

AGM Great Austins Area Preservation Group (GAAPG)

Thursday 25th April 2024 at 7.00pm

St Thomas on the Bourne Church

Welcome: Tim O'Dell (Chair) introduced committee members: Edward Emblem (Treasurer), Tim Young (Vice Chair), Chris Bennie, Debbie Young (Membership) and Claire Macland

Apologies: Jane Elliot, Lindsay Williams

Others Present: Approximately 20

Background: This is the 3rd GAAPG AGM; a local community organisation which aims to preserve the atmosphere and integrity of the Great Austins area and its surrounding catchment area. Objectives are to review planning applications within the area and identify those that may be troublesome, such as plot divides/ inappropriate developments and send a reasoned objection to the planners.

Treasurer's Report: The GAAPG currently have circa £700 in the bank. Annual running costs include website (domain name + hosting fees) and hosting AGM. Website receives 20-30 visits/month; provides a means of approach to residents, potential buyers, students. There was an appeal to all, new area photographs wanted for website.

Chris Bennie explained the Planning Applications of note:

1. New development on a plot off Leigh Lane. Originally a Faulkner and Borelli plot; the access has been re-sited to Leigh Lane and committee offer no objections.
Status: Active
2. 86A Tilford Road. A home office detracted from the silvern nature of the area but planners were appeased by a planting plan
Status: Granted
3. 4 Greenhill Road. The committee objected to the introduction of a carriage driveway and the irreconcilable impact it would have on the levels of the foot path.
Status: Refused

Cllr Carole Cockburn (guest) explained the current status of the controversial Wates Development, the field off Waverley Lane, which was granted planning permission in July 2023 for 146 dwellings.

In spite of the numerous reasoned arguments and the general optimism that this application would not be granted, the Inspector on balance, granted in favour, citing that Waverley had failed to meet its new housing requirements.

Waverley Borough Council in conjunction with Farnham Town Council are appealing the inspector's decision and will be challenging the decision in court, the case being due in July 2024. The outcome will determine whether a judicial review is then warranted.

Arguments for appeal: the Inspector made mistakes including overlooking that the field was destined to become part of the designated Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); not in keeping with the neighbourhood plan.

Committee changes: Tim O'Dell, Chair of the organisation for past 3 years is standing down, in favour of his VC Tim Young (Proposed Chris Bennie, Seconded David Lusher); Edward Emblem to become VC (Proposed Tim O'Dell, Seconded David Lusher); Claire Macland to join the committee (Proposed Tim O'Dell, Seconded Chris Bennie) Martin Quicke to join the committee (Proposed Chris Bennie, Seconded James Duckworth)

AOB:

Solar Panels: May be subject to planning permission in a conservation area. Technical rules apply to exposed walls/roofs that face the road. Each case is likely to be judged on its merits.

Hedges: Should be trimmed back to be in line with the historic boundary posts. It is the responsibility of householders rather than the Council to keep them maintained.

Cobblestones: It was acknowledged that because so many of the original cobblestones from Great Austins were not intact/had disappeared over the years, Surrey Highways had deemed it uneconomical to replace them. Not so the case with Middle Avenue or, hopefully, other roads in the Conservation Area when it's their turn for resurfacing.

Vote of Thanks to Tim O'Dell: For excellent leadership of the group from David Usher.

The Meeting ended at 7.50pm.