

# Wilderness Residents Association

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Minutes of Wilderness Residents Association (“WRA”) Annual General Meeting (“AGM”) on 12 March 2023 at 6.00pm at Wilderness Golf Club.

**In attendance:** 31 members representing 22 houses: Blackhall Lane (1); Parkfield (5); Wilderness Avenue (5); Woodland Rise (11)

**Apologies for absence:** six apologies received in advance of the meeting.

**Introduction** – Martin Greenslade (Chair WRA Executive Committee)

**Minutes of 2022 AGM** – taken as a true record

**Report of Chair** – Martin Greenslade

The Chair provided an update on the matters that the Committee had spent their time on during the course of the year. He confirmed that there have been no changes to the membership of the Committee and all Committee members are standing for re-election but that we are looking for new Committee members.

The areas in which the Committee has spent time in the past year include the following.

*Elysian Residences and plans:* Elysian bought the Wilderness House Estate from Pegasus Life last year. Further limited scope planning applications have been made to alter the planning permission obtained by Pegasus. Progress has been slow, not helped by their main contractor going bust.

*Land at Seal Drive* acquired by KCC for school playing fields. We have continued to press KCC to enter into a deed concerning the covenants but we have been unable to elicit any response.

*WRA Member Survey* – Early 2022, communicated results at last AGM.

*Planning applications and potential covenant breaches:* our main focus is on the one house per plot covenant (see below). We have reminded some residents of the 75 foot building line, resulting in revised plans and we have alerted residents to work on trees and hedges that may affect the screening of their property. Neighbours are not routinely alerted to work on trees and hedges nor where residents seek a lawful development certificate. However, these are visible on the SDC website and residents are encouraged to sign up for relevant planning alerts.

*Ancillary accommodation* – there is a risk that self-contained accommodation may become a breach of the one house per plot covenant if separately sold or let out such that it becomes a separate dwelling. In these circumstances, we ask the owner to sign a deed committing them not to dispose of the accommodation separately from the main dwelling.

*Security* – there was a marked increase in burglaries on the Estate at the end of last year. We have been asked by several people whether the WRA should be taking an active role in communicating security-related information to residents. This is not strictly within the remit of the WRA. However, we have liaised with the private road Trustees and agreed that, when communication might be helpful, we shall communicate with all residents across the estate in a low-key, non-alarmist manner.

*New residents* – we are always keen to get in touch with new residents as soon as possible after they have bought a property on the Estate, particularly as they are likely to have plans for developing the plot or renovating the property. The earlier in the process we can alert them to covenant and other Conservation Area restrictions, the easier it is for them to be accommodated in their plans. If you become aware of anyone who has bought a house, please let us know their contact details.

*Q – Chris Elliott (P):* There is a site in Parkfield that has been empty for two or three years. Can anything be done about this?

Chair: Martin Greenslade, Hon. Secretary: Roz Roxburgh, Hon. Treasurer: Roz Roxburgh

Hon. Secretary’s address: Little Croft, Woodland Rise, Sevenoaks, TN15 0HY

*A – Martin Greenslade:* the site has been sold and the new owner is very keen to start building on the plot. The Conservation Officer issued a negative report on the plans and these have now been amended (but not yet approved). The Committee did not object as we were comparing the new proposals with the previously approved plan and believed the new owner's plans were more suited to the Estate than the previously approved plans. The stated determination date is in the second half of March.

*Q – John Phipps (P):* you mentioned co-ordination between the WRA and Road Trustees; Parkfield has a WhatsApp group which works very well. Should this be extended to the whole Estate?

*A – Martin Greenslade:* the WRA only has email addresses of all residents and not mobile phone details. However we are increasing the level of engagement between the WRA and the various Road Trustees.

*Mark Kibblewhite* – we instantly inform the Road Trustees if we hear anything.

### **Advisory vote**

An advisory vote was held to gauge the level of support amongst WRA members for the WRA Executive Committee to be involved in the communication of security matters to residents

*The vote was carried unanimously*

*Q - John Van Rossen-Veerdink (WA):* do we know if there was a connection between the arrests made by the police after Christmas and the burglaries on our Estate?

*A – Martin Greenslade* – we haven't been told of any connection.

*Christine Wightman (WR):* the police specifically told them that the items that had been stolen from their house had not been found in the possession of the individuals who were arrested but their burglary had taken place a couple of months earlier.

*Q – Aldo Melpignano (WA):* Could we ask the WRA to communicate our ambition for security patrols to other residents?

*A – Martin Greenslade* – If your plan for security patrols has been agreed with the various Road Trustees, we would be happy to consider communicating it on a broader basis.

### **Report of Treasurer and accounts for the year ended 31st December 2022 – Roz Roxburgh (Treasurer)**

The Treasurer's Report was circulated with the AGM notice. The Treasurer explained that the Committee has decided to maintain the Full Member subscription at the increased rate of £150 introduced last year in order to build reserves to £40,000 before maintaining funds in the range of £30,000 to £50,000. Subscription income is expected to be between £15,000 and £16,000 and expenses (in a normal year) are just below £10,000. The Committee believes that this level of reserves would allow an initial response to a covenant breach and buy time until more funds could be raised.

*Q - Nigel Wightman (WR)* – at that level, a determined developer would quickly blow through our reserves. Should there be some expectation over time that reserves will rise not least due to inflation?

*A – Martin Greenslade:* We have increased our view on the appropriate level of reserves but believe that reserves shouldn't grow indefinitely. We need enough runway to have determined the legal issues and obtained appropriate advice before reverting to members for additional funds.

*Q – Chris Elliott :* How many households are members?

*A – Martin Greenslade:* there are about 160 houses on the Estate and around 100 households are members of the WRA, so about 60%.

### **Resolution to approve Treasurer's Report and accounts – carried unanimously**

#### **Subscriptions for 2023**

Subscriptions for 2023 are proposed to be maintained at the same level as for 2022: Full Members - £150; Associate Members - £50; Friends - £30.

### **Resolution to approve subscriptions for 2023 – carried unanimously**

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**Election of Executive Committee Officers:**

The existing officers shown below are required to be elected annually under Rule 6 of the Constitution. Each of them retires and, being eligible, offers themselves for re-election:

- **Martin Greenslade (P) as Chair – carried unanimously**
- **Mark Kibblewhite (WR) as Deputy Chair – carried unanimously**
- **Roz Roxburgh (WR) as Secretary and Treasurer -carried unanimously**

**Election of Executive Committee Members:**

The Committee has determined that, as a matter of good practice, all Committee members should be subject to re-election annually. Accordingly each Committee member retires and, being eligible, offers themselves for re-election.

- **Laura Daniels (WA) – carried unanimously**
- **Margaret Deegan (WA) – carried unanimously**

**Other Business**

There being no other business, the Chair declared the meeting closed and invited Edward Rook (Head of Country House Department at Knight Frank) to deliver his presentation.

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