

AGM Minutes
Friday 2nd February 2018
East Grinstead Sports Club 18.00-19.10

Present:

Sir Nicholas Soames	Oliver Harwood, Clutton's
Lee Farren CEO	John Prigent, Age UK East Grinstead
Kate Bennett, Business Manager	Sonia Joao
Fiona Humphreys, Administrator	John Belsey, GolfGuard
Judy Theobald, Treasurer	Charmaine Hallmark, Hallmark Travel
Roger Martell	John Hallmark, Hallmark Travel
Margaret Martell	
Fiona Bewers, The Caravan & Motorhome Club	
Elaine McGloin, Age UK East Grinstead	
Chris McGloin	
Rex Whittaker, Councillor	
Stuart Scholes	
Lenny Walker, Airtech	
Philip de Jong	
Margaret de Jong, Pertinax	
Dick Sweatman, Councillor	

1.	<p>Apologies: Apologies were received from James Moore, Matt Cole, Norman Webster, Bob Russell, Andrew Southwell, Mark Healy, Peter Robinson, Gary Needle, Richard Leman, Kevin Ellis, Julie Knight, William Knight. Lee Farren, CEO, warmly welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Sir Nicholas for attending. He thanked Sir Nicholas for facilitating our trip to The Houses of Parliament. Last year's minutes were approved – proposed by Stuart Scholes and seconded by Rex Whittaker.</p>
2.	<p>Chairman's Address: Sir Nicholas Soames thanked Lee Farren for inviting him and said that it was good to see that the Association was in good shape. He had had a busy day in the constituency meeting CAE in Burgess Hill and 6th Form students at Sackville School. He said that the students that he met were outstanding – interesting and interested. He said that we were lucky to have two excellent schools in the town. Sir Nicholas then went on to talk about Brexit. He said that it was no secret that he was a firm Remainer but that we now had to see through this very difficult process. The House of Lords is presently scrutinising the bill before it comes back to the Houses of Parliament for sign off. He said that Brexit was the biggest administrative change that the country had faced since 1940. Unfortunately, it was absorbing a huge amount of time and effort when other important issues like Health and Education were having to take second place. The Government has been busy building up the number of negotiators from industry so that we get the best deal possible. Sir Nicholas said that we were lucky to live in a prosperous constituency where only 349 people were unemployed – the second lowest rate in the country. He said that there was real concern within the car industry and the effect of Brexit on all of the companies associated with the manufacturing process. He thought that Financial Services industry would be fine. Mid Sussex was seeing huge growth, particularly in the Burgess Hill arc where £65 mill has been invested by the Government. He said that his recent trip to America had confirmed what he thought - that confidence is very strong. President Trump is rejuvenating the Rust Belt and opening open caste mines to provide fuel. In Britain we have poor debt ratios and consumer spending would have to decline at some point as it was unsustainable.</p>

