

Minutes of Sovereign Harbour Residents Association Meeting Held on Wednesday 21 Jan at Haven School

SHRA committee members present :

Chairman: Dave Hitchcock (470701),
Treasurer: Linus Gunning (470757),
Secretary: Brenda Hilliam (470791),
Press Officer: Chris Peppiatt (471304),
Paul Metcalfe, Peter Lloyd Jones, Lyn Sweetman, Peter Davey, Angela Knight.

Apologies from Molly Burton who was on holiday.

Councillors Patrick Bowker, Patrick Warner and Chris Williams arrived after their council meeting ended.

There were approximately 150 residents present.

The chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting especially new residents. The two speakers invited to address the meeting were present to address the concerns of the residents raised at previous public meetings about security. The chairman pointed out that SHRA had no intention of employing a Security company, that it was entirely up to the residents themselves to decide, and that Sovereign Commercial Services was just one of three companies approached who could or would be interested in providing such a service. Mr Tim Hatcher of Sovereign Commercial Services began with a model presentation of what private security at the Harbour could be about.

- In general residents are concerned about vandalism, graffiti and nuisance crimes.
- It was envisaged that random patrols of two uniformed officers in electric vehicles during times of most need, at present perceived to be the night hours (although this might change with consultation with residents) with the security personnel liaising with the police, retail park security staff and residents.
- These patrols would be in radio contact and a dedicated telephone line would ensure attendance at a disturbance within ten minutes.
- Empty or holiday homes could also be checked.
- It was possible that the cost of this security could be offset to some degree by a reduction in cost of household insurance - an insurance company spokesman would be willing to speak to residents.
- There would be regular meetings with SHRA and the police.

Questions from the floor:

- Q: How is this scheme different to Neighbourhood Watch?
A: Neighbourhood Watch is residents themselves checking for trouble, security staff would be trained, qualified, competent people with more resources. Dave pointed out that at an earlier meeting a liaison officer from Neighbourhood Watch had spoken to residents but there had been a very poor response.
- Q: Why had a survey of residents not been done to discover exactly what the problems were?
A: 98% of the people present at the last meeting were aware of problems, this is not to say that this is a high risk area, but there are concerns and we need possible solutions. When the police are contacted because of limit to their resources they have to decide which of the problems is most important, at that time.
- Q: Security staff seen around the Harbour at present appear elderly or retired.
A: Staff don't have to be young to be fit and active. Security Company will have to be licensed, staff will have background checks etc. completed.
- Q: Should the charge be compulsory? why should a few people pay for all?
A: It is better to convince people that this is the way to go - compulsion is not the answer. There will always be a core of committed people in any community.
- Q: Why couldn't the security at the Waterfront be extended to the rest of the Harbour?

- A: The Traders at the Waterfront pay for the security, any expansion would have to be paid for by the residents.
- Q: Can security staff make arrests?
- A: Registered and or licensed security staff can detain offenders pending the arrival of the police.
- Q: How will the security staff be different to the Street Warden scheme, which appears fairly useless.
- A: The Security Company would have high calibre, qualified, trained and competent staff.
- Q: What about CCTV cameras like those already in place in the Harbour, wouldn't this be cheaper.
- A: CCTV cameras are very expensive and need to be monitored.
- Q: What about children causing trouble during the day when the Security will not be around?
- A: Times for Security to be about will be matter of discussion between residents and the company.
Unruly children may need to be subject of Antisocial Behaviour Reports.

The chairman thanked Tim Hatcher and Paul Brown for the presentation which was very well received by residents. He then introduced Inspector Charles Donald who started by congratulating residents on living in the second most law-abiding area in Eastbourne!

As with other police forces throughout the country Chief Inspector Mills of Eastbourne has to decide how to spread his resources and where. The confrontation area is the Town Centre, problems with shop-lifting by day and burglaries by night. Two officers patrol St Anthony's and Sovereign Harbour and also respond to calls all over Eastbourne. There is need for communication between residents and the police, who cannot do everything on their own, the community can help. In Ringmer a "Local Action Team" has been set up to assist the police, such teams have legal standing and include Neighbourhood Watch.

Questions from the floor.

- Q: Do the police have full access around the Harbour, residents have been told nothing can be done on un-adopted roads.
- A: As far as the inspector was aware no area is off limits, police go where there is crime, but resources have to be used to best effect.
- Q: What about speeding cars and bikes?
- A: If there is a problem the police will come. Eastbourne Council could use radar-gun, the police need evidence to prosecute.

The chairman pointed out that a speed survey will be carried out in Atlantic Drive which has just been adopted. There will also be School Warning signs.
Inspector Donald pointed out that speed limits cover all roads, adopted and un-adopted. Unfortunately speeding is not yet socially unacceptable as is drink driving.
Information about levels of crime and police response can be found on their website.
The chairman thanked Inspector Donald for coming to speak to the residents.

Dave then spoke about the Sovereign Harbour Trust

The Trust was established in 1988.

Six members make up the Trust, three from Carillion and three from the Environment Agency which they have not filled to date.

Dave has now received a letter, following telephone calls, from the Environment Agency inviting a member of the residents association to join them on the Trust.

Any nominee would have to submit to an interview by the Environment Agency.

SHRA committee has backed the Chairman's nomination of Tim Cullis, who was willing to stand and who addressed the meeting.

Tim started by explaining where the money collected by the Trust goes.

All residents on purchase of a property at the harbour are bound by a covenant to contribute

1. to Southern Water-for sea defence works,
2. to the Marina, for cleaning and maintaining the harbour and

3. some people pay a berth charge.
Any surplus money from Southern Water goes to Harbour Maintenance.

The Trust is a limited company, which will become a registered charity, with no shares or shareholders. Two of the Trustees hold 186 directorships between them, they are not paid for work on the Trust.

If the Outer Harbour is to be dredged who will pay for this? Once someone is on the Trust he/she can look more closely at expenditure in general. There is difficulty in breaking the costs down. Money is spent on berths, lock keeper buildings, harbour master wages, maintenance of pontoons.

The walkways are the developers responsibility at present, will be council responsibility on adoption. Maintenance includes bridges and locks. Flood defence: shingle is replaced from the outer harbour along the coast towards Bexhill, by a consortium paid for by the Environment Agency.

Dave asked if there were any other nominations for the SHRA Trust representative. There were none. A vote was taken by show of hands on the proposal that Tim Cullis be nominated to the Environment Agency which was overwhelmingly approved. There were no objections.

Dave mentioned that School Warning signs are to be erected along Atlantic Drive.

Redrow: Work is due to start on the Welcome Suite very soon and general building will commence some time after that.

New committee members are needed and in particular a Secretary as the present Secretary, Brenda Hilliam will be resigning after the AGM due to other commitments.

The next meeting will be the AGM on May 12th at Haven School.