



WELCOMES & UPLANDS ROAD ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD IN KENLEY MEMORIAL HALL ON TUESDAY JUNE 7th June 2012 at 8:00 pm

Chairman's Opening Remarks

The Chairman welcomed the residents present and thanked them for attending.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Mr and Mrs Darnell, Mr and Mrs Runacres, Mr and Mrs P. Dixon, Sally Poccocke, Mr and Mrs Daffin, Mr and Mrs Thurgood, and Mrs Dixson-Smith.

In attendance

Committee: Colin Brown (Chairman), Richard Russell (Secretary), Peter Davis (Treasurer), Erik Haar Hartmut Klein, Michael Lott (Uplands Road Representative), and Robin McCallum.

Residents: 17 (10 in 2011) attended representing 11 (8 in 2011) households of 214 households plus 7 Committee Members.

Special guests: Len Arnold of Arnold Tarmac, Frank Gaskin of Blocplan and Cllr Steve O'Connell for Kenley

Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 7th June 2011 were adopted.
Proposed by Rob McCallum and seconded by Erik Haar.

Matters Arising

None

Spending proposal on resurfacing roads

The meeting began with a question and answer session with Len Arnold and Frank Gaskin who kindly attended to answer questions about the proposed road resurfacing. The Secretary read out the core questions sent in by email from residents and the main issues dealt with can be summarised as follows:-

Q. Spray and chip is a cheap job which will soon wear out and create a mess from vehicle tracks, melting tar in hot weather and stone chips being washed to the bottom of Welcomes Road as happened last time the road was resurfaced.

A. The modern method of doing spray and chip will involve shutting down sections of the road for 24 hours, sweeping the road clean, applying a flash seal and after drying over night applying a bitumen spray with 10mm stone chips. The treated section will be rolled with a rubber roller drum and then swept again for surplus chips. The flash spray creates a mesh on the surface to ensure optimum binding and stability. The best bitumen will be used and there will be no water added as some contractors do as this will reduce longevity.

In the context of sweeping it was agreed that the Secretary would ask residents in the Newsletter and on the web site not to blow leaves into the road but to pick them up and bag them.

Q. How long will the resurfacing last and is there any guarantee?

A. Arnold Tarmac Ltd, which has been in business for 34 years, are confident of a long lasting surface but will always come back and redo any defective work attributable to them without charge. The 10mm stone could last up to 20 years.

Q. Between 12 and 30 Welcomes Road there is no camber and rain water travels down the middle of the road and does not stay in the gullies. Can this be corrected?

A. Probably not without planing the surface which is not advisable in the case of Welcomes Road which has no stable base and was extensively repaired by Frank Gaskin in 2010 at some considerable expense. This is one argument against applying a layer of tarmac, which apart from the prohibitive cost, could undermine the stability of the road.

Q. Can we apply an anti skid surface to certain key sections?

A. This will be done at both ends of Uplands Road and the entrances to Welcomes Road. The brown surface will reinforce the impression of a private road area and hopefully keep down unwelcome through traffic.

Q. What can be done about improving drainage on Welcomes Road?

A. There is a point in Welcomes Road opposite roughly No 90 on the woodland side where water crosses the road which seems to be a natural place to build a soakaway or French drain (a soakaway back filled with ballast). Such a soakaway could remove significant amounts of water and is successfully used at the bottom of Zig Zag Road which in mid 1990s was impassable at times. The construction costs of such a drain should not be great. **The permission of the owner of the woodland would be sought should we decide to proceed with a test drain.** Other drains exist along Welcomes Road and have been cleared in the past only to block up very shortly afterwards. Frank Gaskin expressed some scepticism that the new soakaway proposed would work because of the high volumes of water involved. One resident wondered who was clearing away the debris that builds up at the bottom of Welcomes Road after heavy rain. In the past residents have been urged not to concrete over drives to keep water flow into Welcomes Road to a minimum.

Len and Frank left after this session and the meeting showed its appreciation of their attendance.

