



Annual General Meeting

Thursday 12th May 2016

Haven School Sovereign Harbour

Prior to the start of the meeting Angelo Errigo delivered the obligatory health and safety briefing in his inimitable style.

Welcome to Members

Jan Weeks (Chairman) (JW) welcomed members to the meeting. She drew members' attention to a booklet that had been distributed around the hall, which included the Agenda, the Chairman's Report, Treasurer's Report and Sovereign Harbour Community Association Report. Apologies had been offered from:-

Members: Peter and Andrea Chartres, Phillip Priddice, David and Helen Atkins, Lesley and Robin Ward, Mark Thornhill, Gloria Ramsey, Jackie Ferguson, Pat and Geoff Chatterton, Chris and Francis Harrap, Joan and Bryan Brady, Patricia Fairweather, Hilary and Howard Orem, Kim Metcalfe, Sylvia Wright, Jackie Wright, John and Linda Langton, Paul and Jackie Gooch, Angela Custance, Don Permian, Robert Stanborough.

Committee Member: Anton Levy

Invited Guests: Robert Cottrill, Neighbourhood Policing Team

Welcome and Introduction of Guests

A warm welcome was offered to all invited guests including Caroline Ansell MP, Cllr David Elkin, Cllr Tony Freebody, Cllr Gordon Jenkins, EBC Head of Corporate Development, Peter Finnes, and EBC Neighbourhood First Team Manager, Tim Whelan.

JW advised that Cllr David Tutt was at another meeting but would be attending later.

Statement from Neighbourhood Policing Team

JW advised members that in the light of recent changes to policing the Neighbourhood Policing Team would no longer be routinely attending community meetings and events. JW had requested a briefing for members and Chief Inspector Emma Brice, District Commander for Eastbourne, provided the following statement.

"Sussex Police has recently undergone a root and branch review to make it stronger, more effective, more efficient and better placed to deal with the modern challenges we face. Part of this review was of the Neighbourhood Policing Teams and how they work with the communities they serve. In the past Officers have routinely attended community meetings, street meetings, and other events where there was often no Police

issues raised for them to deal with. Whilst seeing officers provided reassurance at these meetings it was not using their time most effectively. Therefore a decision was made for PCSO's and NPT Officers only to attend meetings where there is a specific policing need. This includes at Neighbourhood Panels as well as other events, freeing up their time to focus on intrusive and priority crimes such as burglary, fraud, as well as supporting vulnerable victims.

Although Eastbourne NPT have not been directly involved in the SHRA in the past, we have remained close partners in keeping Sovereign Harbour safe. Indeed it is worth noting the strong support that the SHRA committee and membership give to their Neighbourhood Policing Team. However Officers will not present for this evenings meeting. NPT Officers remain engaged in the community at all levels, and Eastbourne NPT continue to serve Sovereign Harbour as we do all other communities. We remain a strong, community driven Policing team working to keep Sovereign Harbour and Eastbourne a safe place to live, visit and work."

Introduction of Committee

Those attending Committee members who had served over 2015-2016 period were introduced. These were Jan Weeks (Chairman), Chris Mephram (Deputy Chairman), Rick Runalls, Angelo Errigo, Peter Thomas (Treasurer), Ian Weeks (Communications Officer), Ray Blakebrough, Penny di Cara, Des Davis, Dilys Iverson and Shirley Davis (Secretary).

JW advised that we were very lucky to have two Ward Councillors on our Committee who lived in the Harbour and were heavily involved in the community.

Committee Report

JW went briefly through the committee annual report and advised that this would be posted on the website for those who had not had chance to read it through.

Very frustrating year for all concerned. On a positive note Pacific House, whether you love the building or hate it, was opened in the spring and is currently over 40% occupied.

Planning applications for sites 1, 7c and 8 were all approved and building had started on site 8. Ground works have commenced on Site 7c and work is due to commence later this year.

All the Clubs in the Harbour, although without a permanent affordable home in the Harbour were flourishing but JW stressed that Sovereign Harbour is still a fast growing community without any facilities.

Further details on what has happened during the year were in the Committee Report attached to these notes, in Waterlines and on the SHRA website.

JW concluded by thanking SHRA members for their ongoing support over the past year.

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurers Report was presented by Peter Thomas (PT) in summary. PT invited members to review the accounts at their leisure and contact him via email if they had any questions.

The full accounts can be downloaded from the SHRA website

Appointment of Committee for Coming Year

JW reported that there had been no new expressions of interest in joining the Committee from the membership in the run-up to the AGM. In these circumstances the existing Committee had agreed to serve for another year and constitutionally they would be automatically re-elected unless there were any objections from the membership.

