



Minutes of the Inaugural Meeting of the Ashford & Stanwell South Residents Association (STANASH) (*)

Held at St Matthews Church, Church Road Ashford

10.30 – 12.30 Saturday 21st February 2025

This meeting was called following the demise of the only known remaining Residents Association within Ashford, namely The Ashford North Residents Association (ANRA) that had been operating for 12 years, leaving Ashford Residents currently unrepresented. The meeting purpose was to establish whether there was any interest in creating a new replacement organisation, and if so to create an Association formation Management Committee, who would then look to pick up & run with this new body.

Meeting Attendees

53 Residents from various parts of Ashford

Councillors – Jo Sexton, Michelle Arnold & Katherine Rutherford

Grateful thanks to Father Stuart King for allowing us the use of the church to facilitate this meeting.

Post Meeting Updates

Where note includes (*) - see Post Meeting Updates at foot of these minutes

Initial Preliminary Meeting

The initial phase of the meeting was chaired by Barry Muggeridge, in lieu of the appointment of any Management Committee.

Jo Sexton introduced herself and the other Councillors being the Independent Councillors currently serving Ashford. Whilst keen to see a Residents Society created it was made clear that, as elected officials, they could take no part in the Association. No other Ashford Councillors were in attendance.

Thanks were offered to Paul West who had run ANRA for a number of years.

Jo Sexton then asked if within the attendees there was support for the establishing of a new Association, which was confirmed, and, after the necessary cajoling, the following were confirmed –

Co-Chair – Julie Holman

Co-Chair – John Dickens

Treasurer – Penny Kielty

Secretary – Anne Crudgington (*)

The said Management Committee then formally took up their positions and chaired the rest of the Meeting.

Formal Meeting

1. Greg Neall from “Ashfordwide” introduced himself and gave a quick overview of that organisations work across Ashford that includes Saturday Markets, Fayres, Remembrance Sunday & the very successful Xmas Market.

Currently “Ashfordwide” are working the Council with regards to a scheme to create a “Business Improvement District”. A feasibility study is currently in course to define what it is that Ashford Businesses want.

At the conclusion of this process they will decide on whether to submit a BID – updates to follow.

Questions were then invited from the Floor regarding anything pertinent for the meeting

2. Peter Davis – Given Closure of ANRA have we established if there are any residual monies that can be transferred for use by this new Association ?

Action taken to discuss with Paul West *

3. Pat Kielty – Did the councillors have any update regarding the current status of the proposed re-purposing of the old Barclays Bank site into a Gambling establishment ?

Following a number of Planning Request rejections by Spelthorne BC, the matter has now moved under appeal to the Secretary of State who has appointed a nominated officer to review the said appeal. (*)

Can there not be found an alternative use for the premises – why not consider making it a “Banking Hub” given the exiting of nearly all the Banks from the town with the exception of Nat West by the Station and a number of small Post Offices within the town ?

Councillor Sexton agreed to go away and investigate any opportunities for creating a Banking Hub.

Valerie Scott - An alternative location for the Banking Hub could be the Library. (*)

“Banking Hub” could also be a hub for the Police & Parking Wardens.

4. Phil Henley – Communication remains very weak across the spectrum – notice as to this particular meeting was in itself patchy. The Neighbourhood Watch organisation for Village Way has a database that could maybe help.

We need to consider any GDPR issues – follow up required.

Barry Muggeridge – Called out that there exists a number of different council sites that notify of upcoming meetings events that would be of interest to Residents – ie Bulletin Magazine. Small concern given the sheer number of these sites but Councillor Rutherford undertook to supply a list of the web page addresses that we can publish. (*)

5. Various – Challenge was made of the Councillors on a lack of faith among Residents. In particular reference was made regarding promises made around shops that were supposed to take occupation as part of the redevelopment of the old Brooklands College site.

Councillor Sexton clarified that the sale of the College land to the initial development company was made by Surrey CC and not Spelthorne BC. The facts are that that Development company almost immediately “flipped” the land to a 3rd part developer who somewhat exonerated themselves from such commitments.

The failure of the site to be what was envisaged is well known.

