

**Sovereign Harbour Residents Association  
Minutes of AGM of 12<sup>th</sup> March 2009**

**Committee Member Attendees**

Rick Runalls  
Jan Weeks  
Marj Pratt  
Jane Gochin  
John Teasdale  
Carol Teasdale  
Christine Runalls  
Peter Thomas

**Agenda**

1. Welcome to Members
2. Welcome and Introduction of Guests
3. Introduction of Committee
4. Chairman's Report
5. Treasurer's Report
6. Appointment of Committee for Coming Year
7. Introduction of New Committee Members
8. Open Discussion Session
9. AOB

**Item 1**

**Welcome to Members**

Rick Runalls called the meeting to order and welcomed all attendees.

**Item 2**

**Welcome and Introduction of Guests**

Rick welcomed guests County Councillors David Elkin, Borough Councillors Susan Morris and Margaret Salisbury, followed by PC Ed Faulkner and Sergeant Ed Ripley. Cllr. Susan Morris apologised on behalf of Cllr. Michael Bloom who is making a good recovery since his stroke last year, but is not yet able to attend all meetings.

**Item 3**

**Introduction of Committee**

Rick introduced the current Committee and offered thanks to Ian Weeks and Rod Gochin, who had both recently resigned from the Committee and to Jane Gochin, who was not re-standing for Committee membership 2009-10.

#### **Item 4**

##### **Chairman's Report**

Rick ran through some key landmarks over the year, both successes and disappointments. He made reference to two areas in particular on which he had previously been unable to report progress, but which were now moving forward.

The first of these was on the Sovereign Harbour Trust on which Rod Gochin's work had managed to get movement since Premier Marinas had taken over the Harbour. Previous effort had failed to get residents a seat on the Board of Trustees and this was still not on offer, however the Premier Managing Director had supported an SHRA observer being admitted to Trust meetings. Rod has offered to take undertake this role and act as a conduit to the SHRA. Rick stressed that it was early days, but the first meeting would be later this month and he hoped it would start giving residents a better insight into the business of the Trust that would develop with time.

The second area was that of adoption of roads on the Harbour. Rick was pleased to report that with the completion of major development work progress had been unlocked. He explained that SHRA has been meeting with ESCC Highways Dept. for a long time and had been pleased with their open attitude and wish to keep SHRA informed of progress. Adoption is now moving forward more quickly. As the necessary inspection and repair work is completed residents can expect to see this continue.

The full Chairman's Report is included as Appendix 1

#### **Item 5**

##### **Treasurer's Report**

Peter Thomas presented the Members with the Accounts and confirmed that membership numbered 793 households for 2008/2009. Total income for 2008/2009 was £6,156.67 compared to £8,933.33 last year. He advised the Members that Waterlines is no longer self-funding due to the current economic climate and the resulting reduction in the number of advertisers using the newsletter. He thanked Jon Martin for auditing the accounts.

Bert Leggett asked why membership fees did not amount to £7930 since there were 793 member households at £10 each. It was explained that normally members start paying their fees in advance of the membership year, the contributions from which appear in last year's accounts. However, it differs this year in that SHRA has not yet started accepting membership fees for 2009-10. A copy of the Treasurer's report is attached as Appendix 2.

#### **Item 6**

##### **Appointment of Committee for Coming Year**

Rick highlighted that since those members standing for re-election or election for the first time to the Committee did not exceed the maximum of 12 permitted by the Constitution, then an election was not required. As a consequence the Committee is appointed for the coming year and a meeting will be held to appoint officers without undue delay.

## **Item 7**

### **Introduction of New Committee Members**

First Rick explained that Jean Bowden, who had applied to join as a new member, couldn't attend the meeting due to a family emergency. He went on to explain that it was normal procedure that all new Committee Members be available to meet members at the AGM. However, in these unusual circumstances, Rick asked if the membership would support Jean Bowden's election to the Committee. This was formally proposed, seconded and the meeting voted unanimously in favour.

