

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF EMSWORTH RESIDENTS FORUM

DRAFT

Held at 7.00 pm 8th May 2024 at Emsworth Community Centre

Chaired by: Dwynwen Stepien

1. Chair's Introduction

The chair welcomed attendees to the meeting which comes at the end of the first year of operation of the ERF.

2. Apologies for absence

A list of apologies and attendees, and further copies of the papers presented, are available on request to the secretary.

3. Minutes of the general meeting held on 17th March 2023

The chair led a review of the minutes and no points were raised (other than to omit the notes of the post-meeting brainstorm session from the formal record). She sought a vote that the minutes be approved which was proposed by Grainne Rason and seconded by Linda Hunt and carried unanimously.

4. Presentations

Young Peoples days

Rev Bruce Watson and Seb, our young representative, outlined the successful programme of events which had taken place over the past year to engage (particularly) younger secondary school pupils in a diverse range of activities and consult with them over ways to enrich the experience of their age group in Emsworth. It was an uplifting presentation, followed by a discussion of ways to scale up the events to involve more young people and the need for additional volunteer helpers.

Victoria Road Community Garden

Kathy Parker outlined the considerable work carried out to date to identify, organise, consult, negotiate and develop a neglected and overgrown HBC site into a fledgling community garden within a 3-4 month period. Significant challenges have been overcome through teamwork and the guidance and cooperation of HBC officers combined with grant funding, including a critical seed corn contribution from the ERF. The outcome is very positive and is shaping to become a major community asset for that part of the town and an exemplar for elsewhere.

The chair thanked Bruce, Seb, and Kathy for their presentations which illustrated the sort of difference that the ERF could make

5. Secretary's Report

Mike Ridley drew attention to the detailed Annual Report which was circulated with the agenda and drew attention to several points:

- The powers of the ERF to influence development through the Neighbourhood Plan, participation in the planning system and regular access to councillors and HBC officers. This is becoming increasingly effective as roles are better understood and relationships mature.
- The need for more volunteers to increase the capacity of the existing committee members.
- The ambition to grow membership numbers to 1000+.
- Examples of different ways that the ERF has contributed to positive change over the past year as prime mover (Community Gardens), facilitator (Young peoples days), campaigner (Southleigh Spine Road) funder and advocate (Spencers Fields Play Area), funder and supporter (Hampshire Farm Meadow arboretum, Clean Harbours Partnership, Heritage Trail)

Workplans for the coming year include consolidation of projects initiated in year 1 plus:

- Scoping a programme of (realistically affordable) changes to calm and make safer and more attractive the major road network where it passes through the town.
- Taking to a next stage the consultation on public spaces (especially St Peters Square) which the ERA led in 2021.
- Incorporating the ERF

To gain traction on these will require professional support to be funded in part from financial reserves.

6. Treasurers Report

Jill Millar noted that she had only recently assumed the Treasurer role and expressed her thanks to the outgoing Treasurer, Roma Alsop. She presented the inspected statement of accounts to December 2023 and requested a vote that these be approved which was proposed by Peter Tier and seconded by Mike Ridley and carried unanimously.

She progressed to outline the budget for Yr 2 operation of the ERF. She noted that this included the expenditure of a proportion of the accumulated reserves (cf the Secretary's report) but that they would remain at an amply adequate level for future contingencies. There was some discussion of the risk to advertising revenue from competition from the new Emsworth Magazine. Jill requested a vote to approve the budget which was proposed by Sheila Morris and seconded by Theo Schofield and carried unanimously.

7. Election of committee

The chair introduced the schedule of members standing for election to the committee for a staggered range of terms:

3yrs

Dwynwen Stepien

	Mike Bateman Andrew Caple
2yrs	Dan Grove Jill Millar Ellie Turnbull
1 yr	Mike Ridley

She sought a vote that these members be duly elected which which was proposed by Gina Caple and seconded by Grainne Rason and carried unanimously.

8. Vote of thanks to retiring committee members

On behalf of the meeting, the chair thanked Theo Schofield, Roma Allsop, Chris Hallam and Chris Fuller for their exceptional contributions to the ERA, EF and ERF and the community at large over a number of years.

9. Results of local council elections

The chair noted the recent outcome of the council elections and took the opportunity to congratulate Grainne Rason, Reuben Mychaleckyj and Charles Robert on their election. She also proposed a vote of thanks to Lulu Bowerman and Richard Kennett for their years of commitment in service of Emsworth and the hope that they would remain active in community life. These sentiments were wholly endorsed by the meeting.

10. Bourne Heritage Trail

Mark Ringwood gave a brief update on the heritage trail which is now operational with durable QR code plates visible on prominent buildings around the town centre. The Emsworth project has also been copied eagerly by a number of neighbouring towns and villages. He outlined the intent to build capacity in the arts and cultural space through the In Our Area CIC initiative.

11. Any other business

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.30pm