JW, however, advised those present that some of the committee had planned not to stand for re-election this coming year, but in view of the things happening in the Harbour, and their in depth knowledge of these, they had agreed to stand for one more year. She stressed however that they meant one more year and no more. With this in mind she stated that it was imperative that members came forward as soon as possible to join the committee and take things further. If this does not happen then SHRA could fold and she was sure that nobody wanted this to happen. It was now up to the members in general to step forward.

As a consequence by a show of hands it was confirmed that the SHRA Committee entering the 2016/2017 year would comprise Jan Weeks, Chris Mephram, Rick Runalls, Angelo Errigo, Peter Thomas, Ian Weeks, Ray Blakebrough, Penny di Cara, Des Davis, Anton Levy, Dilys Iverson and Shirley Davis.

Sovereign Harbour Community Association Report

Des Davis (Chair) of SHCA went through the Trustee's report and highlighted what had been happening to the proposed Community Centre. A copy of the report will be posted on the SHCA website and the SHRA website. You can also listen to Des's presentation.

DD pointed out that whilst SHRA and SHCA worked very closely together they were, in fact, two separate organisations ie SHRA are a pressure group and have been fighting for the Community Centre whilst SHCA would take over and manage the completed Community Centre.

The only positive thing to come out of the last year is that planning permission was granted for a building which had taken months of meetings and discussions to get a really good design which would be viable, an asset to the community and sustainable.

During the year we have continually been advised by SCS's Project Manager that the project was on target and that work would start in September with completion in April 2016. Then we had another date of completion autumn of 2016. In December 2015 we were given a flow chart and told everything was on target although completion date was now 26th December 2016. In January 2016 everything was still on target. In February we were hit with "site 5 is contaminated and cannot be built on". The Community Centre would have to go on the alternative site as allowed for in the S106 agreement of Site 7 – near the Medical Centre. Then in March 2016 we were told that the design that had been approved and that we had planning permission for would not fit on Site 7 and a new design would have to be done. We now have planning permission for a building that cannot be built on site 5 and does not fit on site 7 – what a waste of time and money.

DD stated that all the Trustees were volunteers and were not paid for all the work they have been doing on behalf of the community. Over the past 18 months

members of SHCA have attended over 30 meetings including:-

- Design planning meetings
- Financial meetings
- Meetings with potential funders
- Progress meetings
- Meetings with Council Officers and Solicitor regarding the proposed Lease arrangements, etc.
- Seminars on funding
- Potential hirers of the Centre

Apart from meetings SHCA Trustees have had to prepare a new Constitution and application for the Charity Commission to change the structure of the Association in order to safeguard the SHCA's Trustees once the building was taken over.

Countless hours have been spent obtaining quotations from companies for tables, chairs, IT equipment, staging etc. Bearing in mind all potential funders require three quotations for each item, as well as telephone calls to potential funders and hirers.

To date SHCA have raised a total of £2237.07, mostly from Residents of Sovereign Harbour. For those residents that have so kindly contributed to the fund we wish to assure them that these funds are held in a restrictive account and cannot be used for anything other than towards equipment for the Centre when it is built.

SHCA were also in discussion with a number of possible funders and had hoped to receive a substantial sum from them. This was apart from the promises of funds already made

The way that EBC and SCS have ridden rough shod over previous agreements has left SHCA with no option but to withdraw from the project unless the original agreed design is re-instated. If EBC insists on throwing all this hard work away then they will be responsible for running whatever SCS is determined to build, without the support that SHCA had been previously committed to giving. With the design change being proposed SHCA no longer has confidence in the viability of the project. We still believe that both Site 5 and the agreed design remains viable within the cost and technical parameters of the project.

Sadly all trust between SHCA, EBC and SCS has broken down. This is somewhat surprising as EBC is a Liberal Democrat led Council which prides itself on its links with the local community.

However, whilst SHCA have walked away from the management of the project we will continue to take every opportunity in conjunction with SHRA to keep pressure on the Council to provide the much needed and long overdue Community Centre in Sovereign Harbour"

DD finished by saying that the Council and the Ward Councillors now have the responsibility for ensuring that a Community Centre, which is viable and fit for purpose, is provided and for its ongoing operation and management. The so called "Concept" provided at the meeting in March did neither.

Following DD's report RR offered thanks, in particular to Des and Shirley Davis, for all the hard work that they had put into the proposed Community Centre.

[**You can listen to Des's statement here.**](#)

Caroline Ansell MP

Caroline Ansell said she had sat and felt moved by what has emerged. She added that she had been working with IW and RR on the Harbour Charge and was impressed with their "never give up" attitude. She had been with them at a very testing meeting with the Environment Agency (EA) and she was pleased that she was on their side and not the EA. She felt disappointed that so far they have not come through. A meeting had been held in Parliament with the Secretary of State and another meeting has been arranged at the end of May with the Deputy Head of the EA. The campaign goes on.

