

Minutes of the Ruislip Residents' Association Annual General Meeting

19:40 on 9th April 2025 at Winston Churchill Hall

1. Welcome and apologies:

Vice Chairman Graeme Shaw opened the meeting and welcomed all present, stepping in for Chairman Graham Bartram, who sent his apologies due to ongoing health issues. Housekeeping and fire safety rules were announced.

2. Guest speaker: Cllr Ian Edwards, Leader of the Council

Cllr Edwards addressed the significant financial and operational challenges currently facing the local authority. Key items covered included:

- **Budget Pressures & Economic Factors:** The Council faced an unexpected funding gap when the central government did not fully compensate for National Insurance increases. Furthermore, Bank of England forecasts indicating prolonged higher inflation and interest rates required immediate additional budget provisions.
- **Pension Fund Impacts:** The Council had anticipated utilizing a surplus in the employee pension fund to ease budget pressures in 2026/2027. However, Cllr Edwards noted that recent global market volatility—attributing recent market hits to Donald Trump—has negatively impacted these holdings, effectively eliminating this expected "pension holiday."
- **Social Care & Statutory Wage Pressures:** Increases to the National Minimum Wage and National Insurance contributions are significantly driving up the costs of commissioned services, particularly adult social care. Additionally, the Council was notified on the day of the meeting of a 50% funding cut to the Integrated Care Board, necessitating an additional £1.5 million in savings over the next six months.
- **Homelessness & The Private Rental Sector:** A contraction in the private rental sector is driving a severe increase in general homelessness, pushing more residents to seek Council assistance.
- **Home Office & Asylum Seekers:** Hillingdon is shouldering a disproportionate national burden due to its proximity to Heathrow. The Council is currently in a £5 million dispute with the government, demanding this national issue, along with the £1.2 million cost of supporting Chagos Islanders, be funded by general taxation.
- **Green Waste & Service Delivery:** The introduction of charges for green waste collection was a necessary measure to balance the budget and protect core services, like weekly bin collections, from government intervention. To further manage finances, the Council is shifting towards commissioning services. Examples include transferring the Beck Theatre, council-run nurseries, and golf courses to private operators to eliminate public subsidies. The Council has also acquired a care home to directly provide nursing care, aiming to save £1 million annually.
- **Core Services:** Despite financial constraints, the Council remains committed to high-standard core services, noting that children's services are rated outstanding, adult social care is among the best in the country, and £12 million is being invested in road maintenance.

Questions submitted for the Leader of the Council:

- **Defibrillators at Ruislip Lido:** Acknowledging a recent tragic incident at the Lido, the Council will review risk assessments for open spaces to ensure adequate defibrillator provision. Residents and community groups were

encouraged to apply for British Heart Foundation grants, and it was noted that Ward Budgets could also be utilized.

- **Derelict CAB Site (9 Eastcote Road):** Cllr Edwards apologized for the prolonged delay, attributing it to capacity issues and a focus on larger housing developments. A design for a housing development is being finalized, with a target to reach the Planning Committee by November and a projected completion in 2027.
- **Lido Vehicle Pound:** The £49k vehicle pound was recognized as an operational error, as it is economically unviable to run a localized pound. The Council is exploring shared solutions with Harrow, but will currently rely on repositioning vehicles rather than impounding them.
- **The Orchard:** Cabinet is expected to approve local listing for The Orchard, establishing a high bar to protect the landmark from inappropriate development.
- **Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB):** The CAB was unsuccessful in a recent funding tender process. Services will transition to the Hillingdon Advice Partnership, maintaining support for residents at a lower cost.
- **Police Visibility:** The Metropolitan Police Commissioner has assured London Councils that neighborhood and response policing numbers are protected. Schools-based officers will be merged into local neighborhood community teams rather than being eliminated.
- **Pavements and Roads:** To improve transparency, the schedule and findings of pavement and road inspections will be published on the Council's website alongside the £12 million budget release.
- **Grant Maximization:** The Council actively pursues external funding, securing £80m for housing and £15.75m for reducing emissions, among other grants.
- **Council Tax Policy:** While a historically low tax base creates challenges under current government caps, the Council remains committed to taking only the minimum tax necessary from residents.

