hon Treasurer Hannah Parkes. They were elected nem con.

In addition, David Baker, Roger Bennett, Jean Bradley, Anthony Mansell and Janet Webber had been proposed and seconded for membership of the Standing Committee. They were duly elected en bloc nem con.

### **Appointment of the Examiner**

Hannah Parkes had proposed Tim Tennant. Passed nem con

### **Any Other Business**

Cllr. Chris Townsend (CT) paid tribute to Blanche Douglass (BD), whose example had been the main reason he had initially become a councillor. He thanked residents for their support at the recent election. Cllr. Pat Wiltshire (PW) echoed all that had been said regarding BD.

Cllr. David Hawksworth advised that the Ashtead Independent Councillors (AIs) were minded to name a route across The Common in memory of BD, a project currently in abeyance pending developments. He recorded his appreciation for residents' support and assistance at the recent election, and further advised that Cllr. Chris Hunt was now Chairman of MVDC with PW Chairman of the Standards Committee. The AIs now had influence on the Council. Acknowledging the on-going Covid restrictions, he announced that the anticipated post election event had been cancelled.

Angela Buxton expressed her appreciation of the work done by GP and the committee. She noted that BD had been a member of Ashtead Players before becoming politically involved, a very confident performer who never let the others down.

Ray Cane queried why SCC had not approved any Tree Wardens' (TWs) applications. CT responded that it was due to the utility supply cables etc found under the verges. New technology should resolve the problem. For SCC to achieve its tree planting goal, its attitude towards the TWs would need to change. In discussion, it was suggested that consultation with the TWs would be vital to ensure that those trees planted were in the right places. Trees were important to maintain the nature of Ashtead.

SL thanked GP and the Committee for their hard work, congratulated the Councillors on their election victories and thanked residents for attending the meeting. He hoped to see everyone in person in 2022.

Meeting closed at 20.33.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, there was no Spring Meeting.

## HON TREASURER'S REPORT (2021 ACCOUNTS)

This year we incurred another deficit due to the fact that we made some exceptional payments as noted below.

### ***Income.***

Subscriptions and Donations were slightly up year on year – from £5,419 to £6,191. The electronic bank payment option, introduced in 2019, has been expanded to include an online card payment facility via our website. The number of individual subscriptions paid in this way is gradually increasing, but it will take some time to overtake the well-established cash and cheque payments collected on the doorstep by our Road Stewards, many of whom now use electronic banking to submit the subscriptions they have collected. The new options are also welcomed by Road Stewards who are hesitant to call on people and handle cash due to the pandemic. Electronic payment methods also allow subscriptions to be paid by residents living in roads where a road steward is not present.

The average membership level across roads which have a Road Steward available to collect subscriptions is 48%, but the inclusion of the significant number of roads that are now without a Road Steward results in an average membership level across Ashted of 36%. The effect of the pandemic lockdowns and restrictions continues to result in lower levels of membership than in pre-COVID days, but we anticipate that they will return to more normal levels during 2022.

Miscellaneous receipts at £111 consist of a payment from Mole Valley District Council towards the Ashted Spring Clean and the money raised from bar takings at the ARA Autumn Meeting.

### ***Expenditure***

Communications continued to be our major outgoing, with costs of £3,056 to cover the production of The Ashted Resident, the Spring and Autumn editions of Ashted Village News and the printing of ARA leaflets.

Other Items include Ashted Spring Clean expenses, and a subscription to the Open Spaces Society, which gave us access to legal advice during discussions on the status of the Green Lane Footpath across the railway.

Exceptionally this year, there was an outlay of £1,450 for the redesign of the ARA website. In addition, website hosting and troubleshooting costs were £343. £720 was paid for the services of a Planning Consultant to advise on our response to the Regulation 19 publication of Mole Valley's Local Plan, which had to be framed in terms of the Plan's legality and compliance.

The deficit for the year is £1,859. Our reserves remain very healthy with bank balances at the end of 2021 totalling £30,190, of which £25,000 is held in a deposit account as a contingency against potential legal costs should an Ashted-wide issue need to be fought on residents' behalf. The total figure excludes £735 held in a separate account on behalf of the Ashted 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 year. Also, my grateful thanks to Tim Tennent who is the Examiner for these Accounts

**Hannah Parkes**  
**January 2022**

# ASSTEAD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Financial Statement for the year ended 31st December 2021

	2020 £		2021 £
<b><u>INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT</u></b>			
<b><u>Income</u></b>			
Subscription & Donations	5419		6191
Interest	11		2
Miscellaneous Receipts	<u>141</u>	5571	<u>111</u> 6304
<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>			
<b>Communications</b>			
"Ashtead Village News" & "The Ashtead Resident"	2295		3056
Website, PC, IT	148		1793
Other Data Base	800		0
Meeting Expenses	259		392
Insurance	922		1066
Membership Administration	127		566
General Administration	78		63
Consultants Fees			720
Gifts & Donations	250		405
Other Items	<u>1394</u>	6273	<u>102</u> 8163
loss FOR THE YEAR		-702	-1859

