



Banstead Village Residents Association

64th Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 25th May 2011

1. *Welcome by Chairman:*

Roger Collins introduced himself and welcomed all those present. He thanked those who were in attendance, outlined the evening's agenda and drew the attention of those present at the meeting to the fact that Cllr Brian Cowle and Cllr Sam Walsh were in attendance, but unfortunately Cllr Mrs Angela Fraser and Cllr Dr Lynne Hack were unable to attend.

2. *Minutes of the 63rd Annual General Meeting:*

Roger Collins proposed that the minutes of the last Annual General Meeting in May 2010 of which a summary had been handed out to those present, be taken as read. This was seconded by Ron Phillips and passed with no objections.

3. *Police Liaison*

PCSO Jackie Phillips was in attendance. She reported to the meeting that a cannabis factory had been found in a property in Court Road and several arrests had been made. She asked that the registration numbers of suspicious vehicles should be reported to the police immediately. She added that there was still no news on the future of the police in Banstead and that Surrey Police were still looking for a location. There was no news on the sale of Banstead Police Station. There had been a failed attempt at a carjacking in Corydon Lane. Banstead had a new full time police officer, Leah Mort, and PC Sue Rowe now had responsibility for Netherne, Lower Kingswood and Hooley. The Beat Panel Meetings are being monitored but are struggling because of very low attendance. Jackie Phillips reminded every one present that the next meeting would be on July 15th at 7.30pm.

4. *Presentation by John Peacock, Chairman of the Banstead Commons Conservators.*

The chairman then introduced our guest speakers, John Peacock, Chairman of the Banstead Commons Conservators. Mr Peacock centred his talk on the plans of Sutton & East Surrey to lay a greater part of a pipeline from Mogador to Burgh Heath across Banstead Heath. He explained that the history of the Banstead Commons goes back to 1066 and the feudal system. The commons comprise Banstead Downs, Park Downs, Burgh Heath and Banstead Heath. Much of the land is metropolitan common land. In the 1860s parliamentary protection was given to all commons in London and in 1893 a supplementary act was passed to protect Banstead commons as a local landowner, Sir John Hartop, was buying up the common land around Belmont to extract soil. As a result of this supplementary act conservators were appointed, 2 by the land

owners and 6 by the vestry of Reigate and Banstead. Mr Peacock was able to say that as a result of these acts it was possible to prove that routing the new pipeline across heath land would be illegal.

5. *Chairman's Report*

Roger Collins started by saying that on the assumption that the association members have read the recent NewsSheet they would know that much of the association's recent activity had been directed to the Surrey County Council proposal to introduce on-street parking charges in Banstead, along with many other Surrey villages. The council had met the previous day to make the final decision on this project. BVRA had raised a petition in Banstead to object to the proposals, for which had gained over 4,000 signatures mainly through the invaluable assistance of the Banstead shopkeepers who were very worried that charges for parking would damage their businesses. The petition was presented to the councillor responsible for the project and the association had therefore been invited to make a 3 minute presentation to the council meeting, which Roger Collins had done the previous day. He continued by saying that an earlier meeting of councillors had already rejected the parallel electronic petition managed by Caroline Salmon which had raised 26,000 signatures. He added that the decision the previous day had gone against BVRA. Roger Collins this to be a perfect example of local democracy failing and the members should consider the council to be acting irresponsibly, by jeopardising the future of Banstead High Street, and undemocratically by ignoring the views of their electorate. The members present were invited to ask questions about the matter in the Open Forum debate.

Roger Collins next reminded people that he had reported at last year's AGM on the local council's Core Strategy and on the Longcroft clinic. He added that Both matters had been overtaken by new government policies. Reigate & Banstead Borough Council now found itself in the position of being free to decide on how many houses to build which would resolve the long struggle to resist the imposition on them of unrealistic housing targets. BVRA would shortly hear of the Council's new plans when they issued the Local Development Framework for consultation. Meanwhile, the Longcroft issue could be subsumed into the Lansley proposals to pass responsibility for commissioning of medical treatment to consortia of GPs in place of the PCTs, which would be wound up. The Longcroft is part of the Mid Surrey Commissioning group of 13 practices. This would not resolve the problem of their lack of space for GPs and equipment but it would change the nature of the medical service patients receive. He added that the whole policy was currently on hold for review, so once more it was a matter of watch the space.