3. Tribute to Mike Hodge

Honorary President Brian Cowley led a moment of reflection to honor Mike Hodge, a former Vice Chairman and Life Vice President of the Association, who recently passed away after a long illness. His nearly two decades of dedicated service to the planning committee were formally recognized.

4. Chairman's Report

Vice Chairman Graeme Shaw delivered a brief report noting that the Association has organized online events regarding The Barn Hotel development and the potential Lidl development at The Orchard. It was also highlighted that funding for the new Hillingdon Hospital has been officially agreed upon by the Secretary of State for Health.

5. Treasurer's Report and Annual Accounts for 2024: Nick Potter

Residents were thanked for their sub payments and donations. We would particularly wish to thank Chimsons Chemist, Ruislip Manor for collecting over 100 envelopes containing subscriptions. The subscriptions and donations are slightly down, consideration to be given to introducing a Direct Debit Scheme, also to consider whether more collection points might be helpful. Currently the split on payments made on line and through the collection points is 60/40

The accounts for 2024 are before you and have been certified by an independent Auditor and checked by John Hawley, the previous Treasurer of the RRA

The accounts were proposed and seconded by Residents present at the meeting and agreed without dissent.

6. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2024

A minor dating error on the previous minutes was noted and corrected. The minutes were then accepted as a correct record without dissent.

7. Election of Officers and Executive Committee Members

Vice Chairman Graeme Shaw reported that no nominations had been received for any of the officers, apart for those for the existing officers. The officers, etc. for 2025-26 are: President Brian Cowley, Vice-Presidents Peter Lansdown, John Williams, Chairman Graham Bartram, Secretary Patricia Wardle, Treasurer Nick Potter, Vice Chair and Woodland Graeme Shaw, Chief Road Steward Daniel O'Neal and Deputy Chief Road Steward Alan Wenman.

The following Committee Members were elected en bloc unopposed: Vivien Alcorn, Sue Brown, Mark Eidem, John Hawley, Susan Midgley, John Swindells, Syeda Malik and Phil Taylor.

Graeme Shaw thanked the executive members for their service to the RRA over the last year and proposed a vote of thanks to all the members of the Executive, seconded by Sue Midgely, which was carried.

Graeme Shaw asked if anyone was interested in joining the Executive, especially to cover the vacancies: Planning. If anyone is interested please contact the chairman, or any member of the Executive.

8. Association Rules Update

Proposed updates to the Association's rules, specifically modernizing mandates to remove the requirement of banking exclusively with an institution possessing a local High Street branch, were passed without objection.

9. Open Forum

- **Refuse Collection Resilience:** In response to concerns about potential bin collection strikes, it was noted the Council has a resilience officer and contingency plans overseen by the Audit Committee. The refuse workforce is a hybrid of employees and agency staff.
- **The Barn Hotel Development & Station Access:** Rumors regarding the site being used for asylum seekers were dispelled; private independent companies are looking at building homes. It was noted that Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) money (estimated at £735,000) from such developments could potentially be used as seed funding to advocate for TfL to implement step-free access at Eastcote Station, which serves as a larger transport hub than Ruislip Station.
- **The Orchard / Lidl Development:** A resident expressed frustration at being unable to access a recent online meeting with Lidl developers and raised serious ongoing concerns regarding flood mitigation protections for residents, noting they felt their previous inquiries to the Council had been disregarded.
- **HS2 Mitigation & Traffic:** Severe traffic issues, including altercations between drivers on New Years Green Lane, were reported as a result of the Breakspear Road South closure. It was clarified that this closure is for installing a larger culvert.

- **HS2 Community Funds:** Following a request to compile a list of local beneficiaries of the HS2 Community and Environment Fund, it was noted that the 2nd Ruislip Scouts (new home), Eastcote Hockey Club (new car park), and St Martins Church (new toilets) have successfully secured funding.
- **HOAC Relocation:** It was reported that £20 million in HS2 funding is allocated for the HOAC (Hillingdon Outdoor Activities Centre) relocation. However, the project is delayed due to statutory challenges in meeting a 10% biodiversity net gain requirement on a Site of Special Scientific Interest.
- **Defibrillator Funding:** A resident suggested creating a trust to use the £20 million HS2 fund for community defibrillators; however, it was clarified that those funds are strictly ringfenced for the HOAC relocation project.

10. Any Other Business

None.

The meeting closed at approximately 22:00.