There was a query from Bert Leggett in respect of a friend, Norman Marsh, who had put himself forward for Committee membership, but was unable to attend the AGM because he was away on holiday. Rick explained to the meeting that Norman is a retired Lib Dem councillor in Eastbourne and had written to say that, while he did not want to come on the Committee, he would be willing to stand if not enough people were prepared to join. This had not been necessary.

Rick then introduced Alison Attwood, who had previously been on the Committee, Jonathan Robson who explained he was a radio and electronics engineer and had moved to the Harbour from Hurst Green and Tony Smith who had come down from North London and had retired from being a website designer for government departments. Tony had recently taken over the SHRA website and thought it was appropriate therefore to join the Committee.

Rick was delighted to re-introduce Ian Weeks, who had decided to re-join to assist the transition to the new Committee. This was warmly greeted by members present.

## **Item 8**

### **Open Discussion Session for Members**

Rick opened the discussion session with a question to members. He explained that the decision by residents to reject the formation of a Parish / Community Council after previous indications of support at Open Meetings and through the petition had been a surprise. The Committee had promoted it after much debate and research and following the decision the Committee was no longer sure that the strategy of challenge and change it was adopting was supported by its members. He invited feedback from the meeting on where they wanted the Committee to go from here. A number of speakers supported the strategies being adopted and this position was shared by the meeting in general. It was expressed by one speaker that we need "more of the same".

The meeting was then opened up to a general discussion on the issues of importance to the Harbour. This was lively and at times heated. Several members commented that without the SHRA who would hold meetings like this? Others felt very strongly that the campaign against the Parish Council by the Lib Dems was unacceptable and the personal attacks made against Ian Weeks had been "wicked". One speaker criticised the Committee for becoming too political in their relationship with the local elected representatives.

A fairly acrimonious exchange took place between Cllr. Susan Morris and several members in respect of the siting of the proposed Medical Centre. Cllr. Morris confirmed she was not in favour of Site 7 and that she wanted co-location of the Health Centre with a Community Centre. She went on to say that she had tried to get a 106 agreement with Dr.Adoki / the PCT to fund a Community Centre as part of the Health Centre project, since Dr.Adoki would profit from the Health Centre. Cllr. Morris said they wouldn't agree to this and inferred that it was Dr.Adoki's responsibility if Harbour residents did not get a Community Centre. This was perceived as an attack against Dr.Adoki, who is well respected on the Harbour and drew an angry response from members.

Cllr. Morris said that if a Health Centre was built on Site 7 then it would constitute a change of land use from the current B1 and would open it up to residential development. She challenged SHRA, asking if this was what they wanted. Rick replied that since the days of 'B&Q' SHRA had fought against change of land use and he had specifically asked questions about the impact of the Health Centre on this. The feedback he had been given was that the Health Centre would be treated as an exception, since it would operate as a small business and consequently would not undermine B1 use. On this basis, Rick confirmed that SHRA supports the planning application. He said that what SHRA and residents in general wanted was for the Health Centre to be given priority and not to keep suffering delays.

Cllr. Morris was asked by a member where she intended to place the Community Centre and was told she had this on Site 1 in her Master Plan. It was also reported that her plan included 8 eco-houses on this site as well. The wish to build houses on this development land was questioned since it was in contravention of the cross-party 'no more residential development' motion that had been passed in 2006, following the '5 Sites' Planning Committee refusal of Carillion's plans. Cllr. Morris replied that the motion had been against further development of flats, and not residential in general. Rick said this was incorrect and produced a letter he had received from Peter Finnis (Assistant Director – Strategy & Democracy) on 17/10/06, which made it clear that the motion was against any further residential development and was not limited to flats.

A member queried references to a questionnaire from Cllr. Morris relating to her Master Plan. She confirmed her statement in the Eastbourne Herald that this had gone out to 3300 homes on the Harbour. The member said he had not received it and a show of hands was requested to check the circulation of this news sheet / questionnaire. Over half those present confirmed they had not seen it. She suggested that this may have been because so many people lived in flats that could not easily be accessed, also because some residents have 'no leaflets or circulars' stickers on their letter boxes. The question was raised that if she is not providing this to the whole of the Harbour and giving them an opportunity to respond, how has she been able to come up with a Master Plan that purports to reflect residents' opinions?