CA had been at the Haven School the previous week for a meeting with local Head Teachers and the Schools Minister with regard to the proposed policy on academies. It was interesting that just 24 hours after that meeting the Policy was changed.

CA advised she has a superb team working with her. There would be a meeting at the Congress Theatre on Thursday May 26th on the EU referendum. She added that if anyone had not got tickets if they contact her she would arrange them. The EU referendum was potentially a defining event.

Marina Rent Charge

Rick Runalls gave a brief synopsis of what has happened in the ongoing fight with regard to this Marina Rent Charge. Sovereign Harbour is the only 800 metres in the UK that has a second tax placed on it. The charge relates to the Southern Water Agreement of 1988 which obliged Sovereign Harbour property owners to pay the charge. The agreement committed Southern Water to repair or replace the groynes on the Sovereign harbour beach and Tarmac Construction to move shingle built up by the harbour arm around to the North Harbour beach. These obligations were transferred to their successor organisations, the Environment Agency (EA) and Sovereign Harbour Ltd. (SHL).

The rent charge was to be administered by a trust that should have been set-up by 1997 and if this did not happen a bond of £2 million was to be lodged by SHL. Both parties failed to honour their commitments, but then co-operated to modify the agreement in 2001 to remove all of their obligations and transfer the costs to property owners.

RR and IW have made a thorough study of all relevant documentation and firmly believe that the modifications to the 1988 agreement (the 2001 deed) are not legal. Consequently, opinion was sought from a Barrister who is of the opinion that the agreement was unlawful. He felt that we would have up to an 80% chance of success if we went to court but this is extremely expensive. We wrote to the CIC and informed them of the Barrister's opinion. Around this time RR had been invited to join the CIC Board. In December 2014 his first meeting was held – this happened to be at the same time as the CIC received the letter. RR was asked to leave the meeting whilst it was being discussed. They decided that the letter was not form them and that it should be sent to the EA. We are of the opinion that the Contract is with the Board not the EA. Needless to say the EA ignored the letter. RR put forward a motion to the Board that the Trust should stop taking money from the Residents until the matter was resolved. Needless to say they turned this down. Interestingly the Secretary of the Board is a Solicitor and his advice to the Board was not to worry and ignore SHRA's letter.

Following this we decided to pursue the issue with the EA with the assistance of Caroline Ansell MP. Secretary of State met with the EA, Caroline Ansell and SHRA representatives. A further meeting is planned with the new Deputy Head of the EA.

RR advised that whilst all this was going on SHRA were opening new ways of trying to resolve the matter, hopefully without the cost of prohibitive legal costs.

RR added that he has struggled with remaining on the Trust Board but has continued purely to put residents' views across. Recently, in response to a request from the Trust to fill the two vacant places, the EA was asked for nominations. The EA surprisingly nominated Jan Weeks and Penny di Cara. Hopefully these nominations will go through and there would then be three residents on the Board.

Open Discussion

Prior to the open discussion JW advised that we would not accept any discussion on three subjects ie dog fouling, parking and litter. She advised that these issues were ones that SHRA had no control over and there were places people could go to pursue them.

Dogs in general

The question of dogs not on leads that could attack and bite people was raised. What happens then?

Tim Whelan advised that there were dog control orders in place in Eastbourne. They could only police the area between the Wish Tower and the Pier which is land owned by the Local Authority. A full review of dog control orders will be undertaken in 2017 and residents will have the opportunity to comment and propose additional locations at the public consultation. He also advised that companies of dog walkers would need to be licensed in 2017.

Tim gave an example of an out of control dog which resulted in court action against the owner. The dog was removed and the owner fined £1,000 and made to do 100 hours community service.

Community Centre

Who is responsible for clearing up Site 5 which is in a dreadful state.

Cllr Elkin advised that as far as he was aware it would be SHL as they owned the land. He would check on this and let JW know so that the information could be put in Waterlines etc.

Why has it taken so long to find that Site 5 is not suitable to build on?

Cllr Elkin advised that Site 5 was supposed to be handed over as a clean site. If it was found not to be a clean site then SHL had to provide an alternative site which they have now done; Site 7. He expressed the opinion that, with hind-sight, the Borough Council should have taken the decision to abandon Site 5 earlier. The controlling factor, he said, was that the available funding was insufficient to allow the deep piling that would be necessary.

