

**Minutes of St Mary's Island Residents' Association Ltd (SMIRA) Residents' Meeting held at the  
Community Centre on Monday 21 February commencing at 8pm.**

**Chair:** Malcolm Gray

**Directors:** Chris Reynolds, Mona Koshkouei, Angela Andrews.

**Secretary:** Jade Jones

**Chatham Maritime Trust (CMT) Representatives:** Julian Perry (Chief Executive) and Grant Leathwhite (Residential Services Officer)

**Guests:** Cllr. Habib Tejan (Medway Council), PCSO Angela Saunders (Kent Police), Claude Khan (Clinical Lead - Maritime Health Partnership),

**Apologies for Absence:** Dean Marsh (Contract & Procurement Facility Manager - CMT) and Sharon Hogarth (Managing Partner - Maritime Health Partnership). Cllr. Piers Thompson (Medway Council).

**Item A01: Opening of the meeting**

The Chair outlined the running of the meeting with the usual requests to accord those speaking the respect to allow them to finish, along with the respect for views that may not be the same as your own.

**Item A02: Apologies for Absence**

Please see above.

**Item A03: Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 December 2021 were recorded and are available on the SMIRA website.

**Item A04: Stakeholder Q&A**

Nine pre-submitted questions were received for the Stakeholders.

**CMT and PCSO Angela Saunders**

**Q1. Pre-submitted question. There is scruffy wood and wire fencing along parts of Restharrow Way, which appears to serve no purpose at all, and looks terrible. I believe it was originally "temporary". The Trust are supposed to be the keen to look after the "street scene" as they call it, but this eyesore does nothing for it. It also partially collapsed into the road one evening, causing damage to my car, for which I received no compensation from the Trust whatsoever. What is the Trust doing about this?**

Answered by Grant Leathwhite in writing and at the meeting:

Unfortunately, due to residents and visitors regularly parking on newly planted shrubs and plants, CMT have had to put in temporary chestnut fencing for approximately 3 years in order to protect the plants until they have established enough that we are comfortable that we can remove the fencing. We agree that it is not an ideal solution, however without taking this action the plants would simply continue to be destroyed by vehicles parking on them.

In November 2019 the trust received a claim for damages to a vehicle under reference 7192016. The incident was passed on to the Trust insurance broker Claim Advisor to progress with claimant and was concluded no fault to the trust and case closed.

**Q2. Pre-submitted question. What is being done about the uneven surfaces around the Island for wheelchair users.**

Answered by Grant Leathwhite writing and at the meeting:

The Trust has worked hard across the estate over the last 5 or 6 years to make wheelchair and other users i.e., mobility scooter, prams and cycling safe and easy across the estate.

The Trust has introduced additional drop-down kerbs, pathways, and even removed cobbles from the river walk and added coloured tarmac. We take disability and movement around site very seriously and it is high on are list so everyone can enjoy the estate.

It has also been brought to CMT attention that the ramp to caisson needs alteration and will be undertaken shortly along with replacement hard wood decking across the caisson.

Additional discussion around residents' responsibility to cut back overgrown hedges that block the cycle pathway around the Island. CMT confirmed that they do enforce the covenants that require residents to maintain their property. CMT went on to confirm that they used to when required maintain hedges etc. at the cost to the homeowner.

Additional discussion regarding the paths that require improvement by the Ship and Trades pub. CMT confirm they now manage this land on behalf of the pub and will look at the existing budget for this year in order to invest in the improvements required to keep this area maintained to an acceptable standard.

**ACTIONS:**

- **CMT to discuss with the Trust Board whether to re-introduce this charged service.**
- **Grant Leathwhite to contact the resident who raised this concern to identify where on the Island is overgrown.**
- **CMT to review the monies outstanding from the Ship and Trades maintenance charge to identify whether funds are available to undertake improvement works to the paths by the pub and car park.**

**Q3. Pre-submitted question. The recent bike marking event was not advertised in advance of the event. We would appreciate greater notice to ensure greater participation.**

Answered by PCSO Saunders at the meeting:

This event was advertised only to residents living in Watersmeet due to recent spate of thefts. PCSO Saunders confirmed that future events will be advertised for the wider Island community.

**Q4. Question raised during the meeting: The Chair raised a question regarding the legal requirement for dogs to be kept 3ft leads.**

Answered by PCSO Saunders at the meeting:

This legal requirement is enforceable when a dog is walked by the road. CMT confirmed that they regularly ask dog owners to keep dogs on leads whilst walking around the Island. CMT went on to

say that recent investment in the dog run has been made and allows owners to let dogs off of leads in this area. Future plans for a smaller dog run located on Island Way West.