The proposal to spend approximately £78,000 (inc VAT) on the work awarding the contract to Arnold Tarmac Ltd., was passed with an overwhelming majority on the basis that work on Uplands Road will be completed in 2013/14 and that there will be no charge for returning the plant and machinery to the site. It was further agreed by the same majority that there will be no further test strip done in 10mm stone and that the entire length of Welcomes Road will be resurfaced later in 2012 without waiting for decisions on planning applications for plots 5,6,7,9, and 10 on the basis that nothing may happen for 2 or 3 years with these possible developments. It was further agreed that GML, who built the houses on 8 and 8a, **will be formally approached by letter** for a financial contribution to WURA in terms of the developers agreement they signed. Two recent emails sent to GML by the Chairman have been ignored. It is also to be made clear to Arnold Tarmac Ltd that payment will be related pro rata to the actually work done. The water leak/spring at the top of Welcomes will be further investigated. **A letter setting out these terms will be written to Arnold Tarmac Ltd to avoid future misunderstandings.**

Chairman's Report and discussions with Steve O'Connell Cllr Kenley

The Chairman welcomed Michael Lott and Hartmut Klein to the Committee and thanked them for their input since joining the Committee. The death of Dave Barrell was reported in the Summer Newsletter and it was reiterated by the Chairman that he will be much missed and the meeting was reminded of the considerable contribution he made to the running of WURA when he was Secretary in particular.

Steve O'Connell was introduced and there was general discussion about ways to reduce and/or slow traffic on WURA roads. Ideas included positioning CCTV cameras at the entrances to Welcomes and Uplands and recording transit times and number plates and then sending letters to offenders, placing bollards in Welcomes at the Uplands junction for a period thus blocking the route through Welcomes. Another resident mentioned speeding through the narrowing Hayes Lane at the Welcomes Road junction and the incidents that occur. **Could that resident keep a record of accidents at this point over the coming 6 months** before any further approaches are made to the Council about restoring speed humps? Steve O'Connell reminded the meeting that the Council had polled frontagers to Hayes Lane about restoring speed humps and the consensus was to reduce their number.

It was agreed that the Chairman and Secretary would arrange a meeting with Steve O'Connell to discuss what can be done to reduce and/or slow traffic along our roads and report back to residents.

The Secretary pointed out that the Council are frontagers to our roads at Hayes Lane, Abbotts Lane and Valley Road and on this basis should make some financial contribution to the upkeep of our roads which are used by a wide variety of vehicles. The question of responsibility/liability for waste water was touched on.

In addition the Council has approved new developments on cul de sacs with access to public roads only via private WURA roads and as such some financial support from the Council would be appropriate. Mr O'Connell suggested a well argued letter to the Chief Executive copied to him might produce a result. **Secretary to action this.**

Another resident mentioned the poor repairs to the road left by utility companies after they have carried out work on their systems. In the past the Secretary has written to all the utilities about digging holes in our roads and they are aware of our requirements. Enforcing them is another matter but **further letters mentioning the new surfacing will be sent by the Secretary.**

The paper titled **Road Frontage Policy Guidelines for Consideration** was discussed by the floor and Mr O'Connell. One resident spent some time setting out the possible legal implications of putting such guidelines on the WURA web site and was asked to submit this research to the Secretary for future use. The time and energy spent on the work was much appreciated. The meeting however felt that as the proposed guidelines are only a list of aspirations with no possibility of legal enforcement it would not affect the legal position of any individual householder in any adverse way. One resident specifically phoned the Secretary before the AGM supporting the adoption of the guidelines.

Mr O'Connell felt that the guidelines were a good idea in principle and in due course could be passed to Kendra to bear in mind when considering planning applications. **The overwhelming majority of delegates voted that the guidelines be adopted and placed on our web site after further fine tuning. Also to be passed to Kendra the local residents association to be taken into account in dealing with planning applications.**

Mr O'Connell was quizzed on enforcement of the removal of illegal building/fencing and he admitted that the process of enforcement can be very protracted due to the right of appeal and in some cases the right to seek retrospective planning permission.

