

Waterlines

The newsletter of the
Sovereign Harbour Residents Association



Issue 43

www.shra.co.uk

January, 2009

***Annual General Meeting
for members only
at the
Haven School, Atlantic Drive
Thursday, 12th March, 2009
Starting at 7:30 pm
Doors open 7:00 pm***

Vacancies exist for new committee members

Nominations, in writing,
should be sent to:

The Secretary,
SHRA,
PO Box 124,
Eastbourne, BN24 9AW.

To arrive no later than 12:00 noon on
Wednesday 5th March

The AGM will be open only to current members (2008/2009, white card with red text)

Please note that only holders of a current membership card will be admitted to the meeting.

In previous years, proceedings have been delayed by large numbers of members wanting to renew their membership at the door. If you want to be there, be sure you have current membership. ***No renewals or membership applications will be accepted at the door.***

In light of the expected committee vacancies, it is imperative that, if the SHRA is to continue its work, new committee members come forward. Applications should be made, in writing, to:

The Secretary
SHRA
PO Box 124
Eastbourne BN24 9AW

Please note that nomination must be received by mid-day on Wednesday 5th March, not 11th March as stated in the December issue of Waterlines.

Another year gone (By Rick Runalls)

Once again this has been a busy year for the SHRA, but unlike other years we have reached a landmark. As has been said at previous AGM's and in Chairman's Reports the changes that occurred within the SHRA Committee 4 years ago recognised that the Harbour faced a crisis. The developers of the Harbour had been allowed unprecedented freedom by EBC to construct it without the normal social facilities for a sustainable community. The developers then submitted applications to use up the remaining development sites for high density housing without any concessions to the missing social infrastructure. EBC seemed content to let this go ahead and in this climate the Committee of SHRA changed and launched an aggressive campaign to resist the proposed developments and fight for residents' interests.

SHRA has always offered to work with the Council at any time, but has kept a spotlight on what they are doing to achieve what Harbour residents need. The operative word here is 'achieve'. In our view it is not good enough to talk up a storm to impress the electorate and then deliver nothing. The best basis for councillors to be re-elected, whatever their political allegiance, is effective action, not political spin. Unfortunately it is the latter that seems to prevail and other than hold councillors to account, there is little the SHRA can do about this since as an organisation it has no formal status or authority. It is painfully obvious what our councillors think of the SHRA, after it was excluded from talks with developers and attacked and undermined in its campaign to give the Harbour an opportunity for its own local representation in the form of a Parish/Community Council. The primary concern of this Council administration appears to be that the SHRA challenges their authority.

Those 'long term' residents of the Harbour will have heard all this before, but it is important in recognising why we are at a landmark in our history. The Committee has done all it can, at least for the time being, to give the Harbour a voice that is listened to. We got the attention of the developers and the politicians, but everything is now in the hands of our elected representatives. They have shown no willingness to take up our offers of working together. This, coupled with the Harbour's collective decision to reject the proposal for a Community Council, means that the SHRA Committee can do little more for the Harbour to influence the most important issues affecting it. In addition there are a few SHRA members who think the SHRA Committee is too aggressive in its approach towards our local councillors and indeed EBC. These seem to be in a minority, but nevertheless must be listened to. The Committee has discussed these issues at length and some of its members have decided that the time is right for SHRA membership to reconsider what they now want from

their Committee. The time is ideal for this since a number of long-standing Committee members, who have already worked for several years on behalf of the Harbour, will not be standing for re-election.

It is very important that residents who are prepared to work for a better future for the Harbour, and hopefully prepared to put party politics second, come forward with a fresh perspective to join the SHRA Committee.

What have been our priorities?

The overriding priority of the SHRA Committee has been consistent throughout the last 4 years. That is to do all it can to help the Harbour develop into a community and not a soulless housing estate. The scope of its work has been extensive, but much has fallen into 5 important 'project areas'.

