

# **Draft Minutes of the 61<sup>st</sup> Burridge and Swanwick Residents' Association AGM**

**Held on Monday, 27th April 2026 at 7.30pm in Burridge Hall**

The Chairman welcomed approximately 34 residents to the 61<sup>st</sup> Annual General Meeting of Burridge and Swanwick Residents Association, adding that he was sure they would want him to extend a particularly warm welcome to our Councillor Joanne Burton and our speaker, Robin Clarke.

## **1. Presentation Speaker**

The speaker was Robin Clarke from the National Air Traffic Services (NATS).

He enlightened us with NATS and his role as Manager of the Social Research side.

NATS here in Swanwick are the community based, operational part. NATS at Whiteley is the corporate HQ and also holds shelves of old equipment.

The Air Traffic Control Company is divided into 2 parts

a) regulated by the CAA under licence from the government. They manage 2.5 million flights per year in the UK and abroad.

b) NATS Services Ltd. (NSL). A commercial services provider widely spread out around the world. They control air space users and airlines and help in uncontrolled airspace. NSL has been in Public Private Partnership (PPP) for the past 25 years.

49% is owned by the Government, 42% by a mix of airlines and 4% by Heathrow. The remainder by some of 4683 employees. Revenue is just over £1 billion. They are always recruiting, especially Air Traffic Controllers, he wished more students, especially women, would study STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematic) to qualify them for this work. In response to a question, he said work placements can be found but you would need to find a host to support you.

NATS runs 2 centres Swanwick and Prestwick. It also runs London City Airport remotely using cameras.

Aquila is their military partner run by 78 Squadron, who only control military traffic.

NATS' future over the next 3 years includes managing drones, some of which are used for medical supplies already operating in the Scottish Isles. All drones will be used in lower level uncontrolled air space and will need managing. NATS are currently in talks with a government regulator regarding this. These drones currently exist and will be a challenge to manage.

The old paper strips that Air Controllers used to use to control flights have been superseded by iPads. A new system called XMAN enables controllers in Shannon and Heathrow to ask planes over 350 miles away to slow down, to reduce congestion and stacking in peak times.

Project Bluebird (AI) will help controllers to make decisions but won't replace them!

Above 24,500 feet aircraft can choose the route they take through the airspace.

Heathrow has a virtual control tower in a bunker.

Later this year NATS will design a new system to modernise departures and arrivals.

To help meet its target of net zero by 2050 NATS has installed 2,600 solar panels on the roof at Swanwick and 2,000 at Prestwick. More are currently being installed in fields at Swanwick.

At Swanwick Lakes there are 86 acres managed and subsidised by NATS in partnership with the Hampshire and IOW Wildlife Trust. There is a long term commitment to community engagement. 45,000 children have visited the lakes over the years. There are 2 miles of public footpaths.

Question asked – How do you stop a vehicle crashing through the barriers into the site? Answer: It's more difficult than it looks but in an emergency Whiteley can manage operations.

The Chairman thanked Robin for a very interesting talk.

He then moved on to the business of the meeting.

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Apologies had been received from Denise and Geoff Ranger, Vaughan and Mary Tudor-Williams and Ren Randev.

## 2. **Approval of the minutes of the last meeting.**

The minutes were approved without corrections

## 3. **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

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## 4. **Chairman's Report**

The chairman read a short summary of the full report that had been published on the website for several weeks. There had been few planning matters, details can be found by going to the planning page on our website and clicking on the planning application number link.

### **The Southeast Hampshire Unitary Authority (UA)**

Local opinion was overwhelmingly in favour of the decision that the Sarisbury & Whiteley ward will be in the UA along with the rest of Fareham, Havant, Gosport and Portsmouth. The parishes of Rowlands Castle, Horndean and Clanfield will also probably join.

At our last AGM Ann Ailes proposed a new bus route running through the Western Wards. She has obtained, from Community First, an estimate of the potential cost as around ¼ million pounds p.a. (actually £208,000 plus inflation). She hopes funding can be found for this from the new Mayoral Southeast Hampshire Unitary Authority (UA).

We surveyed those on our email list to assess the need for a new bus service as agreed at the 2025 AGM. We had 38 replies to 169 emails. Only 14 residents thought they would use it, some only occasionally. We concluded that, though there is some desire for public transport, the proposed scheme is unlikely to be viable without a subsidy that is unlikely to be available. Therefore, we would take no further action. If there were to be a subsidy, it would probably be a precept on the Council Tax charged to all residents in the UA even though benefiting a very small portion of Southeast Hampshire.

Residents who expressed a desire for the service were advised of the services run by the Community First Charity and Locksheath Communicare minibus (whose volunteers run a door to door service for housebound residents) and added links to our website.

There were no questions on the Chairman's report.

## 5. **Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer presented his report and showed a graph indicating the decline in members paying the subscription. Our bank balance remains healthy at present.

A resident asked for an explanation of the sum deducted from our association's bank balance labelled Speedwatch. The explanation, that we hold this amount on behalf of Speedwatch because it has no bank account, was accepted.