One member queried as to whether the Committee had considered putting up independent councillors for election and Rick explained that this had been seriously considered before

the last local elections, but a majority decision not to stand was taken. At that time it was felt this would weaken the effort that SHRA was able to put in and there was hope that given SHRA's previous successes, elected representatives from either party would work with the Association. He said it was possible that this decision would be reviewed before the next local elections take place.

Susan Morris thanked the Committee for the invitation to attend the AGM and told the audience that she had met SHRA to introduce herself, but considered the Committee never wanted to get on with her. Rick refuted this and said that SHRA had wanted to work with the ward councillors and that they had been invited to, and once attended a Committee meeting, but she had made it clear by her actions that she did not want to work with SHRA.

A member asked directly if she and SHRA would 'stop point scoring' and be prepared to meet. Rick said it was for the new Committee, who would meet following the AGM to decide on their strategy and course of action for the coming year, but thought it was extremely likely that the ward councillors would again be invited to discussions with SHRA.

#### **Item 9**

##### **AOB**

Rick introduced Linus Gunning to the meeting who said that there was an initiative to raise political and financial awareness before the next general election and that there was to be a meeting on May Day at 8.00 at the T & G conference centre.

**The meeting closed at 9.30 pm**

**Sovereign Harbour Residents' Association  
Annual General Meeting of 12 March 2009**

**Chairman's Report**

**1) Committee's Vision and Objectives**

The Committee's vision for Sovereign Harbour has been consistent over the last 4 years and remains essentially simple. We wish to see the Harbour develop from a housing estate to a sustainable community where residents' reasonable expectations for a safe and peaceful living environment are put first. When we moved to the Harbour we were sold our homes on the back of a promise of a village environment, but sadly this ideal was never the objective of the developers, or Borough Councils of the past. Most of us are now fully aware that poor planning control and a lack of strategic thinking by EBC has enabled developers to build profitable residential accommodation without the provision of the social facilities, which are critical to support the development of a sustainable community. Everything the Committee has promoted is targeted at providing a stronger community infrastructure and through this a community spirit.

In summary our strategy still has two facets. Firstly we wanted to develop a Residents' Association that was both transparent and responsive to members' priorities and effective and professional in dealing with local government, developers and other groups with the potential to shape life on the Harbour. Secondly we wanted to influence those organisations to deliver a sustainable community by providing missing social facilities, while maximising business and quality employment opportunities. The bottom line was a fair deal for the Harbour.

Cornerstones of the Committee's strategy have been to maximise the engagement of residents across the Harbour by seeking their views and involving them in campaigns, and to maintain a non party political stance.

**2) The Past Year and the Way Forward**

The greatest disappointment to me after 5 years fighting for a better environment in which the Harbour can grow, is the attitude of both our elected representatives and other politicians. Perhaps I'm politically naïve, but I cling to the belief that our councillors' principal objective should be to work for the benefit of the residents who have elected them. Their political ambitions should be second to this. As has been stated on many occasions, SHRA has always been keen on working with our councillors on issues that will improve the Harbour for its residents, but this has not been reciprocated.

There has never been a willingness to work with SHRA and indeed a great deal of effort has been directed by the politicians at undermining SHRA's efforts on behalf of residents. The reason for this appears to be that they see SHRA as a threat to their authority. However, as discouraging as this may sound the ambitions of politicians has never been allowed to affect the

priorities and commitment of SHRA and I hope that will continue to be the case in the future.

At previous AGM's I have described the SHRA not in terms of a residents' association focusing on the social life of the community, but as an activist group. This has been a necessity to fight for the basic infrastructure and big issues that have been overlooked by our developers and our Borough Council. I have also said that in time this could be expected to change as those issues were put to bed, or were taken wholly out of residents' influence. The Committee feels that it has come to that position now. It is a time for the SHRA Committee to reflect and in particular for SHRA members to decide what they want of their Committee and do something material to support it.

Why do we think this landmark has been reached? Given the limitations in what SHRA can do as a group of informal volunteers we have reached critical points in four key areas.

