

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the PURLEY BEECHES RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Thursday 9 November 2023 at Purley Memorial Hall, Glebe Road, Purley on Thames

The Chairman, Barry Kochanek opened the meeting at 8.00pm.

1. **Apologies.** Received from: Ros & Matthew Crowder, Alison & Peter Lupton, Mick & Jan Williams
2. **Minutes of previous meeting.** Agreed as read.
3. **Matters arising.** There were no matters arising.
4. **Treasurer's report.**

The final balance as at 31 October 2023 amounted to £14,584.96, an increase from last year. 86 residents had paid their subscriptions this year by bank transfer and 40 had paid by cash or cheque. Full accounts were available at the meeting if any members wanted to scrutinise them.

5. Chairman's Report.

The Chairman began by thanking residents for attending the AGM, especially on such a dark and chilly evening. He expressed his thanks to all members of the committee: Treasurer, Tony Stener who also set up the Hall for the AGM; Margaret Rolfe, membership secretary, including organising the collection of subscriptions; Jill Brown, secretary and for organising drinks and nibbles for AGM; Margaret Richardson and Anne Ritchie who have important input during committee meetings.

(i) Eric Mason

The Chairman made reference to the sad passing of Eric Mason on 23 January this year. Eric was appointed one of the Trustees of the land held on behalf of the Association on 22 January 1987 and remained as such until his passing. Eric was always a keen supporter of the committee with plenty of practical advice. He wished to note that we recognise his 36 year contribution to the Association. On a happier note he wished to formally welcome Jo Coombes to the committee; Jo was elected at last year's AGM and had already made her mark with regard to raising funds.

(ii) Ash Die Back in the woods – potential cost.

This was mentioned at the last AGM and, having met with our tree surgeon, he estimates the work to be £17,400. There are 38 affected trees and much of the cost is for road closures and for specialist equipment as some of the affected trees abut the Oxford Road. The PBRA do not have this amount of funding available.

(iii) Fundraising to meet tree costs.

The Woodland Trust have been approached but was not able to help as they are more concerned with regeneration which may be relevant for any replanting. We also contacted the Good Exchange which is part of the Greenham Common Trust who have indicated the PBRA as an accepted applicant, which means they will match any offer received from a third party. We will continue to pursue this but in the meantime we have to consider raising funds from members.

Under the Trust Deed there are 164 beneficiaries which equates to a flat amount of £106 each to pay to cover the estimated cost of £17,400. If only members currently paying the annual subscription paid this would rise to £145 each.

We could seek to persuade the Parish Council or the West Berkshire Council to take on the responsibility for the woods. We know that funding is scarce and there is the question of the basis on which the approach should be i.e. handing over total ownership, with or without conditions. We must realise that once the woods go we would lose control. As a last resort all or some of the woods could be sold and the resulting funds distributed.

A suggestion from our new committee member would be to ask each household to put one hour's income into the Association.

(iv) More helpers for woods clear up

The Chairman thanked those who had turned out to help on clear up days but we always need more help. There is a lot of ivy to remove, shrubs to be lopped and clearing of vegetation from the walls and path edges, not forgetting litter picking.

(v) The Constitution and Trust Deed.

Both of these documents are available on the Purley on Thames website. It is felt that both need reviewing. The Deed is very simplistic although the basic content says who the beneficiaries are, who the trustees are and who holds the land on behalf of the beneficiaries. After obtaining a solicitor's advice draft, revised documents would be put to members to discuss and vote upon.

6. Election of committee and officers.

The Chairman asked for anyone with an interest to firstly consider becoming a trustee, as we are entitled to have four and now have two, or failing that to join the committee. The committee has taken charge now for many years and the average age is mid seventies – new blood is needed.

All existing committee members agreed to stand again and all were elected at the AGM by a show of hands.

7. A.O.B.

Discussions:

- (i) "One hour's income scheme" – a negative response as, bearing in mind AGM turnout, residents appear apathetic. Also concerns about confidentiality.
- (ii) Confirmed that Green Canopy would be preserved by re-planting trees
- (iii) Our Insurers have been advised of our Ash Die Back situation
- (iv) Consider asking for donations directly from Purley Beeches residents and other Purley on Thames residents. Use Purley Parish Magazine to give information and ask for donations?

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.

November 2023

Committee Members:

Barry Kochanek Chairman)	943 3819
Tony Stener (Treasurer)	941 7143
Margaret Rolfe (Memberships)	941 7247
Anne Ritchie	941 2465
Jill Brown (Secretary)	9412 326
Jo Coombes	

Trustees:

Barry Kochanek	
Margaret Richardson	942 3274