

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE HORSELL
COMMON PRESERVATION SOCIETY HELD ON 11TH APRIL, 2006**

Present : 91 members of the Society.

Apologies: Mr. and Mrs. Graham, Mr. and Mrs. E. White, Mr. and Mrs. Gammon, Mr. Robinson, Mrs. Ogden, Miss Pemberton, Mr. and Mrs. A Smith, Mrs. Wilson, Mr. Vice, Mrs. Victoria Taylor.

1. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 2005

Mrs. Duckett proposed, Mrs. Cuttle seconded that the Minutes of 2005 be accepted. This was agreed.

2. Annual Report

The Chairman said that by the time the Horsell Residents' Association and Horsell Common Preservation Society realised their AGM dates clashed it was too late to change either date.

He said that the two main themes were the Heather Farm situation and the question of incorporation.

On Heather Farm there has been much misinformation. The situation is that there has not been a documented proposal from Woking Borough Council. It is probable that this will be ready by the end of May when Ray Morgan has agreed to brief representatives of HCPS. The present B1/B8 (light industrial and warehousing) application would give the Society controls over any individual purchasers of the site.

When, early last year, I decided to stand down after this AGM I hoped that I would be able to do so having successfully resolved the two major issues that concerned me. One was to achieve an agreement to protect the Common against potentially harmful developments when the Heather Farm site was sold and the other was to bring our management structure and governance into line with the currently recommended practices for societies such as ours by moving towards incorporation.

As so often such good intentions are frustrated by events, and the announcement by Woking Borough Council that it was considering Heather Farm for a potential waste plant was such an event. Obviously it complicated the Heather Farm negotiations but more seriously, because the statements were not supported by properly detailed proposals, they attracted a great deal of speculation that naturally generated a lot of personal concerns for local residents. Dealing with all these consequences, including rather more than a hundred previously disinterested residents who joined the society after the announcement, required a great deal of effort that we would have preferred to devote

more directly to the Common, and consequently both of the issues that concerned me have been delayed.

Nevertheless, we have made sufficient progress on incorporation to bring a resolution to this meeting, and we were able to pursue our negotiations with Blue Prince and thereby ensure that their planning application included the safeguards that so concerned us.

There has been so much misinformation bandied around about Heather Farm that we prepared the summary note about the agreement which you should have seen on your chairs. I should also like to bring you up to date:

First, there has NOT been a documented proposal yet from Woking Borough Council. Their last public statement was the delay announced on March 30th so I contacted Anne Murray, the leader of the Council, asking for clarification. She arranged for Ray Morgan to do that and I received his email at tea time today. He states:

The report [on the Waste Project] is being finalised by the project team that has been working on the Council's waste management strategy. It had been hoped to publish [the report] at the end of February, however, in light of the publication by Surrey [County Council (SCC)] on 6th January of "The [Waste Disposal Authority –]Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy – Draft Action Plan", the project team report has been delayed.

SCC at its Executive meeting on 17 January agreed that mass burn incineration Energy from Waste (EfW) be selected as most favoured option for residual waste treatment as part of the integrated waste management solution. This choice of technology by SCC and its revised targets for recycling needs to be taken into account by the project team before publishing its results.

It is now expected that the report will be published towards the end of May. The project brief remains unchanged, i.e. to explore the provision of a local environmentally sustainable and affordable advanced thermal treatment plant for residual waste as a source of sustainable energy. As previously outlined to HCPS only a solution that can demonstrate no adverse effect on the Special Protection Area will be advocated. The design criteria for the proposal continue to seek to keep vehicle movements within the parameters previously set for the Mushroom Farm operation.

After publication the report will be sent to Surrey County Council and other Districts and Boroughs in Surrey for consideration in the context of the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy. Only following the response from the JMWMS working group will the Borough Council consider the matter further and, if the project remains an option for consideration the Council will subject the proposals to wider public scrutiny and independent assessment before reaching a decision. This is unlikely to take place until the autumn of 2006 at the earliest.

When the report is complete I, together with colleagues from the project team, would be happy to brief representatives of HCPS.

That is the state of play as at 3.54 today and represent everything we know at this time.

Moving on to the B1/B8 planning application, I should confirm that this is not and never has been a joint application with HCPS. I have a letter here from the Blue prince consultants that prepared the application confirming that, and more importantly confirming that he has replaced the erroneous pages that referred to a joint application.

