

# MINUTES

Barden Residents Association Meeting

Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017

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## In Attendance

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Mark Hood (Chair), Lucy Athey (secretary), Fran Long (treasurer), Martin Coulstock, Maureen Coulstock, Jo Young, Megan Le Goubin, Steph Wenzel, Felix Wenzel, Jan Davidson, Izzie Kerr, Laura Fox, Greg Fox, David Hibbs, Trina Winfield, Michael Cooper, Clive Ashdown, Andy Thistlewood, Ross Butcher, Sarah & Karl Hardcastle, B McCourt

## Approval of Minutes & Apologies

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Mark Hood (chair) called the meeting to order and the previously circulated minutes from the AGM/meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> November were approved. Apologies from Fred Long, Cindy Parkhurst, Joff Brown, Helen Kirk, Jon Sidaway and Gill Sargent

## Presentation from David Hibbs

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David Hibbs, a Holford Street resident, gave a comprehensive summary of his 3-year investigation into the drainage problems in the streets surrounding Holford Street and Danvers Road which were badly flooded in the Christmas 2013 floods. Mr Hibbs has been in lengthy discussions with KCC and Southern Water as he believes the excess surface water caused by drainage issues combined with the flood waters and made the flooding significantly worse. He informed the meeting of a pipe blockage, which has since been repaired and diverted by Southern Water into our sewer system - since the repair, Mr Hibbs has noticed no surface water in the previously affected areas (these being over the drains in River Lawn Road, Holford Street/Danvers Rd & the junction of where Barden Rd intercepts with Avebury Avenue). Mr Hibbs handed out comprehensive handouts to all present condensing his long running discussions with Southern Water. If any residents would like a copy of these we can put you in touch with Mr Hibbs.

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## Presentation from Neighbourhood Watch representative Sue Mason & PCSO Coe

Sue Mason is a Neighbourhood Watch volunteer and on the West Kent Executive. She gave an informative presentation of the benefits of being in Neighbourhood Watch as currently there are no streets in the Barden area taking up on the scheme that she is aware of. Each street would need a volunteer co-ordinator who would then ask residents for their email address to set up a group email. Then, when Kent Police send out information that may concern residents they would simply forward it to the group. Residents can also individually register with E-Watch to receive an update of crimes in the area. Sue also recommended doing a small newsletter twice yearly and organising an annual social meeting. When the watch is set up the street would receive a road-sign and residents would all receive a window-sticker to display. More information can be found here <http://www.ourwatch.org.uk/knowledge/running-a-scheme/>. Sue said the main benefit is to make you more aware of what is going on in your area plus as a bonus members of the scheme are entitled to a reduction in their house insurance. Sue left information and samples of stickers with Mark so we can display these on our website and facebook group. Please get in touch if you are interested in setting up the scheme in your street.



Mary Coe, our local PCSO was also in attendance and highly recommends the Neighbourhood Watch scheme. She informed the meeting that local police are meeting with McDonalds to discuss the anti-social behaviour outside the high street branch and possible solutions to it. Mark mentioned if the lighting was improved in the ballpark area/river walk then the teenagers may be encouraged to congregate elsewhere. PCSO Coe is aware of our concerns regarding some residents speeding in the area and asked about the Speedwatch scheme, Mark informed her that we are unlikely to be suitable due to the restrictions regarding parked cars and junctions. PCSO Coe can be approached at St Stephens church on Friday mornings if any residents have any issues that need discussing.

## The Nelson Arms

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Our local pub is up for sale and following the last meeting we have successfully applied to make the building a "Community Asset" as we would like to see it continue as a community pub but are also concerned it could be knocked down to build modern flats. Ideally it would still be run as a business but the community asset being in place also means that potential developers would have to adhere to planning requirements and would be more likely to convert the existing building than completely replace it. Current owners Shepherd Neame do have a right to appeal the community asset which is in place for 6 months. Julie Lane raised concerns about the pub being empty for this time.



## Save Our Boatyard

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The residents of the boatyard are due in court on March 13<sup>th</sup> in Hastings as they are being sued by the Mockfords for trespass. Supporters of the Save Our Boatyard campaign are setting up Crowdfunding page to help with court costs; when this is set up we will share via our website and Facebook page.

## Teen & Twenty Club

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Shortly after the previous committee meeting we discovered that the Teen & Twenty Club will be closing at the end of March; the land is potentially being sold to Tonbridge Medical Group in order to build a new 3-storey medical centre to replace their existing practices at Higham Lane and Pembury Road. Although most are in favour of a modern facility on our doorstep we are concerned that land is being sold and services moved without any public consultation. Youth services have been moved out of the Teen & Twenty to the neighbouring buildings behind the library but there are now very few community spaces in Tonbridge that can be rented for social occasions as the Teen &

Twenty was. The Angel Centre's main function room is only open until 10pm and no longer has a licensed bar, other private function rooms in Tonbridge have a prohibitive cost. Mark proposed that we apply for a Community Asset Provision, not to protect the dated building but to ensure that if it is demolished an alternative that will benefit the community is provided. A discussion was had about whether this could stop something that is of benefit to the community. It was agreed that we wait to find out more information after the council meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> February - members of the residents' association will attend this and if necessary we will hold an additional meeting prior to our scheduled one in March.

## Conservation Area Proposal

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The benefits and drawbacks of making the Victorian area of Barden a Conservation Area were outlined by Mark. Primarily this could help the residents of the boatyard as it potentially could prevent modern unsympathetic flats being built on the boatyard site. Those present agreed they would like to know more about the pros and cons before taking it further so Mark will invite Susan Bevan from Slade Area Residents Association and a council member along to a meeting to help explain further.

## Speed Restrictions and Parking

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It is agreed by many, particularly in D1, that the new scheme is not working. Mary McCarthy and Andrew Thistlewood have agreed to set up a separate group to look at practical ways to improve the scheme. Andrew agreed that he is happy to be a main point of contact for the new group. There are still worries that although the new flats have their own parking space, this would not prevent residents with multiple vehicles parking in D1 after 6pm.

## AOB

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- As the Speedwatch scheme is unlikely to be suitable for our closely built up area Mark is to contact Richard Long to request another speed audit, this time concentrating on the area near Preston Road and also Barden Park Road.
- A Freedom of Information request told us how many business and residents permits have been given out in Barden but they cannot tell us how many actual parking spaces there are to compare these, although it was agreed that the scheme is definitely oversubscribed. Martin Coulstock said that D2 has approximately 67 parking spaces compared to 50 business permits.
- The garden of remembrance no longer has street lighting (it did in the past), it is unclear why this is the case.
- Martin Coulstock is now our lead flood warden for the area, if you are interested in becoming a flood warden please get in touch. Martin showed those present “What Should I Do In an Emergency” booklet, Mark to post links to this and other information on the Barden website.
- A local design student Ed had designed a choice of logos for our association and those present voted on their preferred one.

## Next Meeting

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Meetings will now alternate on Tuesdays and Wednesdays to enable as many people as possible to attend. The next meeting is **Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> March**, however there may be another meeting before then to discuss the Teen & Twenty development.