He advised that SCS were still planning for the Community Centre to be ready for occupation in April 2017 and were optimistic it might even be ready for February and he was willing to bet that SHRA's AGM in 2017 would be held in the new Community Centre. He said that the Community Centre to be built on site 7, whilst not the original design would be equal to the original in size etc. In response to a

residents accusation that we had been lied to, Cllr Elkin refuted this, but did accept that there could have been ineptitude.

What will happen to Site 5?

Cllr Elkin said Site 5 is owned by SHL and he has no knowledge of what they are allowed to do with it.

Do you think that this development, which is the largest ever undertaken by the Borough Council was just too big for the level expertise it had at its disposal?

Cllr Elkin said he was unable to comment as this was an issue for the Borough Council.

At this point, JW announced the arrival of Cllr David Tutt, the Borough Council leader. Cllr Tutt explained that he has been in back-to-back meetings all day and apologised for his late arrival.

Cllr Tutt picked up the question about the development being too big for the council. He project, he said, was not just the past five, or even ten, years, it went back a very long way. The council had to make some very pragmatic decisions because the developers, in a failing property market, were preparing to abandon the project and leave the development half completed.

Cllr Tutt said that one of his morning meetings was with the Planning Inspectorate to discuss the Borough's employment plan. He informed the meeting that Sovereign Harbour Ltd, despite having obtained planning consent for a business development on Site 7a, was now trying to get change of use for even more residential development.

On the subject of the community centre, Cllr Tutt acknowledged residents' disappointment and said he shared their frustration, but praised the S.106 agreement which provided an alternative to Site 5 and reiterated Cllr Elkin's confidence that we would be holding next year's AGM in a new community centre.

If Community Centre is to be on Site 7, why is there not a road put between North and South Harbours otherwise there would be a 6 mile round trip for people from South Harbour to get to Centre.

Cllr Tutt acknowledged the situation and assured members that had a more central site been available, it would have been acquired.

How many parking spaces were being allocation on Site 7 for the new Centre?

Cllr Tutt stated that he did not know at this stage but he would find out and come back to JW within 7 days.

The Council and Councillors are servants of the community and paid for by the community. They should be acting for the community not everything being one sided in favour of developers.

Cllr Tutt stated that they were doing their best within the constraints that they have and would continue to do so.

North Harbour residents had been promised an additional exit onto Pevensy Bay Road through Site 7 both for emergency use and to alleviate traffic congestion. The additional residential development makes that even more urgent.

Cllr Elkin said there would be two emergency exits one at the Yacht Club and one be

the roundabout in Pacific Drive at Site 7c. However, because of financial constraints, these would be controlled by the emergency services and would not be generally available.

If unable to build on Site 5 why can it not be built on Site 6? The Centre should be in the heart of the community.. If they can build a 2/3 storey office block on site 6 this must mean the site can take a single storey Community Centre.

Cllr Tutt advised that Site 6 has planning for employment use. To have Site 6 would mean a change of use and he was not sure if this would be possible plus it could mean that we would lose Site 7. If the Residents wanted him to look into the possibility of having Site 6 he would do so but this could mean considerable delay to the Community Centre. Cllr Tutt said he was not a gambler, but he would bet we would be celebrating the opening of the community centre this time next year.

IW said that when he raised this possibility at the last meeting, it was stated categorically that this was not an option.

We were assured that there would be no further residential development until after the community centre had been handed over, but the residential development has already started. Why doesn't the council call a halt to the residential development until the community centre is provided?

There was a bargain between the developers and the Borough and County Council, but it seems that at the moment, this is only working in favour of the developers.

Are you sure that the new site is not contaminated?

Cllr Tutt said he was prepared to explore the possibility of Site 6 if it was the consensus of the meeting, but work was well underway on the new site and tenders had been prepared for the construction.

Sovereign Harbour SPD

When the SHRA signed up to the process of developing a plan for the completion of the harbour development, we were given a cast iron guarantee that the SPD would prevent Sovereign Harbour Ltd from getting its way, and provision of community facilities would be a priority.

We reluctantly conceded the need to allow 150 additional homes to provide the finance for the community facilities on the basis of that guarantee. However, when negotiating the S.106 agreement, council planning officers allowed Sovereign Harbour Ltd to negotiate away all the safeguards we had worked so hard to provide.

IW told of a meeting which he, Jan and Cllr Elkin had with Rob Cottrill, the Chief Executive to voice our serious concerns at the delay in concluding the S.106 agreement and the rumours we had heard about its content. Mr Cottrill acknowledged our concerns, but insisted that the council was on the right track and would not make the requested changes. IW said it was at that point that we realised the whole thing was going pear shaped.

RR added that people make throw away statement in the belief that they can deliver on the content, but later find they can't. They weren't lying at the time, but they shouldn't have made the promises until they were confident they could deliver on them.

