

Minutes of the Annual Village meeting

28th November 2024

LHVT Committee

Alan Lambert *Chairman*

Linda Lambert

Greg Rogers

Gareth Tinsley

Janet Engels

Naz Mohammed

Apologies

Simon Letts *Treasurer*

Alison Rose *Hon. Secretary*

Mike Pickford

Sixteen Villagers (excluding LHVT Committee members) attended the meeting at the Village Hall

Introduction and Welcome

The Chairman welcomed those attending to the 53rd AGM of the Letchmore Heath Village Trust. He continued by introducing the attending committee members to the villagers in attendance. Having been formed in 1971, the Trust seeks to preserve and enhance the quality of community life in the village.

He explained that The Trust meets every month. All meetings are minuted and action points followed up. Communication is through the village website (www.letchmoreheath.com), the village drum, the village noticeboard, the Newsletter and by hand delivering flyers and notices to all houses in the village.

The Trust works hard to engage productively with other local stakeholders and interested parties. Within the village these include the Memorial Hall, The Three Horseshoes pub and Bhaktivedanta Manor. Outside Letchmore Heath the Trust works with residents Associations in Aldenham, Patchetts Green and Round Bush.

Noting the attendance of Rosamund Gray (Chairman of the Radlett Society and Green Belt Association), Alan thanked her and RS&GBA for their close co-operation and generous support. He also thanked Karl Mahon (Bursar) for his and Aldenham School's continued support for Letchmore Heath Village Trust.

Working relationships with Elstree Aerodrome are mainly through EACC – the Elstree Aerodrome Consultative Committee – but have been strengthened this year through direct discussion and meetings with Humphrey Gibbs. All this is in addition to working with local councils – APC, HBC and HCC. Letchmore Heath is extremely fortunate in enjoying the active and loyal support of Counsellors David Lambert on the Parish and Borough Councils and Caroline Clapper who serves on both Borough and County Councils.

Alan extended his thanks and appreciation on behalf of LHVT to many individuals for their continued support to matters arising in and outside the village – to Ian Southern (Letchmore Heath resident) for his knowledge and experience and Alison Robinson (Radlett resident and past Aldenham Parish counsellor) for their commitment and contribution to fighting the Solar Plant and BESS planning applications.

The LHVT Committee currently has nine members - including a Secretary, a Treasurer and a Chairman. Whilst the Trust's main objective – to protect, sustain and improve the quality of life in Letchmore Heath – is unchanged, the nature and balance of its work has shifted significantly in recent years. Many of the main threats and issues facing Letchmore Heath no longer come from “within” - but from the surrounding “without”. To recognise this change in the landscape, the Trust split the responsibility for Planning in two – one to cover planning issues within the curtilage of the village (internal) the second to recognise the increasing priority of planned developments and threats to the green belt, beyond our boundaries (external). The Solar Plant and BESS – or more to the point, BESSes - are notable examples.

The Chairman commented on the work done by Janet Engels. When it was decided to ask her to take responsibility for external planning issues, we hadn't realised what was round the corner. Janet moved to the village over four years ago and as a retired lawyer was rapidly recruited to the Trust.

As many of you know, the sheer volume of research, follow up and hard graft that she has put in can only be described as monumental. Whatever the outcomes of key planning decisions, this community could not have been better represented, principally thanks to her professional, articulate and focussed determination. Janet – the local community is in your debt. Thank you.

Election of New Committee

Under LHVT rules the Committee is elected annually by paid up members of the Trust. As there were no new nominations, all Committee members were willing to serve for 2024-25, all were re-elected.

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer reported accounts for year ending 13th June 2024.

Income of £2,333 pounds. Expenditure of £1,609 pounds. Cash balance of £1,828 pounds.

LHVT received a grant of £750 toward the Defibrillator and the associated contribution of the same amount (£750) to the purchase price.

Accounts are available to view on the LHVT website.

Vote on Asset of Community Value (Three Horseshoes Pub)

Alan invited Janet Engels to speak on this matter. Janet explained to those in attendance what an 'Asset of community value' is and why this matter was to be voted on. Janet had previously sent out communication via the Village Noticeboard to residents on this topic. Janet invited questions.

Ian southern (resident) asked “How many years is the application valid for”, Janet replied “5 years” Ian returned with another question “Is there any cost to ‘The Trust’ for this application, Janet replied “No”. Another resident asked why the ACV has been brought to the residents at this time? Both Janet and Alan explained that the trigger for the discussion to bring the pub back into an ‘ACV’ was mainly due to the well-publicised financial issues being experienced by the current operator Peach Pubs/Revolution Bars and the wider hospitality industry.