6. Carol Keity & later Julie ?? – what can be done regarding vehicles ignoring clear and long established “No Right Turn” signage across the town.

Reality is with Police resources stretched as they are, this is not something that will be resolved by enforcement.

7. ??? – Why is it that Shepperton seem to get all the nice new shops but Ashford only gets the same repetitive businesses (Nail Bars / Barbers / Mini-Markets / Vape Shops ?

Frank Greaves – How can we impact the type of businesses setting up in Ashford – what Council incentives exist for certain types of shops ?

Barry Muggeridge was able to offer insight regarding the challenges of running a business in Ashford. Yes Shoplifting was a significant concern but the issue of aggressive rent rises from many Freeholders (Often Pension Fund companies), have seen a number of businesses close and this trend is ongoing. Cash businesses are very attractive to these businesses

At a practical level, asking for Butchers & Greengrocers is a simple issue. The Town has had a number of these over the years, but the hard facts are that people didn’t use them to a level that it made it profitable for them to operate. So “Use or Lose” is a fact of life.

Barry also reaffirmed the fact that Muggeridge Furniture Store was itself due to close this year so it will be another business lost to the town albeit he and Steve are long overdue to take their retirement (!)

Greg Neall again raised the issue of the Business Improvement District, and the fact that he was looking at creating some videos in support of this initiative.

8. Helen Mason – Clockhouse Park has become a drug den – Pedestrian Gates remain open at various points and the Car Park itself has very poor lighting.

Councillor Sexton agreed to look further into what can be done about this.(*)

9. Jeffrey Rippingale – How will this Association ensure effective communication with it’s membership ? A show of hands of those present confirmed that a significant majority do not use Facebook.

??? – Neighbourhood Watch utilise a WhatsApp Group

??? – Schools use a phone fan-out system – how does that work and would it be helpful for this purpose ??

Discussion was had regarding setting up an effective emailing system (*) as well as possibly a dedicated Website for the Association. Should there be any monies left within ANRA these could potentially help fund subscription of a website.

Chair to work with Councillor Arnold regarding possibility of creating a website.

10. Jeffrey Rippingale – Can we have an update regarding the redevelopment of the Car Park opposite the Gym within the Brooklands estate.

It is expected that a new planning application will be submitted for the site by early April. This site is a Spelthorne owned asset and the latest plans provide for Retail shops / Flats above & Parking. Consideration being given to one of those shop units being available for Community use.

11. ??? – We have series of depressing aesthetics across our High Street – Car Park Development / Royal Hart eyesore / Landlord greed over rents / lack of new business investment. Landlords moving away from business space provision in preference of change of use to residential.

In response Councillor Sexton reminded that –

1. Village Way Wall finally replaced after 3 years due to a small number of residents giving Cllr Sexton some information as to how it was damaged which she then followed up and spoke to the relevant shops to get it rebuilt.
2. Council issued a sec 215 notice to improve the Antique Business as Spelthorne were getting numerous complaints about the building having a harmful effect on the amenity of the local area. The Antiques Business at the Royal Hart and now Greene King are reviewing options for the site.
3. Ashford Multi Storey Car Park development –Plans are expected to be submitted by April. Likely to comprise mixed usage of Retail & Residential

12. Helen Collis – What will the impact be of the proposed Devolution

Councillor Sexton provided overview of the current status which can be summarised as follows

1. The decision is made regarding the move to devolution.
2. At present, Surrey has a two-tier council system, with 11 district and borough councils and a county council. As a result, different services are currently delivered by the district and boroughs councils, and the county council.
3. The government expects all two-tier areas to reorganise in the coming years, and has confirmed that Surrey will be on an accelerated programme to do so
4. When Surrey move to a unitary model, the county and district and borough councils would all dissolve and a new unitary council or councils would deliver all the services.
5. We would also see a new Strategic Authority created, led by a new Mayor. This could cover the whole of Surrey, or Surrey could join together with neighbouring councils with a Mayor sitting across a larger geography
6. There is currently a differing of opinion as to how the new unitary model will shape. The current District & Borough Councils in principle favour 3 region structure, whereas Surrey CC currently lean more towards a 2 region structure.