Roger Collins went on to talk about the village lights. He reminded everyone that the new lamp posts in the High Street would shortly be installed and that he believed that the contractor would transfer the BVRA equipment to the new posts, but not the light strings. They would need replacing and that means money. The Association Committee was waiting to find out how much but he expected it to be a matter of several thousand pounds. Fund raising could soon therefore be an issue for the Association.

As regards general planning matters, our vice chairman Mike Sawyer would be able to answer any questions the members might have. It had been a quiet year for planning applications and developers were holding their fire until they see how the new government's policies will run.

The Chairman concluded by inviting his audience to raise any questions they might have under agenda item 8, the Open Forum debate. He then moved on to admin matters.

6) *Presentation of audited Accounts:*

David Gradidge, the BVRA honorary treasurer then presented the accounts which had been audited and are published on the back page of the May Newsheet. It was reported by David Gradidge that accounts covered the fact that the Association's financial year end had been moved from the end of January to the end of March. A donation of £500 had been made to the Lady Neville appeal for extra equipment and the committee will look favourably at other good causes in the village. At this point Mrs Diana Bowes proposed the acceptance of the 2010-2011 accounts, this was seconded by Mrs Mary Palmer.

7) *Election of Officers:*

Roger Collins then moved to the election of the Hon. Treasurer, the Hon. Secretary and the Executive Committee and reminded the members that the Executive Committee will appoint the chairman at the meeting on the following Tuesday. He was very glad to say that both David Gradidge and Catalina Vassallo-Bonner were standing again for Hon. Treasurer and Hon. Secretary respectively, and he took the opportunity to thank them for their more than usual work over the past year. He added that together with the invaluable Road Stewards they made this association function. He then asked for a proposer and seconder for David and Catalina. Both David Gradidge and Catalina Vassallo-Bonner were proposed by Sally Hull, and seconded by Ron Phillips and appointed as Treasurer and Hon. Secretary with no objection from the meeting. The Hon Auditor was proposed by Nina Sawyer and seconded by Audrey Carty?

Roger Collins continued to say that it was the custom to elect the Executive Committee en bloc. He was pleased, in fact amazed, to say that the committee had lost no one during the year, but, indeed, had gained one extra member, John Conacher; moreover everyone had agreed to serve for another year, for which he was most grateful. The current members were: Drina van den Berg, Shirley Conacher, Midge Reed, John Conacher, Tony Ford, Richard Heath, Alan Lansdown, and Graeme Ward; also Mike Sawyer and himself who were currently Chairman and Vice Chairman. He then asked for a proposer and seconder for the committee. The committee was duly proposed by Sally Hull and seconded by Beryl Penfold.

Roger Collins concluded by offering a big thank you to all committee members.

8) *Welcome to Local Councillors and Open Forum:*

The meeting was informed that unfortunately Mrs Angela Fraser DL, Banstead's Surrey County Councillor, and Borough Councillor Dr Lynne Hack were unable to attend but that Borough Councillors Sam Walsh and Brian Cowle were in attendance. Among the areas covered by questions were:

- Carparking charges: It was felt that charging for parking in Banstead was an affront to democracy. Reigate & Banstead was the only borough in Surrey to balance its enforcement budget. Suggestions were made which would involve metering one side of the High Street and that people would take a chance by parking without paying. It was pointed out that it could take 10 years to recoup the cost of installing cash machines. It was felt by those in attendance at the meeting that BVRA should continue to resist the imposition of parking charges and that a meeting could be sought with Crispin Blunt, the local MP.
- Carparking: It was felt that some parking should be available at the Police Station end of Banstead and it was suggested by Cllr Cowle that the land between the Woolpack and Chuck's meadow might be suitable
- The Downland Group: Cllr Cowle explained that he had left the Tory party as a councillor and was now part of a new group called the Downland Group with other councillors from this part of the borough. This allowed him to speak out in favour of Banstead rather than having to toe the party line.
- The Lady Neville: Despite the fact that the updating of Priory Park in Reigate had not cost the residents any money the people of Banstead were being asked for £15,000 half the cost of completing children's playground at the Lady Neville. It was felt that when the work was completed before the school summer holidays the ownership of the equipment should pass to the local community.

9) *Any Other Business:*

There being no other business the meeting closed at 22.00