There was general astonishment expressed about the new shiny facade on Hayes Lane Primary School and Mr O'Connell seemed to agree it was inappropriate to the surroundings but there had only been one objection and the plans were approved.

A member of the Committee raised the question of painting double yellow lines to stop inconsiderate parking at the junction of Abbots and Hayes during the school run. Some consultation with nearby residents will be needed. **The Secretary will write to Mr O'Connell about this issue.**

Mr O'Connell was allowed to go home at 9.25pm. His attendance was much appreciated particularly after he had already had a hard day!

On the question of road sweeping the Chairman had negotiated 3 sweeps per year with Veolia for £1800 which seemed a better deal than meeting the costs of taking waste to Kent by the old contractors.

The problem of the prolonged icing up of Welcomes Road on the bend near No 60 was raised and the **Chairman will organise another grit bin to cover this stretch of road.**

Fun Day contribution: No Fun Day 2012 so the usual £200 donation will not be required.

Secretary's Report

The usual 2 newsletters were produced in the year earning a modest sum from advertising. It was pointed out from the floor that the Newsletter needs to use the word Road in the heading not WURA which can be construed as a residents association which we are definitely not.

Drafted papers on the Guidelines for frontagers and the Road Spending proposal whilst keeping residents informed of road matters via emails and the web site.

There was a vote of thanks to Andy Spencer Jones for his prompt updating of the web site and arranging the hosting and maintenance, all at a modest cost to WURA.

The Secretary informed the meeting that Ardenrun Estates Ltd have reapplied for planning permission to build 2 modest houses on the wooded plot at 7-9 Welcomes Road. The original plans were approved in 1999/2000 but were never acted upon as the Council seemed to require WURA to grant permission for access (which exists already) including rights of way over Welcomes Road for vehicular traffic. As WURA does not own the road and is unlikely to for cost reasons the Association can only write a letter of 'no objection' to the access. Ardenrun have offered to pay WURA £2000 per house towards road improvements and have also cooperated in modifying the proposed plans to tone down the over large gates proposed which exit onto Welcomes Road and to make sure there is plenty of off road parking available. No rain water will be allowed to drain into Welcomes Road either. It was recommended that we write a letter of 'no objection' if called upon to do so leaving it to the developers legal advisers to resolve any problems for the new owners in seeking clean title. **The meeting unanimously agreed to allowing the letter of 'no objection' to be written if required whilst leaving the planning application to proceed in the usual way.**

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer mentioned the usual problem of levy arrears – 6 were overdue at the time of the AGM. On the question of arrears we have usually collected them via conveyancing solicitors when houses exchange hands. Levy income remained stable at about £11,000 per annum. Because of the high expenditure to be incurred in the coming months sealing Welcomes Road reserves may fall to somewhere between £25,000 and £30,000. This is felt to be a sufficient buffer for all but the most dire emergency. In such a case an emergency levy would need to be raised. In the meantime there was unanimous agreement to keep the annual road levy unchanged.

The accounts were in the process of being audited at no cost by Gary Lowe and permission was sought by the Chairman from the floor **to buy Mr Lowe 6 bottles of wine** as in previous years in recognition of his help. This was carried unanimously. **The audited accounts will be placed on the web site in due course.**

The accounts and budget which includes a figure of £80,000 for resealing our roads were adopted. Proposer Robin McCallum. Secunder Hartmut Klein.

Election of Committee & Appointment of Auditor

The following offered themselves for election/re- election. Colin Brown, Chairman, Peter Davis, Treasurer, Richard Russell, Secretary, Erik Haar, Harmut Klein, Michael Lott (Uplands Representative), Robin McCallum, and Danielle Thurgood. Unanimously approved.

Mr Gary Lowe was re-appointed Auditor.

Any Other Business

Pat Magnus proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman for his long service to the community and WURA which was warmly endorsed by the meeting. The Committee was also thanked for their efforts.

Closure of Meeting

There being no other business the meeting closed at approximately 10.00 pm.