7. There are a considerable number of issues to address with the current discussions centred around the way forward as it relates to the current levels of debt within each of those District & Borough Councils.
8. Discussion continue and regular updates will be needed as these will obviously affect all residents across the Spelthorne landscape. (*)

13. Various – Crime Prevention / Anti-Social Behaviour was a regular feature of the meeting.

Philomena reminded the attendees that it is imperative that any issues are formally reported via the Online process with Spelthorne Police.

Given this is one of the main recurring issues for all in attendance, Councillor Sexton suggested inviting the Police Liaison Officer to our next meeting (*)

The meeting concluded as 12.20 and attendees were advised that the next meeting would be held at the same venue on 14th June between 10am – 12pm.

Post Meeting Updates (*)

1. Following the meeting a discussion was had regarding the name of this association. The footprint of boundaries is essentially all of Ashford and doesn't look to cross the A30 into Stanwell. It is therefore proposed that the Association be renamed the "Ashford Residents Association". This proposal has been agreed within the Management Committee but will be put to a vote of attendees at the meeting on the 14th of June.
2. Given the work associated with being Secretary (Meeting minutes & Membership Management), Anne Crudgington has notified that she no longer wishes to put herself forward as Secretary but remains very keen to assist the Association wherever she can. We thank Anne for notifying us so quickly but it means we are looking for a new Secretary. Any interest – please let us know on the new Ashford Email Address – Ashford-RA@outlook.com
3. Regarding the Bank account Paul West has confirmed a balance – we are now in discussion with the Council by serving a Section 151 Notice as regards transferring these funds for our use.
4. The Council has issued letters to those who requested to be advised of the planning process as regards a meeting to be held at Council Chambers regarding the appeal of planning for Barclays Bank. This meeting is scheduled for 26th March at 10am. Anyone wishing to speak at this meeting needs to inform the Inspector on the day – he will ignore any prior request submitted prior to the meeting.

To attend the meeting you will need to email Matthew Clapham from Spelthorne BC at the following email address – planningdm@spelthorne.gov.uk

You will need to provide your name, email address and status within the context of the appeal (ie Interested Party).

Although not discussed at the meeting there is now also a 'Stop the 24-Hour Gambling Centre in Ashford – Protect Our Community' petition been created. For those who wish to sign up to this petition please use the link below.

<https://www.change.org/p/stop-the-24-hour-gambling-centre-in-ashford-protect-our-community>

5. Banking Hub – Councillor Sexton has supplied the Chair with the contact details of a Chris Norrington within Spelthorne BC to discuss further the criteria for moving any application forward for a Banking Hub. Updates will be given at the June Meeting or before as necessary.
6. With regards to the list of weblinks to sign up for notifications from the Council, Councillor Rutherford has supplied a list and this list will be forwarded to all attendees in due course.
7. As regards the concerned re Drug Dealing at Clockhouse Park, we have had confirmed that the Police are working with the relevant bodies to complete an “Environmental Visual Audit” to complete a proposal for improving the lighting / Safety of the affected areas. Feedback at the next meeting in June.
8. As above – we now have a new email address for this Residents Association –
Ashford-RA@outlook.com

Please use this for all communication as regards this Residents Association going forward.

9. Please use this link to discover more about the devolution discussion - [Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation \(LGR\) - Surrey County Council](#)
10. We have confirmed that Matthew – the Police Liaison Officer has agreed to come and talk to us at the next meeting on 14th June.

In addition to the above – Simon Lowe from Surrey CC has asked to come and present an update on an initiative known as “Placement Project”, which is the piece of work that included a lot of information gathering from Residents around what they want for Ashford going forward. There was a meeting on 26th February where this latest update was presented, but Simon was keen to come and give us a further update in June which will obviously include further progress. This is a combined initiative between Surrey CC & Spelthorne BC to try and improve certain areas of Surrey taking into account Residents concerns. A set of recommendations will be the output at some point and then its for Surrey CC / Spelthorne BC to agree what can be funded. So it won’t solve world hunger but it could see positive change over the next 2-3 years.

END