- Final Development of the Harbour. Securing social infrastructure and promoting the EBC cross-party policy of no more residential development.
- Parish / Community Council. To promote such a Council as an opportunity for residents to get good local representation through a formal body. Properly run Community Councils can be the soul of a community, put the interests of local residents first and achieve improvements in the local environment .
- Sovereign Harbour Trust (SHT). Nearly all Harbour residents are contracted to pay an annual charge to SHT via the 'Estate Rent Charge'. This has been the source of much dissatisfaction on the part of residents, not least of all because of its lack of transparency. SHRA has been working to get representation on the Board of Trustees.
- Neighbourhood Panel. Previously referred to as a LAT (Local Action Team). This is now fully set up and running. Its membership is taken from Harbour residents and it is attended by representatives of the Police, councillors and other local organisations. It's focus is addressing law and order and antisocial

behaviour problems,

- Harbour Environment. This is a broad area of work that has to some extent has been absorbed into the Neighbourhood Panel.

The current situation in each of these areas is outlined below.

Harbour Development

Since SHRA started to be excluded from meetings between the Council and Carillion and the cross-party accord that had been so important in dealing with the developer had apparently broken down, the SHRA Committee were forced to reconsider our position. In addition to not being involved in some meetings with the developer we were not being provided with promised debriefs on their outcome and general progress. We contacted EBC to protest this, but nothing changed. Having been marginalised in this way we felt we had little alternative, but to withdraw from a process we had lost all confidence in.

Were we right or wrong to do this? Well, it shouldn't be forgotten that we had already attended initial meetings with the Council and Carillion and had promoted residents priorities for missing facilities, as had been expressed at the Open Meeting we had organised. We had forcefully expressed our wish that the Health Centre, the siting and financing of which had been agreed previously, should be allowed to go ahead as a priority. One of our ward councillors disagreed and said it must be part of the Harbour Master Plan. SHRA advice was rejected and that is why we still haven't seen a start on the Health Centre.

There is still no decision taken on whether we will get a Community Centre. The SHRA Committee asked for a meeting with EBC planners to discuss this and we offered some outline designs to help. One of these was sized the same as Polegate's Community Centre. Polegate has the same population as Sovereign Harbour. EBC indicated that this was too ambitious. This was many months ago and we never had any more feedback on

our proposals. The only thing we have heard regarding a Community Centre is from Cllr. Morris in the newspaper (Herald of 16/1/09). Rather than press Carillion to get a little of the land they own for a Community Centre, it seems the only options being considered are renting the top floor of the Yacht Club or building a Centre on a pontoon in the Harbour, both at the expense of Council tax payers.

The first suggestion certainly would please Carillion and fits right in with what they told SHRA nearly 4 years ago – “the Harbour doesn’t need a community centre, it’s already got the Yacht Club”! The Yacht Club is already being used by a few clubs, but is totally unsuitable for many community activities such as the scouts, mother and toddler groups, a dramatic society, etc., etc. It would provide for a maximum of 120 people, but has no room for a stage and no provision for the storage of necessary equipment. The Yacht Club is a private organisation, it was never intended to provide for the needs of the community as a whole and is certainly no substitute for a Community Centre. The idea of using a floating structure has also been discussed in the past, but its size limitations, mooring costs and the dangers associated with its use make it an unattractive option. What a pity our councillors won’t speak to SHRA. They may have found some use from the work we had already done. Carillion is sitting on many acres of development land on the Harbour, so why do we need to waste Council Tax revenue on inadequate, make-shift solutions?

Where is our Health Centre? As has been mentioned the intended Health Centre has been delayed because of the insistence of one of our ward councillors that it must form part of a Master Plan for the Harbour. Unfortunately this apparently wasn’t discussed with our other two councillors who were sitting on the Planning Committee. When Dr. Adoki had to re-apply for the continuing use of the existing surgery, they turned it down. We came close to having no

medical facilities on the Harbour at all, but fortunately wiser heads on the Planning Committee prevailed and an extension to the use of the current surgery was granted by ‘a whisker’. Joined up thinking? SHRA hopes that Dr. Adoki will just submit a planning application, since the so called Master Plan is going nowhere it seems. He will certainly get the support of the current SHRA Committee and we may find out at last what the Council’s position is.