The SHRA went into the SPD project with great enthusiasm, we saw it as a real

opportunity to finally get some real benefits for residents. We were encouraged that the developers were part of process, but in the event it's turned out to be a total waste of time, everything we agreed to has been negotiated away.

Cllr Elkin said, it's disappointing that you're (SHRA) not at the table because you're now not able to influence what's happening. RR responded that it doesn't matter because when we are there, nobody hears what we have to say.

Alison Attwood, who originally floated the possibility of using Site Six raised the possibility that a community centre on Site 7, so far from the centre of the development, would alienate a large section of the community and this could lead to it becoming a white elephant. She said we have waited so long for our community centre that a further delay, which could result in residents getting what they need would be acceptable. She urged the councillors to go away and thoroughly investigate the option.

Cllr Tutt restated that if that was what residents wanted, they would go away and make the enquiries. He conceded that the council had made mistakes and then told the meeting that one of the worst was to try to please people every step of the way. He then said that both Cllr Elkin and he had always felt that Site 5 was the wrong site but they had continued with it at the insistence of the SHRA. They should, he said, "have been firmer with the SHRA" at an earlier stage.

This caused a very angry response from the hall and Cllr Tutt was accused of trying to shift the blame onto residents.

Cllr Tutt told the members that if S.106 agreements had been around when the harbour development was started, all of the community facilities would have been provided, but this couldn't be applied retrospectively.

Cllrs were reminded that they, and planning officers are servants of the public and their role is to deliver what the public needs. Cllr Tutt responded that they can only work within the limits of statutory instruments and can't just make up rules to suite what the community wants.

Cllr Tutt told members that anybody can apply for planning consent on any land and if refused can appeal to the Planning Inspectorate. The Council, he said, has been fighting Carillion for a decade. Carillion is not a friend of the council or of residents.

RR pointed out that it was Sovereign Harbour Ltd that withdrew Site 5 for the construction of the Medical Centre. He said we shouldn't discount Site 5, but Cllr Tutt said that using it would be too costly. When questioned about the actual amount involved, he said he didn't know.

Why planning officers, when negotiating the S.106 agreement had allowed the safeguards in the SPD to be removed?

Cllr Tutt said he had been informed by planning officers that the conditions were unenforceable and if upheld on appeal, could result in the loss of the community facilities. IW asked, why, knowing that to be the case, did senior council officers draw the SHRA into a process that was doomed to failure and wasted many hours of their time, councillors' time and officers' time. Cllr Tutt was unable to respond.

At this point, JW called a halt to the topic as there was only 15 minutes remaining for other issues.

Bus Link

Why do we still not have a cross-harbour bus link?

Cllr Elkin repeated what he had said last year; the design and money are in place but what they do not have is the owner's permission. The land is owned by M&G and it will be used as a lever to obtain consent for further development of the retail park. Compulsory purchase of the land would be extremely complicated.

RR told members that the plans for the regeneration of the retail park, including a bus link had been given consent and the cash was available. However, the Town Centre developers took legal action to change the status of the retail park from "District Centre" to "Out of Town Centre", which would have prevented some potential uses. The action was doomed to fail, which it did. The Town Centre developers appealed against the decision and lost again. However, their spurious action caused sufficient delay to cause the plans to be shelved. Hopefully new plans will be submitted soon that could lead at last to the provision of the bus link.

South Harbour road adoption

Why have all the roads in South Harbour not been adopted?

Cllr Elkin said that most of the roads have been adopted but there were a couple of areas that had not been. He added these could not be adopted until the developers finish everything to the satisfaction of the Council.

Do the businesses in the Innovation Park pay the Harbour Charge?

Cllr Tutt advised that he did not know. He said they paid Business Rates but not the Harbour Charge. He agreed to find out and let JW know.

IW stated that the harbour businesses definitely do not pay the charge. He said that SHL, which owns the Waterfront development, and was the original owner of the marina, was a signatory of the 1988 and 2001 agreements, so it would be inconceivable that it would commit itself to paying the charge.

Any Other Business

Caroline Ansell said that one area in the country was trying to stop second homes and holiday homes in their town so that local residents would have the opportunity to buy them. She wondered what residents of the Harbour views were on second homes and holiday homes in the Harbour and asked for people to contact her with their views.

She also informed members that the debate she was chairing on the EU referendum had attracted a huge amount of interest. Originally a room for 300 people was booked, but this was fully booked within days. The venue was changed to a room for 900 people, but this too was fully booked with a waiting list. The debate has now been moved to the Congress Theatre to provide more places.

There being no further business, JW thanked all members for attending and closed the meeting.



