

**Normandy Action Group (NAG) Annual General Meeting
1 November 2022 in Normandy Village Hall
Minutes**

Present: Mike Aaronson (in the Chair), Roshan Bailey, Phelim Brady, Mike Dean, Geoff Doven (from item 4), Paul Hart (NAG Treasurer), Bob Hutton, Nick Norton, Christine Wilks, Keith Witham.

Apologies: Dina Ahmed, Mark Galloway, Martin Sweeting.

1. Mike Aaronson, Chair of the NAG Steering Committee, opened the meeting and thanked those present for attending. He welcomed Roshan Bailey, Chair of Trustees of Normandy Village Hall, Councillor Keith Witham (Surrey County Councillor for Normandy), and Councillor Bob Hutton (Chair of Normandy Parish Council). Councillor Mark Galloway (Chair of the Normandy Parish Council Planning Committee), had been planning to attend but was prevented by illness from doing so. All those present introduced themselves to the meeting.
2. The Chair apologised for not having brought with him printed copies of the Minutes of the 2021 AGM, but said he hoped they could be taken as read. There were three Matters Arising. The first was a commitment to put a link to DEFRA's Magic Map on the NAG website; this could be used to identify Ancient Woodland in Normandy. The second was to publicise in the NAG Newsletter and 'The Villager' magazine the existence of the Ancient Tree Inventory, maintained by the Woodland Trust, where significant trees in Normandy could be recorded. Both these actions had been completed. The third was a commitment to return to the issue of financing NAG at the 2022 AGM; this was covered by item 5 of the present meeting.
3. The Chair spoke to his Annual Report, which would be placed on the NAG website and signposted in an electronic newsletter that he would send out later in the week. The Report reviewed the main developments in the external environment during the course of the year and how NAG had responded. This had included trying to keep up with the shifting direction of government policy with regard to planning, as well as issues closer to home in Guildford and Normandy. Discussion centred on the under-resourcing and resulting under-performance of the planning function in Guildford Borough Council (GBC); there were critical current challenges around the enforcement of planning regulations that were not being met. The meeting agreed that local government elections in May 2023 would provide an opportunity to seek commitments from all candidates to address this important issue. It was also agreed that the Chair would write to the Leader of GBC on the same subject. **(Action: Chair)**
4. The Treasurer submitted his Report, giving the financial transactions during the year and the residual balance. There had been three outgoing transactions since the NAG AGM in 2021, totalling £122.26: renewal of NAG domain name registration and NAG web site hosting fees, £107.26; Guildford Residents Associations annual subscription, £15.00. There had been no income received by NAG since the previous AGM as NAG continued to provide information to members and the community without subscription. The residual balance, in the bank account (£93.05) and in petty cash (£2.17) was £95.22.

5. The Treasurer explained that this meant that, on the assumption that outgoings in the coming year would be similar to those in the period since the previous AGM, NAG would not be able to meet from existing funds all expected liabilities as they fall due. It was therefore necessary to consider how best to close the funding gap. A number of options were considered: subscriptions, donations, or cease to incur costs. Subscriptions were costly to administer and would raise more funds than we needed. We were confident we could seek and obtain sufficient voluntary donations from our followers, but we felt this would be more appropriate when there was a major issue that would call for a 'fighting fund', such as we faced during the passage of the Local Plan. No-one supported going 'offline', as the 'virtual' mode of operation had proved very cost-effective. Instead, at the suggestion of Councillors Witham and Hutton respectively, we decided to seek modest grant support from the County and Parish Councils to allow us to continue to maintain the website and associated webmail, and to keep local residents informed on planning matters. **(Action: Chair to submit bids for £100 to each of these two bodies.)**
6. In the absence of Councillor Galloway, Councillor Hutton expressed appreciation for the activities of NAG in supporting the work of the NPC Planning Committee. There was support around the table for NAG's disinclination to offer an opinion on individual planning applications (all of which went to the Planning Committee for comment) unless they raised wider policy issues, such as inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
7. Nick Norton, founder member of NAG, was invited to give a rapid overview of some of the broader issues that could impact on our environment and amenities in Normandy. This included possible new legislation that could impact negatively on the planning system, the building of affordable homes, and on environmental and wildlife protection. It was too early to say whether the new Government would take forward all the proposals that had been tabled by its predecessors, but there was considerable concern among conservation and wildlife charities about the suggested direction of travel; NAG would continue to monitor developments and keep its followers informed. The Chair thanked Nick for his insights.
8. All members of the existing Steering Group had indicated their willingness to stand again. The meeting unanimously re-elected Mike Aaronson (Chair), Paul Hart (Treasurer), Dina Ahmed, Mike Dean, Nick Norton, and Martin Sweeting, to serve for a further year on the Group.
9. As there was no other business, the meeting closed at 2135.