- a) On the remaining Harbour development the campaigns we have led stopped more wholesale residential development and were instrumental in getting Carillion to sit down with Council Officers, Lib Dem and Tory members and SHRA. No political group did this, it was SHRA and it gave the Council an opportunity they had never previously had to put things right on the Harbour. Our Council never gave the SHRA credit for this or indeed the other work we have done and have now excluded both SHRA and the Tory representative from meetings with the developer. Cllr. Morris has publicly said that she and the current administration will provide what the Harbour needs. SHRA has no power to insist the residents' collective voice is heard, so we are not in the position of being able to argue effectively for residents' priorities within this process.
- b) We undertook to give Harbour residents the opportunity for its own Parish / Community Council that would have funds and power to direct at issues on the Harbour. We fulfilled this commitment, but following the rejection of this by Harbour residents in the recent vote we are unable to take it further. If residents wish to reconsider this in the future an opportunity will arise in about 2 years time.
- c) We have encouraged and contributed to the formation of a Neighbourhood Panel on the Harbour. This Police initiative is now well established and provides a forum for residents' concerns on law and order and antisocial behaviour to be addressed. We have done our best to resist attempts to introduce politics into the running of the Neighbourhood Panel.
- d) A big issue for residents has been the money they are contracted to pay to Sovereign Harbour Trust. Members and other residents will know that for the last 4 years we have been trying to get a better understanding of, and a voice in the Estate Rent Charge. We were ideally seeking a seat for at least one resident on the Board of Trustees.

This has not occurred, but there has been a positive development with Premier Marinas, who have taken over from Carillion as a major beneficiary of the money collected by the Trust following their purchase of the marina business. Their Managing Director has supported an SHRA representative attending Trust meetings as an observer, which will start providing a better insight into the business of the Trust and how money is being used. This arrangement will commence at the next meeting, on 19 March 2009.

In short, there is a lesser role for an activist group at present, although SHRA should be prepared to re-launch this at any time in the future if the commitments of our elected representatives prove insubstantial. As a result some members of the current Committee are not intending to re-stand and this will make way for other residents, hopefully without party political axes to grind, to come forward and take the SHRA into the future. The strength of the SHRA Committee has always been that it remains party politically neutral, so it is prepared to champion the interests of all residents without bias. It is important that new Committee members recognise and respect this

**The main issue for SHRA members is to decide whether the SHRA Committee has met their expectations and aspirations and what they want from it in the future.**

### **3) Other Activities over the Year**

In addition to the main areas of effort, mentioned above, and Open Meetings and displays in support of these SHRA has undertaken the following.

- a) We have continued distributing Waterlines to all residences, rather than just members of SHRA, since this represents our principal means of communication across the Harbour. It remains an effective voice for Harbour residents and does not turn away from controversial issues. The frequency and distribution is kept under review. Recent loss of advertising revenue means that continuing general circulation would require SHRA members to subsidise other Harbour residents, which is not fair. However, we have recently been approached by new sponsors, which could alleviate this problem, although frequency of delivery may still be affected. The time taken to write and produce Waterlines has been substantial and has relied greatly on the commitment of Ian Weeks. His resignation in December 2008 was a major loss and reminded us all of the immense value of his contribution. However, we have managed to keep it rolling so far.
- b) The SHRA web site was started by Ian Weeks and for the last 4 years has provided access to our activities and those of other residents groups on and off the Harbour. Waterlines is widely read from this source and we know that it is routinely accessed by political groups, council officers, Carillion and their consultants, as well as the Police. Ian's resignation hit the web site hard. However, it is with the greatest of pleasure that we can announce

that the site has now been redesigned and taken over by our new web site manager, Tony Smith.