There is no sight or sound of the recreation facilities that the harbour desperately needs to support the growing population of children and youths. The only suggestion of a play area was provided by Carillion, who more than a year ago proposed that the bike racks in the garden area adjacent to the Waterfront be changed into a play area. The land had no value to them and they didn’t offer to pay for the construction of the play area. Our ward councillors have been very supportive of this in print and intend to spend the £27k Carillion used to buy out their responsibility to provide recreation space on the Harbour. It would be churlish of SHRA to complain about having any additional play space, but this can’t be the right place for it. It’s great for visitors, but it’s too far from the residential areas of both North and South Harbours. If EBC want to provide play space for visitors then shouldn’t it come out of the tourism budget before it comes out of money intended to benefit residents? The questions and concerns the SHRA had about this proposal were communicated to the Council in writing, but have never been answered.

In short we can conclude that SHRA’s withdrawal from the so called consultation process has had no detriment and added some clarity. Residents can be misled into believing that the Council are serious about listening to their views when the SHRA is part of a process in name only. However, one thing SHRA members can rely on is that we made the residents’ case when we were in the process and continue to do so.

Parish / Community Council

SHRA undertook to provide residents with an opportunity to have its own Community Council (CC) and has tried through Open Meetings and other information to provide residents with accurate facts on the pros and cons. Through its own research the Committee had no reservations in advising residents to vote in favour of the CC. The negative campaign of personal attacks and misinformation by our ward councillors, contrary to the position of neutrality espoused by their leader Cllr. Tutt, was apparently successful in convincing residents that costs would be higher than was the case. As well as providing a dedicated and formally recognised body empowered to fight for residents interests, the access to funds this Council would have had might have been used to great effect in achieving and maintaining the facilities missing from the Harbour. Of course in its absence we are wholly reliant on our ward councillors and EBC to provide what we need. It hasn't happened so far, but who knows? They don't talk to SHRA, so we don't!

Sovereign Harbour Trust

As we all know through our obligations to pay the annual Estate Rent Charge households pay over £200 a year into Sovereign Harbour Trust. Some of this is then distributed to the Environment Agency (EA) in support of maintaining flood defence provisions. Sovereign Harbour seems to be quite unique in having to pay towards its own flood defences, but at least its value to the community is apparent. Less clear has been the money paid by SHT for marina maintenance, previously to Sovereign Harbour Marina Ltd. (SHML), but now to Premier Marinas. SHRA has always been intent on getting a seat on the Board of Trustees, which has 6 seats. When SHML were in place 3 of these seats were occupied by Carillion employees or ex-employees, while the other 3 were vacant, but allocated to the EA.

Approaches to SHT were unsuccessful, so we met with the EA to see if they would

support us taking one of their seats. They declined and eventually appointed their own nominees, one of which was the chairperson of Pevensey Bay Parish Council. Isn't it a pity Sovereign Harbour doesn't have a Parish / Community Council, which has formally recognised flood defence responsibilities and would have legitimately opened the door for us.

OK, we'll stop moaning about not having a Parish / Community Council, but surely you didn't believe our ward councillors when they told you we didn't need one because Parish Councils are just concerned with maintaining war memorials and cricket pitches! Anyway, enough of this banter.

Since Premier has taken over the marina we have had more success. Premier has stopped short of giving a resident a seat on the Board of Trustees, but they have invited a member of the SHRA Committee along to their next meeting and we hope things will develop positively from there. The SHRA Committee member concerned, who has been leading on this issue, has recently resigned from the Committee. However, he has agreed to attend Trust meetings, provide ongoing feedback to the SHRA Committee and act as a conduit for residents' interests. Premier's attitude is welcome and hopefully will at least improve residents' understanding of what they are paying for.

Neighbourhood Panel

Readers of Waterlines will realise that SHRA had an interest in the prospect of regular liaison with the Police on issues affecting the Harbour through the possible formation of Local Action Teams (LAT). They are intended to address specific issues of law and order and antisocial behaviour and are designed to form, address the problem and then disband. However, the concept was superseded by a new Police initiative – the Neighbourhood Panel, of which more than 20 are envisaged for the whole of Eastbourne. Unlike LAT's Neighbourhood Panels don't come and go, but remain

in place to provide an ongoing focus on Police-related issues.

SHRA thought this initiative was well worth supporting and got involved in the formation of the SH Neighbourhood Panel, which is now established and meeting regularly. The Harbour is a 'low risk' area as far as crime and antisocial behaviour are concerned, but a Neighbourhood Panel can only help it to stay that way. The Panel is formed from 12 Harbour residents and is attended by the Police and Police Community Support Officers (PCSO) as well as ward and county councillors and representatives of other groups, such as Neighbourhood Watch.

