

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE STRAWBERRY HILL RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION , HELD ON MONDAY, APRIL 19TH, 2010 AT STRAWBERRY HILL GOLF CLUB

<u>PRESENT</u>	Joint Chairmen	Robert Youngs/Bruce Duff
	Joint Secretaries	Clare Phelps/ Pam Crisp
	Treasurer	John Naish
	Committee members	Teresa Read, Eugene Bacot Mike Allsop
	Conservative Candidate	Deborah Thomas
	Councillors	David Porter, Clare Head David Marlow
	Residents	approximately 60 present
<u>APOLOGIES</u>	Committee members	John Armstrong
	MP	Vince Cable
	Police	Safer Neighbourhood Team

Bruce Duff, who chaired the meeting, welcomed everyone.

Bruce then asked the meeting to approve the minutes of last years AGM. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

Chairman's report – Bruce Duff

Once again, I'd like to thank you all for coming along this evening.

Looking back over the year 2009-2010, the Strawberry Hill Residents Association – SHRA – has been very active on your behalf. And we're glad to be able to report quite a number of successes. Perhaps the most significant has been the opening of the zebra crossing at the junction of Waldegrave Road and Tower Road – reported at length in the latest issue of the SHRA Bulletin, which I hope you are all receiving regularly at your homes. First mooted at the end of 2008, it took 15 months of battling the Council bureaucrats to get the crossing installed at this busy and potentially dangerous intersection - and I'd like to thank our two Councillors, Clare Head and David Marlow, for their help and support.

Another situation that SHRA was able to influence was when Young's Brewery decided to rename The Pope's Grotto, our best-loved local pub, The Alexander. We were appalled to lose the pub's historic association with the world-famous literary figure of Pope himself and at the last minute, the brewery agreed to our compromise proposal, The Alexander Pope.

We pressured our long-suffering Councillors to persuade the Council to carry out a hedge and tree trimming exercise, as it was getting difficult to walk on pavements overgrown with shrubs and branches. And in this context, did you know that Juliet Taylor is our Ward Champion and she welcomes any points regarding the environment in Strawberry Hill. You can contact Juliet through the main Council switchboard.

A major success as a result of non-stop lobbying by SHRA has been the refurbishment of the stairways at the station. I am sure you will agree that the appearance of the station looks much better. But the project is certainly not finished, as we now intend to apply ourselves to persuading Network Rail to renovate the footbridge, with its unsightly corrugated plastic side panels. I have spoken recently to the chief engineer of Osborne's, the contractors responsible for the stairs refurbishment, and he seemed hopeful that the work could be carried out during the current financial year, 2010-2011. WE SHALL SEE, AND WE WILL CONTINUE TO HARASS NETWORK RAIL.

Once again, the Christmas carol event in the village went off very well – in fact, it was the most successful yet, with about 150 adults and children gathering around the tree to sing and enjoy festive treats. Altogether, we raised £350, which was duly donated to Roy Kinnear House, our wonderful local care home for people with learning difficulties.

The SHRA Bulletin goes from strength to strength. Shops featured in the latest issue are already reporting noticeable increase in business, with lots of local customers commenting on the articles about them.

SHRA has worked closely with St Mary's College to set up a joint committee with us to discuss any issues concerning the College and affecting our neighbourhood. So far, there seems to be a fair amount of goodwill between Town and Gown – and long may it continue!

Unfortunately, we failed to have the antennae on top of Rochester House removed. Despite the welcome support of Vince Cable, our MP, and our Councillors, Big Brother steam-rolled through all the objections.

Nor were we able to persuade the businesses in Wellesley Parade (on the far side of the level crossing) to back us in applying for timed parking in front of their shops. The idea was to allow customers to park and shop, which is impossible now with the spread of commuter parking. But a local landlord completely misinterpreted the campaign, seeing it as an effort to impose a Controlled Parking Zone – CPZ – on the entire area, which would have been detrimental to his 12 tenants. So he influenced the traders to vote against an innovation which would have been to the good of everyone.

On a more positive note, I'd like to bring to your attention the new edition of "The History of Strawberry Hill", by Tony Beckles Willson, a former chairman of SHRA. This revised version, with up-to-date text and enhanced pictures, is offered today at the special AGM price of £5.99. It makes an ideal gift and has been produced to coincide with the big new exhibition "Horace Walpole and Strawberry Hill", now on at the V&A.

There are a number of people I want to thank for their sterling work over many years for Strawberry Hill residents. Joe Brett and Mike O'Hagan, two stalwarts of SHRA committees, have retired and Sergeant Denzil Darby, our neighbourhood policeman, has moved on to other Metropolitan Police duties. In his place, we welcome Sgt. Claire Hughes-Smith, who says that she – like Denzil – will make it a priority to involve herself in local issues. Our thanks, as always, to our hard-working Councillors, who do everything they can to ease our path through to the corridors of power in the Council. I would also like to thank our volunteers who deliver the bulletin around the neighbourhood.

And finally, perhaps I could ask you to help SHRA to keep up the good work by paying your annual subscriptions - either to our Membership Secretary or to the shops accepting them. As you know, Committee members do not receive any remuneration, so the full subs amount is applied to our activities on behalf of Strawberry Hill residents.

Treasurers Report – John Naish

John noted that bank interest had decreased significantly from last year. Some expenses from the 2008 Carol event were included this year resulting in a £110 deficit for the year. John proposed thanks to Carol Ruddock for her first class job in auditing the accounts and recommended her re-election. This was approved, proposed by Bruce Duff and seconded by John Naish.

Election of SHRA committee

Bruce handed over to Clare Phelps who asked the meeting to approve the re-election of the joint chairmen. This was proposed by Clare Phelps and seconded by Mike Allsop. Bruce proposed the re-election of the joint secretaries, seconded by Colin O'Keefe. Bruce also proposed the re-election of the Treasurer, seconded by Pam Crisp. Robert Youngs propose the re-election of the other committee members, seconded by Clare Head.

Any other business

Closing of the station ticket office – June Collins

Bruce advised the meeting that Vince Cable is pursuing this issue with the train operating company

Clearing of railway arches – George Kerpner Mr Kerpner pointed out that a number of arches near 45 Orford Gardens have been cleared and it is not obvious that permission for use has been granted, Cllr Head will follow this up with Victoria Holsworth.

Wellesley Crescent Green – Arthur Tarrant Mr Tarrant commented on how nice the green looked with daffodils in flower and new waste bins in place. He thanked the council for these improvements.

Strawberry Hill House – Rodney Murray-Jones Renovation work is on-going and is still scheduled to finish in time for the re-opening in September 2010.

Parking on Wellesley Road – Patricia Bassett Mrs Bassett raised the issue of pavement parking by Strawberry Hill College. She thought that this was particularly dangerous when construction vehicles were parked opposite. Cllr Head pointed out that consultation must have happened before this was put in place. She also questioned where parked cars would go if these spaces were removed. Mike Allsop commented that traffic and parking is an issue but the College cannot stop students bringing cars. They are planning a survey of car ownership by students in halls of residence.

John Naish reminded everyone about the Strawberry Hill Golf Club Open Day on 31st May.

Bruce thanked the committee for all their work.

The meeting closed at 8:10 pm