- c) We have continued with the monthly 'surgery' at Simply Italian. Attendance is limited, but it still provides a potentially useful source of contact with residents. In particular it gives the opportunity for residents to meet Committee members face-to-face and share their views and experiences in an informal way.
- d) We have continued pressing for the adoption of roads and foul drains on North and South Harbours at our regular meetings with ESCC Highways. The adoption process has been erratic because it could only be unlocked when building work was getting near completion and required coordination between the Council, Southern Water, Carillion and the individual developers. We have kept residents informed of the developing situation and ESCC has been helpful in keeping us updated with the latest program. It is good to note that many of the big issues are now clear and adoption is progressing more smoothly.
- e) Thanks to the ongoing commitment of a small group of Committee members the SHRA maintained representation at many Planning Committee and Council Meeting. This has enabled a good overview to be taken on Council processes and decisions and continues to enhance the standing of SHRA.
- f) There are many people around the Harbour with ideas that bring residents with shared interests together in a social way. Wherever possible the Committee has tried to support these through advertising their activities in Waterlines and in some cases by committee members getting involved themselves. Good examples of initiatives by residents are Harbour Friends, Sovereign Harbour Racing Club, the Harbour Social Club and WI. Our congratulations go to those residents who have developed these ideas and turned them into successful contributors to the community. We would urge you to support them – it remains a case of 'use it or lose it'.
- g) Although it has not been expressed as a major area of interest by residents, we met with ESCC and our County Councillor, David Elkin, last year to discuss the possibility of establishing library facilities of some kind on the Harbour. The Museum Act of 1964 puts a requirement on the County Council to provide library services to communities and these should be within 2 miles. Clearly this puts the Pevensy Bay library within the reach of much of the Harbour. However, ESCC agreed for one of its mobile facilities to visit the Harbour for half a day a week. This is now up and running and the mobile office has PC's, which provide access to internet and library catalogue databases and is manned by 3 staff to assist residents in using the machines. Required books and other material can be ordered and collected the following week. After articles in a local newspaper arguing for a library on Sovereign Harbour it is disappointing to see that this mobile facility is not used more. It has been advertised in Waterlines

and sets up in the car park opposite the Yacht Club on Tuesdays between 2pm and 4pm. Once again the message must be 'use it or lose it'.

#### 4) Health of the SHRA

We have had some indications that residents and others believe that SHRA is in decline. Nothing could be further from the truth. The tools that SHRA have put in place and have enabled it to function so successfully are firing on all cylinders, after a brief hiatus with the web site. We have even been able to replace the SHRA notice board that was originally sited on the wall of the new fish restaurant on the Waterfront before it was vandalised. Thanks to the sponsorship of the Police we have purchased a new and larger board and after consultation with Carillion, we have been allowed to mount it on the wall of the end shop adjacent to 'Bright Ideas'.

The SHRA Committee is very much a 'going concern', but the recent response to the Parish Council campaign and the attitude of our elected representatives has resulted in long-standing Committee members reviewing their position. The situation is very much business as usual, but it is up for SHRA members to decide what that business should be and to come forward and support the Committee.

#### 5) Thanks

- Firstly, I wish to offer my personal thanks to Ian Weeks who has been an enthusiastic and tireless contributor to the Harbour. The value of this contribution cannot be over-stated and the success of the SHRA owes much to his efforts. Ian's decision to resign last year really was the end of an era. My thanks also go to Rod Gochin, who resigned at the same time as Ian. Rod's quiet contributions at Committee meetings were always challenging and thought provoking. It is Rod's recent efforts that have led to the change of stance with respect to Sovereign Harbour Trust and he has agreed to represent residents as a guest at Trust Meetings and act as a conduit back to SHRA.
- The Committee once again wishes to express its thanks to two Harbour businesses who from the beginning have offered us encouragement and support, which has continued over the last year.

**Temple Bird (Solicitors)** - deserve particular thanks for their outstanding commitment to the community. They have for four years generously provided use of their conference room for Committee meetings and have been unflagging supporters of the SHRA. They were the first to take out advertising within Waterlines and the income this has provided over the period has been a welcome contribution to minimising the cost to residents of producing Waterlines.

**Simply Italian** - have also been supporters of the SHRA for the period this Committee has been in office. They routinely allow us to use their lounge for our monthly surgeries, and provide space for other residents groups to hold social gatherings and meetings.

We also wish to thank those members who have provided assistance in circulating the Community Council petition, given regular help in distribution of Waterlines and general encouragement to the Committee. We do, however stress the need for ongoing material help – the Committee can't do it all themselves.