I should also like to emphasise yet again that this application in no way furthers the waste proposals. Indeed, it probably does the reverse because at the moment it is the only viable alternative Blue Prince has. It might be worth quoting verbatim from a letter our solicitor received from the Blue Prince director:

As you point out, the main area of dispute is over the calculated BPM daily traffic movements (626).

All I can do is make the following general points:

1 We never counted traffic movements, so the number for Blue Prince is calculated from the employment numbers and the working practices of the business.

2.The BPM traffic movements are when we were operating at full capacity, not the reduced level of operation in 2002 & early 2003. This is the usual practice when undertaking an analysis such as this.

3.We generated traffic every Saturday, Sunday, Bank Holiday (except Christmas Day) and most weekday evenings. The proposal limits operation to 7am to 7pm Monday to Friday and Saturday mornings only - both a major reduction in traffic per se, but also a reduction in the nuisance of out of hours traffic. I assume that the Common is heavily used at weekends & summer evenings and therefore the restriction on operating hours will be a substantial gain to users of the Common.

4.The Society has ensured that the application was heavily modified during its preparation, changes made include:

Restrictions on operating hours

Restrictions on the Use Classes permitted

Changes to reduce the amount of B1, and increase the amount of B8, to dramatically reduce the theoretical traffic numbers, as B8 is one of the lowest traffic generators e.g. if the site was all B1, theoretical movements would be 2000 per day.

Commensurate reductions in Car Parking - you will recall that the original master plan had over 500 car parking spaces; we now have 145.

Landscaping to mask the buildings from the Bourne footpath.

Minimising of external lighting.

I understand that your efforts to ensure that the application was appropriate will never be enough for some individuals, however I thought it might be useful to lay them out for you to use as you think fit.

I must confess I get very annoyed about all this, individuals dispute as exaggerated the theoretical calculation of traffic movements of Blue Prince, but treat the equally theoretical calculations for future employment and traffic as correct. Most of the people protesting wouldn't have been interested but for the Waste Plant, and I believe that the current reaction is driven by a belief that our application is some form of Trojan Horse for the Waste Plant. They do not realise that a Waste Plant is not permitted under our agreement. I suspect that if you mentioned this it would take a lot of heat out of the debate.

Those are the words of the Blue Prince Director, Adrian Dawes, and I think I detect some slightly bruised feelings about the drastic changes he had to make as a result of our protracted negotiations and some hurt feelings that they have not been appreciated. I share those feelings.

The other equally important outcome of the negotiations is the controls that the planning application gives the society over any individual users of the site. Without those, if the eventual purchaser sold any of it on or leased it out it would have extremely difficult to enforce the planning constraints in practice.

I have spoken at far greater length about this than I would normally because I know there are many people here who are more immediately concerned about the future of Heather Farm than about the Common. I have tried to answer all issues as fully as I can so that we can devote the remainder of the meeting to the business of the Society and would now like to ask the Sub-Committee Chairmen to add anything they wish to their reports already circulated.

Estates Management - Mr. Rimmer

Horsell Birch work largely complete. The pond will be dredged in the summer.

Special Protection Area - HCPS support English Nature proposals, many meetings have been held to build a management plan.

Special thanks were given to Mr. Pugh who has submitted applications to the Rural Payments Agency and Mr. Bowden who has taken on running the volunteer working parties in conjunction with Mr. Halstead.

Finance and Legal - Mr. Uttley

Heather Farm has been dominating matters, but other items have been - vehicular rights of access; monitoring planning applications and incorporation. Also the potential purchase of Pyrford Common, which is ongoing. He thanked all the members of the sub-committee.

Public Relations - Mr. Davies

2 issues of "The Common" have been produced.

The questionnaire is being analysed, a surprisingly wide age range responded.

Information boards have been erected.

Membership has increased by 18%.

Mrs. Slatter proposed, Mr. Wilson seconded, that the Annual Report be accepted. This was agreed.

3. Election of members to the committee

3 volunteers to act as tellers: Meiron Shaw, Brian Wilson, Jill Balister.

Each candidate spoke.

Votes cast and collected.

4. Annual Accounts

Mr. Harris said that risk management is a prime concern re HCPS money. COIF, who are used, are charitable investment fund managers. The strategy is under constant review. At the moment HCPS is in a strong position to carry out objects for the foreseeable future.