## **Medway Council**

**Q5. Pre-submitted question: Machine Shop No 8. A forlorn and derelict eyesore which has been left to fester for decades without attention of any kind and is a weed infested disgrace. Now the subject of various development schemes, none of which are sensible or practical, and which all appear to have fizzled out and come to nothing. What is happening with this plot of land?**

Answered by Cllr. Tejan at the meeting:

Cllr Tejan has recently spoken with the owners who are in the process of levelling up the land whilst they await a decision on their business model from Medway Council. No further information provided on the business model.

**Q6. Pre-submitted Question: Yellow lines on St Mary's Island. The problem raised regarding parking near junctions and the subsequent danger for drivers and pedestrians has not been solved by the introduction of yellow lines. An example has been provided as follows: parking adjacent to the playground along Restharrow Way still creates a long curving blind bend, with cars meeting head on and having to mount the pavement to avoid one another. The near approach to the Island Way East/Restharrow Way roundabout is still obscured by up to five or six large vans parked up, along with parking by dog walkers, commuters, etc who do not live here. Cars still meet head on here also. Cars emerging from Willowherb Close also do so completely blind. You cannot even see to cross the road by the children's playground. The Council's view is appreciated as the PCSO for the Island is unable to take any action other than advise people as she sees them. For instance, is a parking officer patrolling the area?**

Answered by Cllr. Tejan in the meeting:

Cllr Tejan commented that the feedback from the consultation that took place in 2021 did not include the junction of Restharrow Way to the best of his knowledge. A comment was made by a resident to confirm that feedback and pictures were provided to the Council and Cllr. Tejan personally by residents concerned about the danger of multiple vans parking on this junction.

Cllr. Tejan confirmed he would review the feedback received.

**ACTION: Cllr. Tejan to review the feedback received from the consultation in respect of the junction on Restharrow Way and provide the next steps to ensure that this junction is safe for motorists and pedestrians. Completed.**

### **Post-meeting response from Cllr. Tejan:**

Officers informed me that all areas that were not included in the last consultation will be treated in the next phase. They will be compiling the works programme for 2022/23 in the coming weeks so will be able to give a better idea once it has been finalised. They have assured me that the points raised about Restharrow Way amongst other roads not previously included in the consultation will be considered.

Regarding the consultation, there were a vocal minority in the surrounding roads on SMI who were against the introduction of the zone as it will arguably displace vehicles elsewhere. Notwithstanding, officers were initially recommending proceeding with sites that didn't have any objections (only).

Therefore, out of the 29 locations originally proposed, the Council proceeded with 25 as listed below which are now completed.

You would note that the sites highlighted in yellow was initially proposed after the consultation. The once struck off was removed from the scheme and the ones in red were added after we engaged with CMT and other stakeholders.

- a. 1 at the junction of Dewberry Close, Wintergreen Close and Restharrow Way
- b. 2 at the junction of Island Way East, The Pinnacles and Restharrow Way.
- c. 3 at the junction of Island Way East and Sandling Way
- d. 4 at the junction of Woodrush Place and Island Way East
- e. 5 at the junction of Haven Way and Island Way East
- f. 6 at the junction of Haven Way, The Pintails and Pochard Close
- g. 7 at the junction of Maritime Way, Island Way West and Island Way East
- h. 8 at the junction of Redshank Road and The Crescent
- i. 9 at the junction of Partridge Drive and Egret Close
- j. 10 At the junction of Partridge Drive and Island Way West
- k. 11 At the junction of Whinchat Way and Island Way West
- l. 12 at the junction of Firecrest Close, Whinchat Way and Westerly Way,
- m. 13 at the junction of The Causeway and Westgate
- n. 14 at the junction of Main Street, The Causeway and The Shore Way
- o. ~~15 Mainstreet at the junction with Stillwater Mews.~~
- p. 16 at the junction of Main Street and Island Way West,
- q. 17 at the junction of Westview and Henrietta Chase
- r. 18/ 19 at the two junction of Little Victory Mount east-west arm, with the two north-south arms
- s. 20 at the junction of Henrietta Chase and Tappan Drive
- t. ~~21 at the junction of Deering Close and Tappan Drive~~
- u. 22 at the junction of Tappan Drive and Island Way East
- v. 23 at the junction of Goldcrest Drive north-south and east-west arms,
- w. ~~24 at the junction of Goldcrest Drive, Bradfords Close and Cheldoc Rise~~
- x. 25 at the junction with Island Way East, Goldcrest Drive and The Avenue,
- y. ~~26 at the junction of three arms of Cheldoc Rise, outside of nos 7, 10-20 and 46-~~
- z. 27 at the junction of Dunlin Drive and Phalarope Way
- aa. 28 at the junction of Island Way East and Dunlin Drive
- bb. 29 at the junction of Island Way East and Apollo Way