#### **6) Priorities for the Coming Year**

This is very much dependent on what SHRA members want, but the outgoing Committee has to observe that although it has provided opportunities for residents and our elected representatives nothing material has so far been done for the Harbour infrastructure. We still don't have a Health Centre, an appropriate Community Centre, recreation grounds or play areas. Just promises that they will be delivered. It is particularly frustrating to see the positioning of the Health Centre being used as a 'football' by the political parties. Hopefully common sense will get the better of it and they will realise it is residents who will suffer if their unwelcome activities lead to yet another delay in this project.

R.H.Runalls  
1<sup>st</sup> March 2009

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**BALANCE SHEET AS AT 28/2/09****Current Assets**

Cash in Natwest Current a/c	£	1,345.79	£	3,997.62	£3,009.07
Cash in Natwest Reserve a/c	£	9,809.32	£	9,682.65	£6,458.03

Prepayments	£	233.67	£	209.14	
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**Equipment Assets**

asset b/f	£	253.36			
plus: purchases	£	1,136.00		£ 364.84	
less: depreciation	£	279.39		£ 111.48	
asset c/f	£	1,109.97	£	1,109.97	£ 253.36

**Total Current****Assets**

£	12,498.75	£14,142.77	£9,467.10
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**Current Liabilities**

Prepaid Subscriptions	£	-	£ 1,880.00	£3,345.00
Cheques Issued not Cashed	£	-		£ 792.00

**Total Current****Liabilities**

£	-	£ 1,880.00	£4,137.00
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NET CURRENT ASSETS Held for Revenue A/c	£	12,498.75	£12,262.77	£5,330.10
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<b>REVENUE ACCOUNT BALANCE at end of the Year</b>	£	<b>12,498.75</b>	£12,262.77	£5,330.10
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Certified that I have laid before the Auditor all of the books and papers of the Association  
Financial Affairs for the year e

Signed..... Date....  
Peter T Thomas ( Treasurer )



3-03-2009

Sovereign Harbour Residents Association  
 REVENUE ACCOUNT for year End 28<sup>th</sup> February 2009

	08/09	07/08	06/07
Subscriptions	£3,485.00	£ 4,349.00	£3,765.00
Advertising Income	£2,145.00	£ 3,975.00	£3,840.00
Donations	£ -		£ 90.00
Bank Interest	£ 126.67	£ 224.62	£ 129.74
The Crumbles Story	£ -	£ 384.71	£ -
Other Income	£ 400.00	£ -	£ -
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£6,156.67</b>	<b>£ 8,933.33</b>	<b>£7,824.74</b>
Printing/Publications			£ 500.28
Waterlines	£5,617.00	£ 3,709.00	£3,577.68
Stationery & Office Supplies	£ 495.00	£ 277.12	£ 485.90
Internet Hosting	£ 105.63	£ 126.76	£ 126.76
Membership Cards		£ 248.59	£ 227.62
Hall Hire & Events	£ 213.62	£ 85.00	£ 105.00
PO Box	£ 59.77	£ 48.20	£ 56.15
Postage	£ 21.00	£ 66.18	£ 2.52
Insurance (Public Liability)	£ 267.01	£ 99.75	£ 358.05
Transport Hire			£ 445.10
Sundries		£ 129.15	£ 40.00
Telephone	£ 147.49	£ 93.69	£ 227.11
Gazebo, Banner, Software			£1,400.74
Bank Correction			£ 0.43
Depreciation	£ 279.39	£ 111.48	
Charitable Donation (DGH)	£ 500.00		
The Crumbles Story		£ 384.71	
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£7,705.91</b>	<b>£ 5,379.63</b>	<b>£7,553.34</b>
Excess (Deficit) of Income over Expenditure for the year	-£1,549.24	£ 3,553.70	£ 271.40
Balance b/f at beginning of year	£6,265.51	£ 2,711.81	£2,440.41
Balance c/f at the end of year	£4,716.27	£ 6,265.51	£2,711.81

Certified that I have laid before the Auditor all of the books and papers of the Association Financial Affairs for the year ending 28<sup>th</sup> February 2009



3-03-2009

Signed..... Date.....  
 Peter T Thomas ( Treasurer )