**Minutes from the Hills Amenity Society AGM on 22 May 2018**

**Attendees:** Wendy Fisher, Ian Locks, Peter Wynn, Brenda Harris, Lisa Godsalve

**Apologies:** Stephen Cohen

1. Wendy opened the meeting and welcomed everyone, on behalf of Stephen, the Chair, who had to send his apologies. Wendy highlighted the continued issue with cars being parked on pavements, often obstructing narrow pathways. Furthermore, double yellow lines are often ignored especially on the corner of Stony Path, outside the Forester’s Arms. It has also been noticed that the bollards placed at the top of York Hill and the gates in Staples Road also cause access issues for those people passing with a pram or a bike riders. Another ongoing problem is from litter being left on our Greens, particularly on York Hill Green opposite the Gardener’s Arms. A small number of kind local residents go out of their way to pick up the litter left by other people and there was an appeal for all residents to share the burden and keep it looking litter free.

2. **Speeding vehicles** - Ian advised that we are still experiencing speeding vehicles in the Conservation areas, particularly in York Hill and Baldwins Hill and he advised that we are starting a campaign to bring in a 20mph speed limit. As part of this campaign we have printed “20 is plenty” stickers for residents to display on the wheelie bins.

3.  **HillsWatch** – Ian reported that we have set up HillsWatch on Facebook, a registered body which aids the Neighbourhood Watch to become more interactive. Currently we have 25 registered users and it is hoped that the number of users will grow and we will then see more active participation. If anyone would like to manage the HillsWatch going forwards, all nominations would be very much welcomed.

4. **Officer Elections** - Officers on the Hills Amenity Society Committee advised that they were standing again for re-election for a further year and this was approved and seconded. It was also reported that Marcus Warren continues to very kindly print the newsletters, in colour free of charge. The Committee thanked Marcus for his continued support and generosity. Ian and Chris Pond added that the organisation has a long history and sometimes we wonder whether we are achieving anything, however recently when the Orientation plaque was unveiled, we were reminded that were we not to exist the focus on the conservation areas would not continue. Of course there have been some building casualties over the years such as the loss of Dryads Hall, Slades junk shop etc however, we have helped to save the Wheatsheaf garden, unveiled more Blue Plaques including the one at 91 Staples Road (on the site of the Oriolet Hospital (Fruitarian), the zebra crossing by the cricket ground, restored bell of Staples Road school and the Pump on York Hill Green. Chris advised that the Council plan to clear the vegetation from the Bridal Path at the top of Forest Way and resurface it with sand which will much improve access for horseriders and walkers.

5. **Treasurer’s Report**

Income from subs, donations and newsletter ads for 2017/2018 was £566.00 a small increase over the previous year. Membership remains stable at an average over the last 5 years of around 86 residents. Expenditure for the year was somewhat less than last year, due entirely to the fact that there were no web hosting and domain fees for the year having negotiated a 2 year deal last year. Once again we are very grateful and fortunate that the newsletters are produced free of charge by one of our residents, Marcus Warren of the OMM Group. Without this assistance the newsletter would be a much less attractive production so thank you indeed Marcus. A copy of the accounts will be available on the website.

6. **Open Forum**

6.1 The dangers of speeding vehicles in our narrow lanes was revisited and Ian reminded everyone that the issue was highlighted as a major concern and a request for a 20mph limit was put to EFDC in the Character Appraisals. Since then we have printed some stickers for local residents to put on their wheelie bin to help raise awareness of the issue. Chris felt that they should be “slow down” stickers rather than being specifically 20mph. One local resident spoke about how dangerous it is becoming, especially at school time where there are no pavements on York Hill. Cars parking on both sides of the road during school pick up times is also not helping and it is felt that it is “an accident waiting to happen”. The possibility of introducing 20mph limit signs have been raised with the Council but we are still awaiting a response. Ian advised that when we it was raised in the Character Appraisal, a discussion was promised but it never happened. One resident advised that vehicles are often seen driving at 40mph and 50mph in Baldwins Hill and in the narrowest part of York Hill there has been a number of near misses. Various options were discussed such as making Pump Hill, York Hill and Staples Road one-way traffic but Chris advised that evidence shows that one-way streets encourage people to drive faster. Also, the previous practice of putting in humps to slow traffic down is not being used now. Chris reported that he could put through a request for specific roads to have a 20mph speed limit but advised that the criteria laid down by the highways is very strict and Essex’s is particularly strict. Furthermore, he believes that there are no roads in Epping Forest which have 20mph limits and the forest paid for the one in High Beach. Also, Chris added that no signage is allowed in conservation areas as the Council do not believe it makes any difference. One resident challenged this by adding that the lack of pavements is a special feature in the Hills and should make a difference, along with the fact that school children walk along these narrow roads to get to school. Another resident welcomed signage if it helped to make the roads safer and in doing so make it a much more pleasant place to live. Ian asked if it would be helpful to pass a formal resolution that we are a particularly concerned that people will be injured, under health and safety and road safety.

**Actions:** The Committee to write formally to Chris Pond and he will raise it at the next Highways Committee. The Committee/residents to help raise awareness through the use of the stickers which have been paid for through our subscriptions.

6.2 One resident raised the increasing parking problems along Baldwins Hill and asked whether we could introduce residents parking. Practical solutions were discussed such as Woodcroft School’s 70 staff members organising a car share to reduce the vehicles parking along Baldwins Hill. Perhaps the residents need to meet with the school to help think of how we reduce the numbers. Ian advised that when we had the last residents parking consultation, residents voted not to go ahead. A discussion followed, and Chris Pond asked that we let him know which roads we would like to put forward for residents parking and he will present this again and ask for parking zones. It was added that there is a strong incentive for commuters to travel in and park in Loughton to join the central line as the fares are half the price than if it they travelled from Bishops Stortford etc. This does not help the situation in York Hill/Staples Road etc.

**Action:** The Committee to liaise with Chris Pond on the introduction of residents parking. The Committee to liaise with the local resident in finding a resolution to put to Woodcroft’s Head Teacher.

6.3 On litter picking, one resident suggested having a litter picking day and publicise in the local newspaper.

The AGM closed, and Chris Pond gave an extremely interesting talk about why there was a need for the Hills Amenity Society back in the 1970s and 80s (developments in Wallers Hoppet and Ashfields). Chris also highlighted the various properties lost and the initiatives implemented to help preserve the conservation areas and deter as much traffic coming through the Hills.