**Q7. Pre-submitted Question: The Council fee to close roads in order to hold a street party for the Queen's Jubilee. Can the fee be waived, or alternatively could SMIRA pay the fee for the whole Island?**

Answer by Cllr. Tejan during the meeting:

The Council fee to close roads for residents to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee is £100 per application. Cllr. Tejan commented that he had enquired with the administrative team within the Council regarding this fee policy, but no response had been provided at the time of the meeting. He confirmed he would follow up this line of enquiry.

CMT commented that they were hoping to hold the annual Food and Drink Festival over the Queen's Platinum Jubilee weekend and were awaiting a Trust Board decision in a few weeks' time.

**ACTION: Cllr. Tejan to confirm with the SMIRA Secretary whether the fee can be waived or SMIRA can cover the cost of one application for the Island. Completed.**

**Post-meeting response from Cllr. Tejan:**

Following the meeting Cllr. Tejan confirmed the following – For the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee, please note that for street parties between 2 June and 5 June 2022, residents can apply to close a road on one day free of charge.

**Q8. Pre-submitted Question: When were the Council told of delays to the roadworks by Medway Tunnel, and why did residents have to find out from the media?**

Answered by Cllr. Tejan at the meeting:

Cllr. Tejan confirmed that he had not received any news that the roadworks was delayed. He confirmed that he would follow up on this question and provide an answer shortly.

There was an additional question about the planned roadworks by Sans Pareil roundabout. Cllr. Tejan confirmed he would arrange for a presentation on this topic at a future residents meeting.

**ACTIONS:**

- 1. Cllr. Tejan to provide an update on whether the roadworks by Medway Tunnel is on track to be completed by the end of February 2022. Completed.**
- 2. Cllr. Tejan to provide an update on the planned works by the Sans Pareil roundabout at a future residents meeting. Completed.**

**Post-meeting response from Cllr. Tejan:**

1. Medway Council secured £1.7million from the government’s Local Growth Fund through the South East Local Enterprise Partnership, to deliver a new slip road to bypass the roundabout from Medway City Estate onto Berwick Way. These improvement works is designed to reduce congestion and ease traffic flow. The Council anticipated a 5-month build, with communications estimating completion by the end of February 2022. Works will be extending past the original end of February completion date, however, due to ongoing works programme reviews, officers were unable to confirm, yet the current date for the works to complete. The delays have been a result of several factors including utility diversions.

The site team will continue to work in close co-operation with the Contractor to deliver this key strategic transportation scheme as quickly and efficiently as possible. As with all civil engineering projects, unforeseen elements or delays are a risk when works commence – especially with a major scheme such as this. The project team have and are experiencing difficulties with various elements of the build – this is considered normal in civil engineering projects, and the Contractor and site team work as hard as possible to minimise delays and over runs. Working overnight, for example. I will inform stakeholder’s as soon as I am furnished with a definitive completion date agreed between the site team and contractor.

2. The Council was successful in its bid for £170million of infrastructure funding from the government’s Housing Infrastructure Fund. This will allow us to proceed with some major regeneration on the Hoo Peninsula unlocking thousands of new homes and creating more opportunities for the area. The HIF scheme will include modifications to the Sans Pareil Roundabout, relocated junction for Wainscott Road to Frindsbury Hill and alterations to the Benenden Road layout amongst others. I will try to get officers to come and present the scheme at a future meeting (TBC).

**Q9. Additional Question raised during the meeting: There is a dangerous crossing in Redshank Road. There is no signage for motorists or pedestrians warning them to be aware, and there have been near misses with those riding e-scooters proceeding across the crossing without stopping.**

Answered by Cllr Tejan: Cllr. Tejan confirmed he would discuss with the Council Highway Officers possible options for a signage or a barrier that will not restrict disabled access. The resident who raised this question will also write to Medway Council direct.

A further question was raised regarding the crossing by the school. The bright colours painted on the hump suggest this is an official zebra crossing under the Highway Code. The Council need to make it clear that is not, as motorists do stop to let people cross.