Harbour Environment

This has been a diverse area of interest for SHRA. For example, SHRA responded to concerns being expressed by residents about irresponsible dog owners and we now have around 15 dog bins around the Harbour. We have provided advice to residents groups within the Harbour based on the network of contacts we have built up. Through specialist skills of Committee members we have been able to provide specific support in the area of risk assessment. Maintenance of roads and pathways has been of widespread concern and we have been able to achieve a good and ongoing dialogue with East Sussex County Council Highways Dept. Through this we are able to get regular updates on the adoption programme and also input our advice and residents' concerns.

Keep Fit the Graceful Way

Those of you who have fond memories of ballet lessons as a child might be interested in a somewhat different kind of exercise class at the Natural Fitness Centre.

It's called Balletcise and is a gentle work-out using basic ballet movements leading on to simple dance routines both classical and modern. It's great fun, most participants have very little experience of ballet and it's in a wonderful location, with the studio looking out over the sea

Classes are for one hour every Tuesday at 3:45pm and cost £6.00. Anyone interested can either just turn up, or if you would like to enquire first, telephone 01323 479944 and speak to Jane.

Community Police update (by PC Ed Faulkner)

One of the long running issues I have raised in these updates and elsewhere has been the big problem with car crime. Thankfully there has been a large drop in the number of incidents and I would suggest this is because of great partnership work between Police and Community. I very much hope that our continued joint action on this will bring further results. Thank you for your support on this issue.

Whilst we have enjoyed a fall in the number of cars broken into, we have suffered a worrying rise in the number of purse thefts in supermarkets and larger stores. We have taken steps to raise awareness, such as working with store security, and patrolling the aisles ourselves giving crime prevention advice to those trolleys with purses and bags attached. Please do your bit to avoid being a victim. Making sure your property is properly looked after is important. Make sure your money stays with you.

And finally, something which is very rare but has a massive impact on the elderly in our society, bogus callers. They cause a huge amount of distress to residents where ever they strike. I can not stress enough the need for you to check identification of callers, genuine callers will always be willing to show your formal identification and will be willing to wait for you to call their employers to check they are genuine. If anyone comes to your door asking to check your water, use your phone, read you meter or any other suspicious activity please make sure you call us as soon as possible so that we can investigate and catch any bogus callers. We would rather get the call and it be a false alarm than have to investigate when the trail has gone cold.

Social Clubs and Groups

For more information on any of these groups, call the number given, or visit the 'Social Activities' page of the SHRA website (www.shra.co.uk).

Sovereign Harbour Art Group

The Sovereign Harbour Art Group meets in the Christ The King Church Hall, Princes Park on Wednesdays 5:00pm - 8:00pm and Thursdays 9:30am - 12:30pm

Learn to paint with Acrylics, Oils and Pastels with an Experienced Art Tutor in a friendly, relaxed and enjoyable environment.

Phone Angela on 07914-884378 or e-mail acrylicart@hotmail.co.uk

You might also like to visit the Art Group's page in the 'Social Activities' section of the SHRA website.

Sovereign Harbour Investors Club

The Sovereign Harbour Investors Club meets on the last Tuesday of each month at the Sovereign Harbour Yacht Club, starting at 7:00pm. Membership is limited to twenty members.

Dates of meetings will be posted on the SHRA website.

To join the club, e-mail: chairman@shiclub.co.uk or visit: www.shiclub.co.uk

Strollers and Toners

Get fit, correct post natal posture patterns, tone up.

Mondays at 2.30-3.30pm. Cost £2.50

Tuesdays and Thursdays at 9.15 - 10:15am

Everyone is welcome and the sessions often run on with drinks on the harbour.

Please call Mari-Anne (fully qualified & insured) on 01323 479280 as classes may alter for January and February.

Harbour Friends

Whether you are new to the Harbour or have lived here for sometime, joining Harbour Friends is a great way to meet new people. Harbour Friends is a social group for Harbour residents of all ages, whether single or a couple. The group meets every Sunday at 7:15pm in the first floor bar at the Yacht Club.