## 6. **To consider and vote on the Committee's proposal to disband the Association.**

The Chairman asked "Should we close our doors and shut down the Association?"

He explained that the Government guidelines in the National Planning Policy Framework restrict Local Council's choices and a Government Inspector has to approve what goes into the Local Plan. The Government also sets targets for housebuilding and penalises authorities that fail to reach them.

Any application for planning that is refused by the council can be appealed. Corporates, motivated by profit, have the funds to bring in the heavy guns. It then costs the Council money from our Council Tax to defend their decision to refuse planning permission. An appeal is more likely to succeed if the housing targets have not been met. The Inspectors decision is final.

The proposed Southeast Hampshire Unitary Authority has been deferred to 2028 but, whenever it is implemented, it is a huge area of which we represent a tiny part.

This makes us a very small voice in an extremely large conurbation. Solent City has arrived as many predicted years ago.

There are also problems in our Association. If we are not to disband there must be a regular change of committee members in order to present a wide range of views.

Over the years it has become more difficult to recruit residents to join the committee and spread the load. Community spirit seems lacking.

Some particular knowledge and skills are required on the Committee but these can be acquired over time while on the committee. Perhaps more importantly, representation from across the area is needed to get a balanced view.

A regular change of committee members is essential. If this becomes the norm, individuals can choose how long they remain instead of being pressured to stay on. Fresh opinions and ideas from different age groups keep an association alive.

This leads to the choices we now face.

The association could widen its activities and maybe hold events to bring the community together.

Merging with other associations in the area might make us more relevant, a larger voice.

So there are other possibilities provided some of you here tonight are prepared to join the committee. The present committee are happy to have a handover period.

Otherwise, we should disband the Association.

Before voting on the motion an opportunity was given to ask questions.

Residents commented:

David Riley - Association should continue, we need a voice, FBC take comments seriously.

Brent Ware - young people were not represented at the meeting, few residents attend AGM's regularly.

R. Pearson - Maybe young people would join if there was a social aspect.

Ann Ailes - We need to use our democratic right to speak on local issues.

Ashley Ailes- we need to be able to press for downgrading the Botley Road so that traffic calming can be introduced.

John Hall - we need representation for planning matters. He also recommended circulating notices in hardcopy which he considered more people would see. Emails are likely overlooked among the many emails that most people receive.

A resident commented that they did not understand planning matters.

The Motion to dissolve the association was put to the meeting. The result was 1 vote in favour of dissolution. 30 against with 3 abstentions.

The Chairman announced that 2 residents had offered to join the Committee, David Riley and Ashley Ailes. He asked for more volunteers from the residents present.

Paul Wayman also expressed an interest but only in the possibility of social activities. He was not interested in planning. The Chairman encouraged him to be elected on the understanding that not all committee members are closely involved in planning matters, that the necessary skills and knowledge could be acquired while on the committee, and that he could resign if he changed his mind. Paul agreed to his nomination.

There were no further offers of support.

These 3 members were elected, en block, by an overwhelming majority of a show of hands at the meeting.

The Chairman explained that the committee has the authority to co-opt 2 members during the year, should other volunteers come forward, and encouraged them to do so.

He hoped to stand down as chairman after handing this duty to someone else during the year. The Chairman is elected from the committee members, by the Committee.

## **7. Questions to our Councillor Joanne Burton.**

Councillor Joanne Burton, offered to take the floor and updated us on local issues.

During the conversations on possible dissolution, she and Alderman Sean Woodward had expressed their appreciation of the work of the association and that councillors take note of comments from residents and their Associations in the deliberations on planning matters.

The Councillor reminded us of the Fun Day planned for Sunday 5th July, and reminded residents of the Botley Road closure in May. She also endorsed the Chairman's summary of the difficult balance faced by the Council in deciding how to determine planning applications and outlined her action and opinion on recent application in the Sarisbury & Whiteley Ward.

The introduction of food waste collection had not gone smoothly but problems had been addressed.

It would probably be 5 to 10 years before Bluebell Way and Whiteley Way through North Whiteley were adopted.

The Chairman thanked her for her patience waiting to address us and for her helpful information. The meeting acknowledged their gratitude for her attendance.

**8. Any Other Business advised before the meeting including, if requested by the meeting, a statement from Ann Ailes on her progress in attempting to get a bus service through the North part of Botley Road in Burr ridge & Swanwick Lane.**

The Chairman explained that the Committee thought it appropriate to ask before the next item commences whether you would like to hear a brief update from Ann Ailes on her progress in attempting to get a bus service through the North part of Botley Road in Burr ridge & Swanwick Lane.

There were only a very few hands raised.

He suggested these people speak to her privately after the meeting. Ann expressed her disappointment that this was not on the agenda.

The only other item of business was an update from Ann Ailes on working party dates for maintenance of the Village Pond. Next date is 3rd June.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and invited all to the usual chat over a glass of wine.

The meeting closed at 21:47.