## BALANCE SHEET

### General Fund

Balance brought forward	32751		32049
Surplus for the Year      Loss	-702		-1859
<b>Total Net Funds at Year End</b>	<b><u>32049</u></b>		<b><u>30190</u></b>

### Represented by

Bank Balances	32049		30190
Sundry Debtors/Creditors			0
<b>Totals</b>	<b><u>32049</u></b>		<b><u>30190</u></b>

At 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 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 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 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 on the

**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** *26th January 2022*

*TC*

## NOTES OF THE AUTUMN MEETING OF THE ASSTEAD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION HELD IN THE APMH ON 20th OCTOBER 2021

Glynis Peterkin welcomed Peter Wakeham, a local botanist and the Chairman of The Downlands Trust. He gave an interesting talk on the activities of The Trust, a registered charity that funds conservation work in the area to maintain chalk grassland, an internationally rare habitat.

Following a short intermission, GP introduced a Q & A session with Asstead's District Councillors: for Common Ward David Hawkworth (DLH) and Pat Wiltshire (PW), for Park Ward David Harper (DJH) and Garry Stansfield, and for Village Ward Chris Hunt (CH). Also present was Asstead's County Councillor Chris Townsend (CT). Apologies had been received from Councillors Mary Cooper and Alan Reilly.

**Q** What was the Council doing about the collection of garden waste which was currently suspended? The grass was still growing, shrubs were being cut back and the leaves would soon be falling. This resident would be having to go to "the dump" three times a week.

**A** PW explained that Joint Waste Solutions (JWS) was employed jointly by several local councils to collect rubbish, recycling and garden waste, but it had a shortfall in HGV drivers. Priority was being given to general rubbish and recycling collections. Households were to be given credit for missed garden bin collections. Employment of private firms by the Council had proved unworkable.

CH advised that it had been discovered that the drivers had been employed on one week contracts. This had enabled them to leave JWS to take up better paid employment. This flaw would now be rectified in future contracts.

DJH reported that the Council Cabinet had refused to give a date for the recommencement of garden waste collections, highlighting poor management by Officers and Cabinet Officials.

**Q** Should residents have bonfires to get rid of garden waste?

**A** PW said definitely no as bonfires would further degrade the air quality in Asstead.

**Q** Could JWS just pay the drivers more money to retain them?

**A** PW replied that it was not just a question of money.

**Q** What could be done about overgrown hedges that block the footpath in Links Road, making it impassable for people with buggies and mobility scooters.

**A** CT noted that SCC used to write to householders advising them to cut their hedges. When that was not complied with, the Council would do the job and bill the householder. Such bills were often unpaid. SCC no longer had this policy. He recommended contacting Cllr. Alan Reilly whose "Alley Gang" could cut back the offending hedges and also arrange for the cuttings to be later collected by MVDC.

**Q** Could Councillors tell of the latest news of the Green Lane crossing?

**A** DLH explained that the long-standing issue as to whether or not the crossing was a Public Right of Way (PROW) had been caused by a discrepancy between the Definitive Map and the Definitive Statement. The PROW Officer at SCC had reviewed all the evidence and produced a report for the Local Committee. An 1845 map, discovered by Brian Bouchard, showed the existence of a footpath before the railway was built. Peter Williams had produced evidence of continuous access. This had convinced the Councillors on the Local Committee and the Officer's recommendation – that it was not a PROW – had been overturned. The actual wording to request the Statement be amended to match the map would be agreed at the next Local Committee. Network Rail (NR) could then lodge an objection in which event the final decision would rest with the Secretary of State. CT added that the decision was passed by 11 votes for with one abstention. Common sense had prevailed. The battle had been won but not yet the war. NR could object, or they could just close the crossing on safety grounds.

PW considered that despite NR maintaining the crossing was high risk, a statistician would argue there would be greater risks involved in having to use the longer road route.

**Q** It appeared the Electoral Boundary Review was recommending a reduction from 41 to 39 MVDC Councillors, with three per Ward. Would that mean Asstead would have to lose one Councillor and be reduced to two Wards?

**A** DLH responded that the AIs' recommendation that the Review be undertaken by a cross-party selection of councillors had been rejected by the Cabinet. The Review would also decide upon the make-up of future elections.

CT noted that, with a population of c15,000 residents, Ashtead was the largest community in the whole of Mole Valley.

DLH explained that some rural wards had only one Councillor, so the idea was to reduce the number of Wards from 21 to 13, and to expand the size of rural wards, with each having three Councillors.

**Q** What was the situation regarding Ermyn Way and the Local Plan, given that the current traffic congestion would be exacerbated if more housing was built.