Annual General Meeting

Thursday 12th May 2016

Haven School Sovereign Harbour
Doors Open 19:00, Meeting Commences 19:30

Agenda

1. Welcome to Members and safety briefing
 2. Apologies
 3. Welcome to and Introduction of Guests
 - Caroline Ansell MP
 - Cllr David Tutt - Leader of Eastbourne Borough Council
 - Cllr David Elkin - Sovereign Harbour County Councillor
 - Cllr Tony Freebody - Opposition Leader of Eastbourne Borough Council
 - Cllr Gordon Jenkins - Sovereign Ward Councillor
 - Neighbourhood First Advisors
 4. Statement from Neighbourhood Policing Team
 5. Introduction of Committee
 6. Committee Report
 7. Treasurer's Report
 8. Appointment of Committee for the Coming Year
 9. Caroline Ansell MP
 10. Marina Rent Charge
 11. Sovereign Harbour Community Association
 12. Open Discussion
 13. AOB
- Meeting Ends

Committee Report for the Year 2015/2016

The Year Past.

The optimism felt at the beginning of the past year gradually turned to frustration, disappointment and anger; promises made became just empty words; expectations set were never met. For the first time in the life of this committee we not only have no firm progress to report, but we have in fact gone backwards.

We have faced many problems over the years with developers trying to force unwanted residential developments on the Harbour and sadly a Council that was apparently deaf to the wishes and concerns of residents, while bending over backwards to support the financial aspirations of the prime developer, Sovereign Harbour Ltd. We thought that had changed, but we were sadly very wrong.

Even in the face of these problems the SHRA, with the support of its members and other residents, managed to influence issues that were at first thought to be insurmountable. The cornerstone of SHRA priorities had been "consultation". We knew what resident priorities were because we asked them – a novel idea.

Following extensive work by the Sovereign Harbour Community Association (SHCA) on the design of the Community Centre, and assurances that the site (Site Five) was free of contamination, a planning application for its construction had been submitted. During the 2015 AGM, councillors from both sides of the political divide gave assurances that delivery of the centre was well on track and at the end of the meeting Jan Weeks, reflecting the optimism felt by the whole committee, confidently predicted that the next AGM would be held in the Community Centre.

The demolition, in April, of the Sovereign Harbour Ltd (SHL) offices that had occupied the site since the beginning of the development were demolished, raised our hopes even further. It was shortly afterwards that we realised how wrong we had been. Even our past experience of harbour planning issues could not prepare us for the depth to which the Borough Council would betray us. Read the enclosed SHCA report for more details.

The key to last year's guarded optimism over the final stage of Harbour development and the provision of community facilities was the agreement to put a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in place to cover the detail of development and establish safeguards to make sure community aspirations following extensive consultation were recognised as a fundamental priority ahead of residential development.

The SPD was developed over a year and a half and incorporated a set of priorities that SHRA contributed to which balanced the interests of all key stakeholders, whilst protecting residents' interests. It was intended to "inform" any decisions being made by Council officers and elected

representatives when considering planning applications on the harbour. The legal commitments arising from this were to be embodied, as usual, in a Section 106 agreement between the Council and SHL. To ensure negotiations over the S.106 were not allowed to undermine the priority of community facilities the planning consent placed a time limit for this process.

By far the most disappointing development, and the first indication that the focus was being lost, was the failure of SHL to conclude the S.106 agreement within the allotted timescale, and the reluctance of Planning Officers to take the prescribed action for failure, which was to refuse the application. Then came the revelation that the SPD, a document that we had been assured would ensure the delivery of a community centre *prior* to the start any further residential development, was totally worthless. Planning Officers, with the full knowledge and support of the Chief Executive, had allowed SHL to negotiate an S.106 agreement that removed all the safeguards secured in the SPD, wasting eighteen months of hard work at the stroke of a pen. What made this capitulation so difficult to understand is that at the time the S.106 was signed, all of the triggers necessary to ensure the immediate provision of the community centre had already been satisfied.

This is just a further example of how the Borough Council has failed in its commitment in the Local Development Framework Core Strategy to develop the town around two sustainable centres; the Town Centre and Sovereign Harbour.

These issues raise serious questions over the integrity of the process and the competence of those responsible. Despite several requests, no explanation for the motivation for these decisions has been given, other than that there were "good planning reasons" for them. Robert Cottrill, the EBC Chief Executive was invited to the AGM, but the invitation was, not unexpectedly, declined.

The planned regeneration of the Sovereign Harbour Retail Park has been put on hold by the owners. Statements made by Robert Cottrill seem to indicate that EBC is preventing any progress until the Town Centre regeneration has been completed. A further consequence of this policy is that the land required to complete the cross-harbour bus link has not been acquired. It seems that any effort to raise the sustainability of Sovereign Harbour has now been abandoned in order to improve the viability of the Arndale Centre and Langney Shopping Centre extensions.