It was suggested that the school headteacher should be approached on this issue, and the possibility of a rota for teachers before and after school to ensure children and parents are able to cross safely. Quite often those with disabled badges park by the crossing restricting the view of those pedestrians needing to cross.

A further question was raised regarding the Councils adoption of Samphire Way. Cllr. Tejan confirmed that the road had been re-surfaced, but the adoption will not happen until later in 2022. A consultation on junctions and yellow lines to be implemented will need to take place.

**ACTIONS:**

- 1. Cllr. Tejan to report back on the solutions to make the crossing in Redshank Road safer.**
- 2. SMIRA to contact Mrs Easton to discuss making the crossing by the school safer.**

**Maritime Health Partnership**

**Q9. Pre-submitted Question: When does the Island Surgery plan to start COVID vaccinations for children?**

Answered by Dr. Khan at the meeting: Dr Khan requested to provide this information at a later date.

An additional question was raised regarding the rules for wearing a face covering whilst in the surgery, now that there is no legal requirement to do so. Dr Khan confirmed that the surgery still requires patients to wear a face covering.

A further question was raised regarding the availability of face-to-face appointments. Dr Khan confirmed that the surgery is trying to return to more face-to-face appointments, and advised patients when they call the surgery, to ask for a face-to-face appointment. He added that the surgery is working to provide continuation of care for patients, including named doctors for follow-up appointments.

Dr Khan informed residents that the surgery has a varied team of disciplines to support the various needs of patients. He went on to say that general practice has changed, but the final decision regarding prescriptions remains with General Practitioners.

A further question was raised regarding the services provided to patients in mental wellbeing. Dr Khan informed residents that this was a challenging area, but a self-referral service is available

through Medway Talking Therapy, a mental health nurse at the practice, and a secondary mental health team in Medway.

A further question was raised regarding the transition from Medway Practices Alliance to Maritime Health Partnership. Dr Khan confirmed that the Managing Partner at the surgery would be able to provide a more detailed response and requested SMIRA to write to her. SMIRA representatives agreed that they would establish a regular meeting with the Surgery in order to set out what residents need.

A final question was asked whether the Island surgery was a training practice. Dr Khan confirmed that it was, but there were not registrars.

#### **ACTIONS:**

- 1. Dr Khan to provide information regarding the Island surgery plans to deliver vaccinations to children.**
- 2. SMIRA to set up a regular meeting with the Surgery to set out what residents need from Maritime Health Practice.**

#### **SMIRA**

**Q10. Pre-submitted Question. The Island Facebook site is policed by "administrators", and some of the more contentious or provocative comments are deliberately blocked. This keeps everything very "nice" but unfortunately also kills off the free speech that this country prides itself on, and which is a basic human right. There is a lot of debate about controlling content on Facebook and Twitter etc - but SMIRA are already doing it!**

Answered by in writing and at the meeting:

SMIRA controls the official Facebook page only. It does not block any comments and allows freedom of speech in so far that comments do not amount to abuse towards other residents. There are three Facebook pages available for residents, but only the official Facebook page is controlled by SMIRA.

An additional question was raised regarding SMIRA's plans to deliver community events in 2022. The question was answered by the Chair; SMIRA does intend to plan community events this year dependant on the ongoing pandemic. However, SMIRA does require more volunteers to support and sustain the work that it is required to do. SMIRA is interested in hearing what residents want to see.

A further question was raised regarding an update on Sector Reps and Neighbourhood Watch. SMIRA's response to this question; there is now only one Sector Rep due to availability of volunteers. Regarding Neighbourhood Watch, the Secretary continues to provide information from the National Neighbourhood Watch scheme through Facebook, SMIRA website and notice boards around the Island. The Secretary also provides information received through My Community Voice.

The SMIRA website has a contact form available for residents to report crime or anti-social behaviour. This information is sent to Kent Police and CMT.

Some residents felt that relying entirely on electronic communications may alienate some residents who are not online. A suggestion was made by a resident for Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators. The concept would be based on utilising neighbour relationships and talking to one another about

concerns within their street. Alternatively, perhaps renaming the Sector Rep to Welcome Rep who would be responsible for welcoming new residents when they move onto the Island.

**ACTION: SMIRA to consider their communications and engagement with residents, particularly around Neighbourhood Watch.**

**Item A05: Future meeting dates**

MG thanked everyone for attending and confirmed that the next formal meeting would be on Monday 25 April 2021 commencing at 8pm and held in the Community Centre.

The meeting was formally closed at 09:30pm.