

**MINUTES OF SOPWELL RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION AGM HELD AT THE  
COTTONMILL COMMUNITY CENTRE AND CYCLING HUB ON FRIDAY 9  
JUNE 2023**

**THOSE PRESENT: Janet Audley-Charles (Chairman), Karen Lilly (Secretary), Kate Swindells (Treasurer) Gail Jackson, Jo Cooney, Elaine Rainsford, Michelle Mackenzie, Rick Taylor, Steve Peters, Mark James, Adelle Stapleton, Chantal Burns, Sandy Norman, Sarwar Shamsheer (Councillor) Emma Matanle (Councillor), Harriet Sherlock (Councillor), Sandy Walkington (District Councillor), Peter Wares, Jennifer Taylor, Mark Guest, Andrew Lunn, Aline Bavister, Giles Hanford, Ranjena Golul, Christoph Lutz, David Berryman, Fran Burrow, Chris Blanch (Everyone Active), Tina Swain, Peter Colvin, Val Langford, Sheila Philpot, Ed Jankowski, Keith Aldridge**

**1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Janet welcomed everyone to the 18th AGM.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**Shelley Hayles, Teresa Frame, Brad Andrew, Linda & Barry Bateman**

**3. MINUTES OF AGM HELD ON 24<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2020 VIA ZOOM**

The minutes were approved as a true record. Proposed by Sandy Norman and Seconded by Michelle Mackenzie.

**4. MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

**5. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

**Report from July 2022 to May 2023**

Janet welcome everyone to the AGM. It was 20 years since SRA was formed and a lot has happened over the years. Later on there will be a presentation from Giles Hanford and Sandy Norman who were the first and second Chair persons. Janet said she would also like to pay tribute to Jack Hill who had recently passed away. He was a member of the committee for 15 years and was very well known around the community. Janet said it was a year since the Community Centre had opened and it was proving popular. The official opening was on 4 March 2023. The Mayor and Daisy Cooper came along, with local councillors also. The SRA had a stall there, along with a few others local groups. There was a good turnout and it was a great day. Other events that SRA have taken part in are, Larks in the Parks – 10 July 2022, Autumn Festival, 30<sup>th</sup> October 2022, Warm Hub - November 2022-March 2023, which which some committee members helped run each week, Local Election and Photo ID information, organised by SRA.

The newsletter is produced twice a year and there is usually plenty of volunteers to distribute it

## **Sopwell Eco-stars Report**

Janet read out the following report from Sopwell eco-stars.

Sopwell eco-stars is a new sub-group of Sopwell Residents Association. We are bringing the community together to address climate change and inter-related issues and build local resilience.

We put on community events with local partners towards these aims, including repair fairs, seasonal cooking sessions, jumble sales, energy and insulation information events and more. We are also helping to build a network of community leaders to spread awareness and work together on issues like supporting our vulnerable residents during heatwaves.

Cottonmill Community and Cycling Update – Michelle Mackenzie

It's now a year since our new Cottonmill Community and Cycling Centre finally opened.

In that year we have continued to meet regularly with the Council and the other CCCC Forum members. We have held Larks in the Parks, the Sopwell Autumn Festival, a repair fair, jumble sale, an election info event, and a Community Leaders event. During the coldest months we held weekly 'Warm Café' sessions and finally, in March this year, we had centre's Grand Opening ceremony.

We have also installed a community defibrillator which was purchased through a Herts County Council scheme. Helped kit out the community kitchen, furnished the Quiet Room and added containers providing free sanitary and incontinence wear in each of the toilets. In the café we have installed a book-share bookcase, mug-swap scheme, board games, toys and a games table.

And, coming up, there is The Cottonmill Gathering (formerly Larks in the Parks) on 16 July and the Cottonmill Ride community cycling day in 16 September- so pop those dates in your diaries!

## **6. TREASURERS REPORT**

Report attached. Kate went through her report. Next year we will be a registered charity so accounts will have to be looked at by accountants.

The accounts were adopted and were proposed by Rick Taylor and seconded by Gail Jackson

## **7. COMMITTEE STEPPING DOWN**

Brad Andrew is stepping down as general committee member,

## **8. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

The following people are putting themselves forward for re-election

Chair Janet Charles

Proposed by Gail Jackson and seconded by Adelle Stapleton

Treasurer. Kate Swindells

Proposed by Chris Blanch and seconded by Elaine Rainsford

Secretary Karen Lilly

Proposed by Jo Cooney and seconded by Michelle Mackenzie

Committee Members

Teresa Frame Rick Taylor, Gail Jackson, Mark James, Steve Peters, Elaine Rainsford, Michelle Mackenzie, Adelle Stapleton, Jo Cooney, Shelley Hayles, Chantal Burns,

Sandy Norman ex-officio

Proposed by Karen Lilly and Seconded by Val Langford

## **9. AOB**

Gail Jackson and Sandy Walkington - Fight the Freight

Gail gave an update on what is happening with Fight the Freight. There is a campaign group and a petition to sign. The county council have sold the land and it will be road freight which will cause havoc on the local roads.

Emma Matanle gave an update of what was happening in the area. There is no news yet of when the double yellow lines are being done on Old Oak. She said she was chasing it as it is very dangerous around there.

Jenny Lane – the houses have now been sold. The opening ceremony is on 29th July. Jenny's family have been invited.

Elaine Rainsford gave an update on the Cottonmill Gathering. This was being held on 16<sup>th</sup> July. There would be various stalls, fairground games, donkeys. Also St Julians Church will be serving tea and cake. The community pantry will also be serving food.

Aline Bavister gave an update on the Community Pantry. It celebrated its first anniversary recently. There are usually between 30-50 people on a Monday. A professional hairdresser comes once a month. In the school holidays they serve breakfast to the children. Emergency food boxes are distributed on a regular basis.

There is a female only cycling event on 14<sup>th</sup> June at the Centre.

Chantal Burns gave an update re Abbey Flyer and said warning lights were being installed at the crossing. Just waiting for an update of when.

Peter Wares said he would be leading a bike ride from Abbots Avenue West.

Gail said the Grow Community Open Day was on 11 June 2023. Everybody welcome.

#### **10. DATE OF NEXT AGM**

To be confirmed.

#### **11. GUEST SPEAKERS**

Giles Hanford & Sandy Norman who were the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Chair people, gave an interesting presentation on how Sopwell Residents Association was formed 20 years ago. Giles gave an introduction on how it all began. Sandy showed slides of various events through the years. Sandy also mentioned her book of the area which was launched at Sopwell House a few years ago.

After the formalities were over. The celebrations continued with a cake and fizz. Food was provided by the Community Pantry. They provided a lovely spread.