Although the sustainable community we had been working towards is now further from our grasp than at any time since the SPD process was started, there were occasions when we could still feel some pride in our community.

The harbour clubs and societies continue to thrive and expand, despite the lack of appropriate facilities in which to meet. Some, however, have been forced to restrict membership through lack of space and availability of venues.

We have been fortunate too to have retained the support of the Neighbourhood Policing Team, in particular PC Ed Faulkner and PCSO Martin Hylands. Sadly, changes to the Sussex Police structure mean we will see very much less of them in the coming year.

Neighbourhood advisors are also a regular sight around the harbour, working as hard for the community as their remit allows.

The Borough Council elections on 7th May saw the re-election of Cllr. Gordon Jenkins and the election of two new councillors, Cllrs. Penny di Cara and Ray Blakebrough, both are harbour residents and both now also serve on the SHRA committee.

In August, the first office block of the Sovereign Harbour Innovation Park, Pacific House opened for business. The contemporary design of the three story building has been controversial, with residents either loving or hating it. However, whatever your opinion, it has been a success; occupation rates have exceeded plan, and interest in the remaining space is high.

After a decade-long struggle with the developers, remedial work was completed and residents finally agree terms for taking control of the Columbus Point Water Feature. This very long process was supported by Stephen Lloyd during his term as Eastbourne's MP and by his successor, Caroline Ansell. Both MPs were ably supported throughout by Cllr. Gordon Jenkins and the Managing Agents, Fell Reynolds.

March saw the retirement of the Eastbourne Lifeboats Operations Manager, Paul Metcalf after being involved with the RNLI since 1980; we wish him well.

Marina rent Charge

Further progress has been made with the Marina Rent Charge, although both the Sovereign Harbour Trust (SHT) and the Environment Agency (EA) refuse to respond to the very compelling legal advice received by the SHRA that the changes made to the 1988 Southern Water Agreement were unlawful. A meeting at Westminster with the Secretary of State for DEFRA, facilitated by Caroline Ansell and supported by Cllr David Elkin, led to further discussion with the EA Area Manager. He, unfortunately, showed a deplorable lack of understanding of the history of the agreement on which the charge is based, and remained belligerent, confrontational and totally intransigent. Following the meeting, further legal advice was sought, taking the EA's responses into consideration, and this confirmed the strength of our case.

A further meeting has been arranged later this month by Caroline Ansell with the deputy head of the EA.

As the EA decided to ignore the issue and did not respond the CIC board's queries, Rick Runalls, as a member of the board, presented a motion at a board meeting that the flood defence charges, collected by the SHT/CIC should cease until such time as the EA provided a legally convincing justification for making this charge. The other Board members, acting on the advice of the

SHT's legal advisor that it was contractually obliged to collect the charge, were unwilling to support the proposal.

However, in a surprise development, the EA has nominated the SHRA Chairman, Jan Weeks, and Cllr. Penny di Cara to fill the two open places on the boards of the SHT and Sovereign Harbour (Sea Defences) CIC. Should these nominations be ratified by the current board members, Jan and Penny would join Rick Runalls which would result in half the board places being occupied by harbour residents and give us a much greater voice. The SHRA will continue to examine all options, including ways of getting our case before the courts at minimum cost.

Sovereign Harbour Community Association (SHCA)

Although the SHCA works closely with the SHRA, the SHCA is an autonomous charity with its own constitution and board of trustees. The trustees' report is enclosed.

Thanks

The past year has been extremely eventful for the SHRA committee, especially those involved in the ongoing saga of the final development of the harbour and the Marina Rent Charge.

Our thanks to Caroline Ansell MP; Cllrs. Elkin; Blakebrough, di Cara and Jenkins; for all their help.

The fight against the marina rent charge has made further progress, although it is still far from being resolved. Our thanks to harbour resident, and retired solicitor, Paul Webb for his continued help and invaluable advice.

Our thanks to Jon Martin, who has again audited the accounts.

Our Neighbourhood Police officers, PC Ed Faulkner and PCSO Martin Hylands can often be seen around the harbour and at their regular street meetings. Thanks to them and Sergeant, Julian Williams.

Our Neighbourhood Advisors, Simon Crouch, Mel Bucknell and Andrew Tilney do their best to keep the harbour clean and free of weeds and dog fouling. Thanks to them and team leader, Holly King, for their support.

Communication with Residents

Communication with harbour residents continues to be our highest priority.

The SHRA website receives an average of about 22,000 page views a month. Members are invited to submit news items and notification of events to webmaster@shra.co.uk. Letters are welcome, but must include a name and address and permission to publish. The "For Sale" and "Wanted" pages are rather under-used; entries are free and can include a photograph.