Paul Downes - queried Note 13 re amount from Heather Farm sale proceeds. Mr. Harris - the primary concern is protection of the Common. Mary Painter - has HCPS looked into fund raising such as grants? Mr. Rimmer - HCPS are negotiating with English Nature and the Rural Payments Agency. Mr. Pugh - European funding from RPA could be substantial. Mr. Harris - Warren Pond 50% grant funded.

Mrs. Lane proposed, Mr. Mare seconded, that the Annual Accounts be approved. This was agreed.

5. Election of auditors

Mr. Harris proposed, Mrs. Duckett seconded, that HCPA (formerly known as Herbert Parnell) be retained. This was agreed.

6. Motion for incorporation

Mr. Robbins said that a new Charities Company is being set up by the government, but not yet ready. Changing of objects have to be approved by the Charity Commission. The motion includes the protection of environment and habitats.

Mr. Shackerley-Bennett has asked for objects to include retention of archives. HCPS would be able to retain any objects of artistic value found on the Common.

Lord Onslow, whose family has an ancient connection with the Common, would like to continue as President.

Julie Waters - queried the need for incorporation. Mr. Robbins - incorporation would provide protection for trustees over any liabilities. Paul Downs - queried the absence of EGM minutes, and the number of signatures required by law. Mr. Balister - HCPS could gain money, therefore, committee should have to call a meeting for major decisions. Mr. Robbins - secrecy not intended. Committee has always made decisions before, in law.

Mrs. Lane proposed, Mrs. Cuttle seconded, that with the added object from Mr. Shackerley -Bennett the motion should be carried. This was agreed.

7. Result of election

Number of votes: Mr. Davies 51; Mr. Durrant 68; Mr. Halstead 56; Mrs. Jux 53; Mr. Robbins 65.

Mr. Durrant, Mr. Robbins, Mr. Halstead and Mrs. Jux were declared duly elected.

8. Questions and comments

Mary Painter - queried the limits of development around the Common. Mr. Cuttle - land owned by HCPS will not be developed and we seek to acquire adjacent land. Heather Farm was commercial development that existed and an agreement setting limits so that it could not get worse and would cover any future buyer is sought..

Richard Roads - thanks for Heather Farm agreement and negotiating deal. Assurance sought that any income from sale does not conflict with HCPS objectives. Mr. Cuttle - this is correct. HCPS opposed McLarens but had to accept it but with capital.

Philippa Anderson - if change of use does not go through what other use is envisaged? Mr. Rimmer - Heritage Lottery Grant being looked at and English Nature asked for advice. EN document rules out any housing development near Special Protection Area. *Philippa Anderson - What other uses. Could be a contained unit for mental health patients.* Mr. Cuttle - not our site to sell. If it was within our budget HCPS would be prepared to buy. *Philippa Anderson - raise membership fees.* Mr. Cuttle - this would not be sufficient to purchase.

Mike Whitewell - vehicle movements create traffic and pollution issues. Mr. Uttley - not movements but emissions created cause problem. A 16% increase would probably have demonstrable harm to Common. Environment Agency says not, but it is being assessed. *Paul Downes - queried the comment made at EGM on vehicles movements.* Mr. Rimmer - HCPS have to be realistic, neither supporting nor objecting. Mr. Cuttle - What HCPS thought at the time, but did not know that figures had previously been larger. Mr. Uttley - Figures have been arrived at by 2 different consultants. *Juliet Andrews - will EN audit be published?* Mr. Uttley - yes it will be a public document. *Simon Waters - read prepared report saying 650 cars, but what of HGVs and lorries? Will HCPS ask for constraint on lorries rather than cars?* Mr. Uttley - yes when audit information comes back.

Roger Balister - has the amendment to the application made by Blue Prince gone to WBC? Mr. Cuttle - yes. *Roger Balister - industrial plants are given to waste.* Mr. Uttley - Waste requires a different application. *Mr. Michie - what is committee view on waste site?* Mr. Cuttle - HCPS do not yet know what is proposed. *Paul Bull - SCC has held up consideration of planning application.* Mr. Cuttle - there are so many different ideas that the only rational way to behave is not to speculate on what could happen.

9. Any other business

On behalf of the committee Mr. Harris thanked Mr. Cuttle for his work as Chairman.

At the close of the formal business Dr. Rob McGibbon gave a talk on "Lowland Heath".