	<p>Oliver Harwood, Chartered Surveyor at Clutton’s, asked Sir Nicholas who he should contact regarding the restrictions applied to planning applications within Wealden area. He was worried that blockages were leaking into our constituency. Sir Nicholas said that he could write to him in the first instance but could see that there would be no early resolution to the problem. Wealden have taken it upon themselves to apply rules around nitrogen oxide emissions too literally. Fiona Humphreys said that they would like to bring more people to Hindleap Warren at Wych Cross but this was impossible due to Wealden rules. He said that there was a pot of cash from Government for by-pass schemes that could deliver economic growth.</p> <p>Roger Martell said that there was a desperate need for more housing in East Grinstead. Rex Whittaker said that the Mid Sussex Plan was close to being signed off. We needed more affordable housing and that local plans needed to be accepted.</p> <p>Stuart Scholes asked where all of the skilled labour was going to come from to enable all of these new construction projects to take place. Sir Nicholas said that this would be a challenge especially in the light of Brexit. But he said that there were eight major developments happening in the Burgess Hill area. Rex said that locally the Town Council was working hard to see the successful completion of the Queens Walk project and the Travelodge development and that everyone wanted to see more growth in the town.</p> <p>Sir Nicholas presented Roger Martell with a farewell card and gift and thanked him for all his efforts at the Association over the years. He said that Roger would be missed.</p> <p>Sir Nicholas left the meeting as he had further engagements.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>Treasurer’s report</p> <p>Judy Theobald thanked Roger for all his help and said that he had handed everything over in an exemplary fashion.</p> <p>She thanked Brooks & Co for auditing the accounts ready for the meeting.</p> <p>She said that the current balance is £14,000 but that she had subs to pay in amounting to £400 plus. Subs are down slightly on the year before and advertising income on VEG is also down.</p> <p>The two events – Race Night and the Christmas Party – broke even.</p> <p>The £2,500 grant from Mid Sussex DC was incredibly helpful.</p> <p>In terms of running costs, the website was now working well and members were finding the Paypal system easy to use.</p> <p>We spent money supporting local causes – East Grinstead in Bloom (£50), Young Enterprise Scheme (£200), Poppy Appeal (£27), High Street Christmas Traders event (£100).</p> <p>Mid Sussex DC has committed to providing grants to the Association for the next 3 years.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>CEO report</p> <p>Lee thanked Kate, Fi and Judy for their help running EGBA and said that he saw the CEO role as a team effort.</p> <p>Lee thanked Roger Martell and asked that the Association gives Roger “Legend Status”.</p> <p>He said that we had had a stable year for membership, hovering around the 120 mark.</p> <p>Our regular Drink & Meet networking evenings at La Farola continued to be popular. He thanked La Farola for their ongoing generosity.</p> <p>He said that we had had some interesting Buzz events that had been well attended.</p> <p>We were using the website to blog information and using social media more.</p> <p>16,000 visitors came to the EGBA website and the Visit East Grinstead site had received 110,000 hits from 40,000 people. Lee said that we would need to rebuild our server as traffic was at a higher rate than predicted.</p> <p>He said that a real aim this year was to increase the number of local businesses accessing grants for apprenticeship schemes and capital investment.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Re-election of Committee Members</p> <p>The constitution allows for up to 8 committee members.</p> <p>Two members are standing down this year – Matt Cole and Roger Martell – and Judy Theobald is now stepping into the role of Treasurer from a general committee member. Committee members were duly re-elected and two new members were elected:</p>

	Member	Proposed	Seconded
	Stuart Scholes (existing)	Oliver Harwood	Philip de Jong
	Elaine McGloin (existing)	John Hallmark	Rex Whittaker
	Fiona Bewers (existing)	Fiona Humphreys	John Belsey
	Bob Russell (existing)	Judy Theobald	Rex Whittaker
	Barney Durrant (existing)	Stuart Scholes	Rex Whittaker
	Rex Whittaker (existing)	Lee Farren	Kate Bennett
	Nick Blythe (new)	Rex Whittaker	Kate Bennett
	Charmaine Hallmark (new)	Stuart Scholes	Lee Farren
5.	<p>Reappointment of Officers CEO, Lee Farren Treasurer, Judy Theobald Kate Bennett, Business Manager Fiona Humphreys, Marketing Administrator All were re-appointed – proposed by Rex Whittaker and seconded by Fiona Bewers.</p>		
6.	<p>Review of 2017 Lee Farren said that Buzz meetings had been buzzy. The recent Imberhorne Breakfast Meeting had been a great success. He thanked Waitrose for their support and for the activity and enthusiasm shown by Tim Thomson at Imberhorne School. Sackville wants to be more involved and we will be asking the Primary Schools to get on board too. We enjoyed hosting a joint event with Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath at Lingfield Park Racecourse in the summer and planned to work more closely with them this year and to use a unified voice to deal with issues affecting members. An idea for a joint event was for a Golf Day at Chartham Park or Sweetwoods, both EGBA members. Our Buzz meeting at the Sports Club introducing Wave Leisure was a great success. Lee Farren asked members to support our events this year.</p>		
7.	<p>The Year Ahead Lee Farren invited members to use our portals and to give us content to share and excite people with. He said that we wanted to shout about all of the members' businesses. Rex Whittaker thanked Lee for all his efforts and also thanked Stuart for his 6 years at the helm. Lee said that it was great to have a fixed address for the Association at East Court. Lee said that we would be ensuring that GDPR policies were adhered to in the coming months. He said that we would strive to help members to access grants by providing help and practical assistance. John Belsey said that Julie Hodgson at The Horse Drawn Carriage Co had applied successfully for a grant and Fiona Humphreys said that they would feature her story and Matt Cole's so that members could see that there were resources on offer that they could claim.</p>		
8.	<p>AOB Fiona Humphreys asked all members to provide information about events they were holding and news about their businesses so that we could help them. The meeting closed at 7.10pm.</p>		