Although many residents were disappointed that we were no longer able to produce Waterlines in hard copy format, the digital version has been well received; the real benefit is that it is considerably cheaper and much less

time-consuming to produce. We were fortunate to have been supported by six local companies which have provided sufficient sponsorship to cover the cost of the website and the software used to compose the newsletters.

Space is, as always, available for local good causes and offers for members, free of charge, at the discretion of the editor; requests and enquiries to waterlines@shra.co.uk.

The Coming Year

We had hoped that 2016 would be the year that we could finally take our foot off the gas and settle down to taking advantage of the community benefits that were expected from the final stages of the harbour development, but recent developments and the failure of Eastbourne Borough Council to fulfil its commitments have made future planning difficult.

Many of the current committee have been involved in the struggle to improve the harbour community for up to ten years; this has put enormous strain on their private lives and time. Several had indicated that they would be standing down at the 2016 AGM but, because of their intimate knowledge of current issues, have agreed to stand for a further year.

However, although they will continue with the fight, this will definitely be their last year. It is, therefore, imperative that new members come forward to ensure the continued existence of the Association.

How Can You Help?

SHRA committee members devote a considerable amount of their time in trying to improve the sustainability of our neighbourhood. This time is given freely and willingly, but there are times when a little help would be appreciated.

If you would like to help, please e-mail your details to:

info@shra.co.uk, or leave a message on the SHRA helpline: 07770-621368.

SHRA Finances

As agreed by members, the SHRA has now spent in excess of £6,000 on obtaining the legal advice needed to pursue our campaign against the Marina Rent Charge. However, we still have more than sufficient reserves to maintain our ongoing operation.

SHRA Membership

Finally, SHRA membership continues to grow and now stands at about 1,500. Thank you all for your continued support.



**Jan Weeks, Chairman,
Sovereign Harbour Residents Association**

REVENUE ACCOUNT for the period 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016 (12 months)

	15/16	14/15	13/14
INCOME			
Subscriptions	£750.00	£1,250.00	£897.00
Advertising Income	£500.00	£4,300.00	£4,300.00
Donations/Contributions	£0.00	£699.95	£100.00
Bank Interest	£3.52	£4.39	£4.84
The Crumbles Story	£127.84	£7.99	£65.96
Other Income	£14.00		
Total Income	£1,395.36	£6,262.33	£5,367.80
EXPENDITURE			
Waterlines & Printing	£41.00	£3,526.00	£3,115.40
Stationery & Office Supplies	£69.71	£121.34	£184.18
Internet Hosting	£233.75	£242.72	£219.13
Hall Hire & Events	£60.00	£120.00	£252.50
PO Box	£251.98	£251.14	£242.35
Postage	£17.45	£30.00	£21.60
Insurance (Public Liability)	£287.32	£277.44	£274.11
Travel & Subsistence	£66.25	£100.65	£0.00
Misc/Sundries	£34.00	£80.00	£75.48
Telephone	£40.00	£20.00	£55.00
PayPal Fees	£32.88	£51.89	£27.00
Computer Software, Peripherals & Consumables	£746.80	£250.02	£79.20
Professional Fees	£1,560.00	£4,620.00	
Depreciation	£337.32	£190.33	£198.00
Donations (Charity and Prizes)	£600.00	£399.00	£344.68
The Crumbles Story	£71.81	£0.00	£101.31
Total Expenditure	£4,450.26	£10,280.53	£5,189.94
Excess (Deficit) of Income over Expenditure for the year	-£3,054.90	-£4,018.20	£177.86

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31st March 2016

	15/16	14/15	13/14
Current Assets			
Cash in Natwest Current a/c	£1,073.24	£2,282.07	£3,882.08
Cash in Natwest Reserve a/c	£7,521.03	£9,017.51	£12,013.12
Cash in PayPal a/c	£84.53	£134.21	£326.10
Prepayments & Overpayments	£622.26	£681.07	£218.91
Equipment Assets			
asset b/f	£641.62		
plus: purchases	£312.00		
less: depreciation	£337.32		
asset c/f	£616.30	£641.62	£132.00
Total Current Assets	£9,917.36	£12,756.48	£16,572.21
Current Liabilities			
Creditors	£330.00	£330.00	
Total Current Liabilities	£330.00	£330.00	£-
NET CURRENT ASSETS Held for Revenue A/c	£9,587.36	£12,426.48	£16,572.21
REVENUE ACCOUNT BALANCE at end of the Year	£9,587.36	£12,426.48	£16,572.21

Certified that I have laid before the Auditors all of the books and financial affairs for the period 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016

Signed  10th May 2016
Peter Thomas (Treasurer)