If you are interested in joining, as long as you are a Harbour Resident, come along to our New Members evening which is held on the last Sunday of every month.

For more information visit our website at www.harbourfriends.co.uk, ring Bev on 479797 or e-mail Bev at bev@harbourfriends.co.uk

The Harbour Womens' Institute

The Harbour branch of the W.I. meets on the second Monday of the month at 2:00pm in the Sovereign Harbour Yacht Club.

If you are interested in taking part, please contact Heather on: 01323 416263.

Vet's Football

The Vets Football Team has now being running successfully for almost three years, but more players are welcome to join from the ages of 32 to 60 years of age, to play Sunday mornings on a casual basis. All abilities and fitness levels welcome. For more information, contact Frank:

vetsfooty@hotmail.com

Sovereign Harbour Racing Club

The Sovereign Harbour Racing Club meets on a number of occasions through the year for excursions to local racecourses.

For more information, or to join the club, contact Linus Gunning on 01323-470757.

Sovereign Harbour Social Club

SHSC meets every Wednesday from 10:00am to 11:30am in Seamoor's at the Waterfront for coffee.

Each month, there will be one outing, lunch, theatre, places of interest.

All are welcome, for further details.

Contact Sam Sweiry on 01323 479111

Sovereign Harbour Social Club (by Sam Sweiry)

Pauline Hale, our 2008 Club Secretary, said in her previous review that our Club has accomplished quite a lot for the first year; she also added a list of our achievements which, in my opinion when looking back, was pretty impressive.

As the founder and current Chairman for the second year, I am personally sorry to see five members of the committee did not wish to be at the helm in the Club new Era of expansion.

I thank, on behalf of all members, all those who contributed their time and energy in the past year and I welcome the Club's new committee and thank them for their foresight in joining me to take the Club to a higher level.

Sovereign Harbour Social Club now has a new website www.harbourseniors.co.uk which will be updated weekly on various subjects to meet the demand for older people in the harbour who are familiar with using computers. There will be items on such subjects as: gardening at home, growing vegetables in tubs, cooking for one person, birthday wishes with poems, holiday photography to share etc.

The Club's last year activities are well documented and the Club members will expand on it. The club will explore new ideas which will bring benefits, not only to the Club Members but also the wider Older Community in the Harbour.

The Camera Club has now passed to Kingsmere Community Association because they offered their premises FREE as well as having all the equipment available at the disposal of the Camera Club Members. In my opinion, this is a temporary set back for the Club and I personally hope, sometimes in the future, the Harbour will be able to claim back the Camera Club, as first intended.

Finally, I welcome the new committee of Sovereign Harbour Social Club and I thank the SHRA committee for giving this Club the opportunity to expose in Waterlines, our club activities to a wider

audience of harbour residents.

I hope and pray that more older people in the harbour will come and join our Coffee Mornings on any Wednesday at 10:00am at the Seamoor Wine Bar on the Waterfront and, for those who can't make it, you can make your interactive contribution through the Club Website.

Sovereign Harbour Neighbourhood Panel (by Jan Weeks)

Chief Inspector Dick Coates, along with Inspector Tony Wakefield, PC Ed Faulkner and PCSO's Martin Hylands and Roy Collins of the Neighbourhood Policing Team came to the Sovereign Harbour Neighbourhood Panel Meeting held on 28th January.

After the meeting CI Coates said: *"It was a pleasure to attend the Sovereign Harbour Neighbourhood Panel meeting and see so many people willing to give up their time to make the area a safer, cleaner place for people not only to live but to visit as well."*

"Without the support of the public I would not be able to deliver the Policing service in the town and this meeting went a long way to show that by working closely together in partnership we will succeed in making Eastbourne even safer than it is at present."

For further information, or to find out more about the Sovereign Harbour Neighbourhood Panel, visit www.eastbournenp.org and click on the Sovereign Harbour link.

Eastbourne Half Marathon

We would like to remind residents that the annual Eastbourne Half Marathon will be held on Sunday, 1st March. It will start at 10:00 am at Princes Park and will follow the same route as last year, which takes it around Sovereign Harbour. Details are available on the new web-site www.eastbournehalf.co.uk.

There's often a shortage of marshals, so anyone wishing to help should contact 01323 734645, or you can volunteer through the web-site.