**A** DJH replied that the Regulation 19 Plan showed MVDC had responded to residents' comments to exclude areas in the Green Belt. Barnett Wood Lane was now excluded and also Beare Green which was close to an AONB. Ermyn Way was still in the Draft Plan though there were concerns with its proximity to the M25, the prevailing wind taking traffic particulates across the proposed site and it being more than a mile away from the nearest railway station.

It was a contentious site for all those reasons in addition to the issue of traffic congestion.

CT said SCC was aware that there are four schools in the immediate vicinity with congestion having a knock-on effect on the Knoll Roundabout and the M25 exit ramp. Highways England was currently reviewing Junction 10 of the M25. It was understood that they would then move on to consider Junction 9 which would include the Ermyn Way crossroads.

PW pointed out that the AIs had fought tooth and nail to have the Barnett Wood Lane site excluded from the Plan, to maintain the gap between Ashtead and Leatherhead.

At the close of the meeting DLH asked residents to consider becoming an AI candidate for the May 2022 Mole Valley Council election.

GP thanked the Councillors for their time and the audience for attending and their continued support of the Association.

## WHO MAKES DECISIONS IN MOLE VALLEY?

Over the last year, Mole Valley District Council had to take several far-reaching decisions, some of which will be irreversible and fundamentally affect Ashtead residents for generations. Yet you were not asked for your views on some, and even your elected Councillors had no opportunity to express theirs by a vote on several key issues. Whilst nothing has been done which is contrary to either local Government regulations or the Council's Constitution, many find this situation regrettable.

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England periodically re-assesses ward boundaries and numbers of elected Councillors in all local authorities, to determine if any changes are needed. The aims are to have a similar number of electors in each ward, and for electors to have an opportunity to vote in every election year. Mole Valley was last examined in 1996, and its turn came around again last year

For District Councillor elections three of every four years, as at present, each ward must have three Councillors with one coming up for election in each of the three years. Currently, Mole Valley has 21 wards, 7 with 1 Councillor, 8 with two, and just 6 with three. To have three per ward, the number of wards would need to be reduced to just 13, and the total number of Councillors to be divisible by three implying 39 rather than 42 seats. A Cabinet Working Group, despite numerous meetings, failed to come up with a generally acceptable system of new ward boundaries.

There was an alternative, that all seats would come up for election once every four years, making it possible for each ward to have one, two or three Councillors as at present, provided that the number of electors per Councillor was roughly the same. The periodicity of elections and the number of Councillors are both matters reserved for the Council, not the Commission. Motions were put to Council on two occasions for the District to have one-in-four yearly elections and single-member wards, but the current Administration would not consult residents on these options.

The District is therefore now destined to lose two Councillor seats and to have just 13 wards, some covering huge geographical areas. The Commission is set to publish its proposals in the summer. There will then be a chance for all of us to comment on the drawing of the boundaries themselves — but the number of wards and number of Councillors is now fixed by the Administration.

The new system is scheduled to take effect in May 2023, when Ashtead faces a reduction from three to two wards, and from seven to six Councillors. All six seats will come up for election at that time, so our three Councillor positions to be filled this May will have terms of just one year.

Another instance where decision making is questionable relates to the Draft Local Plan for 2020-2037. This fixes planning policies and determines how the housing targets placed on the District by central Government are to be met, including the release of Green Belt land for building. This extensive procedure has been through two exhaustive public consultations. Comments were received from numerous individuals and organizations (including a lengthy one from the ARA).

In general this has been undertaken in a very objective manner by the Council's Planning Officers and there have been almost monthly discussions – which were open to all Councillors on the suggestion of the Ashtead Independents (AIs). Planning policies were reworked and all sites proposed scrutinized against generally agreed criteria. In February Council voted, by a majority of six, to submit the Draft to the Planning Inspectorate for examination – along with the comments received during consultation.

The AIs voted against. We opposed, not just on the grounds of the proposed developments on Green Belt, being principally directed to the already built-up areas (including Ashtead) and the lack of plans to improve infrastructure, but because there had been no opportunity for Councillors, even in the Cabinet Working Group, to actually vote on the inclusion of individual sites or the new policies. When the public examination by the Inspector starts, probably in June, there will then be a chance for residents to press again for Green Belt retention and infrastructure provision.

**Clr David L Hawsworth CBE**

**Leader, Ashtead Independents**

## **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
Mrs Lynda Coburn, Willow Brae, Grange Road, Leatherhead, KT22 7JU	07779 865562
Martin Cox, 10 Paddocks Way, KT21 2QZ	279682
David Knoyle, 6 Beechcroft, KT21 2TY	273771
Tony Mansell, Cashio Berry, Ashtead Woods Road, KT21 2EQ	877438
Peter Shrubsole, 40 Summerfield, KT21 2LF	270460
Peter Stanyard, Moonfleet, Farm Lane, KT21 1LW	07785 243988
Mrs Janet Webber, Kerria, Highfields, KT21 2NL	278221

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Hon. Membership Secretary: Mr Tony Mansell

0300 030 9980

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

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