The vote was unanimous in favour of reinstating the Asset of Community Value for The Three Horseshoes pub.

5. Brief Reports from Trust Committee Members.

Trust members gave brief reports on activity in their areas of responsibility during the last year:

Greg Rogers: Bhaktivedanta Manor, Traffic Management and village security initiative

(I) Greg commented on a productive and cooperative working relationship with the Manor and thanked a member of the Manor' for attending the meeting. The trust continues to have a good working relationship on the Janmashtami festival, which attracts 60,000 + visitors every year. Traffic management continues to be at the forefront of minimizing disruption to the residents and the local area. The introduction of ticketed entry for this festival has helped to reduce traffic issues.

Greg explained that there is regular consultation with the executive committee of the Manor concerning their properties in the Village. These discussions seek to ensure that appropriate planning applications are in place in compliance with existing regulations. The Trust will continue to work with Bhaktivedanta Manor in addressing their longer term needs, and how these can best be met.

A village safety initiative will bring a 20mph speed limit to the village. Communication on this scheme continues with the Highways Agency and will include details of signage design and location within the village.

A village security initiative will be implemented using existing CCTV from within the village to better help to protect residents from crime. CCTV will be added to the village hall. Greg thanked Michael Trott (village resident) for his help in executing the safety initiative.

Naz Mohammed: Village website

(II) The website is continually updated throughout the year. Naz told residents that the website had received 2300 total views. 1000 visitors this year in the last 12 months. Since inception the website has received 18,000 views and 8,300 visitors. The BESS flyer was downloaded around 300 times.

Alan Lambert: Aldenham School

(III) Alan reiterated thanks to Bursar Karl Mahon for the continued support.

Linda Lambert: (on behalf of Alison Rose) Litter/fly tipping

(IV) Alison reported that fly tipping continues to be an ongoing problem. All fly tips are immediately reported. It also helps if other villagers also report these problems. Linda reminded residents that Hertsmere Borough Council are responsible for rubbish on the roadside, Herts County Council are responsible for rubbish on the highway and private landowners are responsible for rubbish on their property/land. Alison and Linda continue their frequent litter picks, seeking to ensure that the village is kept free of litter. Others are always welcome to join them.

Gareth Tinsley: Internal Planning and EACC

(V) Gareth explained that he and Mike Pickford look after planning applications within the Letchmore Heath Conservation Area. In the last year there were 11 planning applications, two withdrawn, two approvals and 7 pending decisions.

Gareth reported that the Elstree Aerodrome Consultative Committee meets twice a year, in April and October, and he attends on behalf of The Trust.

Janet Engels: Planning (Outside of Letchmore Heath Village)

(VI) Janet told residents that she looks across all planning applications that could affect the village. The number of large-scale planning applications is becoming more frequent and the fight against those continues.

Janet expressed the importance of the support for objections from within the village. She also expressed her thanks for the help and support from the Trust Committee, Ian Southern and Alan Rubinson on the complex solar plant and BESS applications.

Linda Lambert: Aldenham Parish Council (APC)

(VII) Linda attended an APC full council meeting on October 28th, 2024. Points of discussion were the sink hole and costs to repair that and the village pond. APC have appointed contractors to quote for works (on the pond) in the region of £30k but APC have no available funds to carry this through. Linda continues to look for other avenues of funding to complete works on the pond. Linda asked residents to write to APC to express any concerns on the current condition of the pond and to aid her case with APC for funds to be made available and works to be completed. A trust member discussed with Linda a CIL grant and offered their support to Linda to look at this option.

Any other business.

1, Who is responsible for trees within the village? Answer, APC.

Action: Linda will follow up with APC to discuss a condition report on Trees within the village.

2, Abandoned car.

Action: APC has closed the case on this vehicle after communication with the owner. It is now for the DVLA to enforce removal of the vehicle from the highway due to no tax and Mot.

3, Future for Bhaktivedanta Manor on purchasing houses within the village.

Action: Both Alan and Janet explained that communication with the executive committee of Bhaktivedanta Manor continues. The Manor will be supported by LHVT in developing plans that will enable devotees and staff to be accommodated within the manor property whenever possible.

On closing the meeting, the Chairman expressed his thanks to the Trust Committee for their work and commitment, and to villagers for attending and contributing to the meeting.

Alan Lambert

Chairman – Letchmore Heath Village Trust

5th December 2024