

## **Faversham Lakes Residents Association (RA)**

### *Annual General Meeting*

*Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2025 from 6pm to 7pm at The Guild Hall, Faversham, Kent*

#### **Faversham Lakes Residents Association Committee**

- Jacqui Chart – Chair
- Linda Thomas - Vice Chair
- Liam Waters – Treasurer

#### **Attended Guests**

- Timothy Chilvers – Development Director of Andersons
- 45 residents were in attendance

#### **Invited Guests unable to attend sent their apologies**

- Alex Eyre – Our Local Counsellor
- Richard Dowling – WKHA – Community Development Manager
- Sky Crook – WKHA Community Development Officer for Wider Kent
- Sean Richards – WKHA – Community Safety Manager
- Rebecca Curtis – WKHA – Neighbourhood Housing Officer

#### **AGENDA running order**

- Opening welcome and introduction of guests
- Aiming for a 7pm close
- The purpose of the Residents Association
- Feedback from the Chair and Vice Chair
- Resident Association (RA) activities throughout 2024
- Growth of the estate and how we will communicate and engage moving forward.
- Andersons' management and maintenance of the estate from 1st February 2025.
- Voting in the committee and the new suggested committee positions

#### **Purpose of the Residents Association**

A completely independent non-political group established to:

- Enhance Faversham Lakes including housing, environment, facilities, community spirit and services for all residents including housing association residents
- Represent and support the interests of the area's residents, address any issues affecting Faversham Lakes, and present the collective views of the community following active consultation with residents

#### **Chair**

- Linda and I are currently the only active committee members, working solely on a voluntary basis for the entire community. We have no hidden agenda and nothing to gain personally, professionally, or politically. We hope residents feel that we have always acted in the best interests of the entire community, and the feedback we have received has always been positive.

- When the Residents Association was formed in July 2023, we had a relatively small community of approximately 140-160 inhabited plots. The estate has grown significantly, particularly over the last 12 months, with approximately 280-300 plots now inhabited.
- Going forward, to meet community needs, we need to consider a more structured, shared, and manageable engagement and communication strategy.
- I apologise for the lack of meetings throughout the year, however in July this year my father was taken seriously ill and passed away at the end of October. This meant I had to prioritise, my personal and family commitments, whilst also working a very demanding full time job. However, due to the comments and challenges in the group chat, I felt compelled to disclose my private matters, which is something I would never expect anyone else to do.
- During the past six months, I have personally felt unappreciated, challenged, and at times undermined. I will allow Linda to share her own feelings separately.
- It has been alleged that Linda and I held secret meetings, specifically excluding WKHA tenants, and attempted to prevent the Christmas event from happening. In reality, the Christmas event was my idea. However, due to the short notice, the RA's lack of access to funds or public liability insurance, and the passing of my father, it was decided that WKHA would take the lead on the event.
- Linda and I are deeply upset by these false allegations. Anyone who is unhappy or concerned with how we have represented the community should have had the decency to speak with us directly, rather than talking behind our backs. We will not allow our integrity to be questioned. This type of negative behaviour will only harm the reputation and confidence in the Residents Association and divide the community.
- Throughout the year, we have met individually and held meetings with community partners such as Andersons, WKHA, First Port, and Local Counsellors, all for the benefit of the entire community.
- At the request of individual residents, we have also met with them to discuss their personal concerns and issues.
- Please rest assured that as the main point of contact, I have always tried to reply in a timely manner responding to residents' queries, either through direct messages or via the central email address.
- **The primary issues raised by residents include the management of the estate (First Port), parking, speeding, antisocial behaviour, lakes/poaching, drug abuse, and bin collections.** Together with our partners, we aim to address these concerns. I have provided Andersons with a list of these issues to address some of them today.
- I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to Linda for her unwavering support during this challenging period.

### **Vice Chair**

- Thank you Jacqui. Can I just say that the feelings Jacqui has spoken about, reflect my own feelings and concerns. For those of you who do not know me, I would like to take this opportunity to tell you something about why I joined Jacqui on the committee.
- I have lived in Faversham Lakes for nearly two years and I joined the committee as Vice Chair because, having been involved in the RA in my previous address, I know how important such an association can be.

- As the committee then only consisted of a Chair and Treasurer, I felt that the skill set and management experience gained when I was a Senior Teacher and Deputy Headteacher in schools in both inner and outer London, could be of some use.
- During my career in education, I worked alongside and supporting Headteachers and Governors dealing with strategic planning, budgets, HR, health and safety and child protection to name just some of the areas.
- My work also involved supporting parents and extended to the local community, as well as working with outside agencies and contract staff, including builders.
- Upon retirement I became a school governor and was elected chair of governors, a position I held for several years and relinquished when I moved house.
- I now volunteer at Davington School, working with children, helping with reading. I am also a volunteer at Faversham Museum.
- I enjoy being a resident of Faversham Lakes and whilst walking my dog, I especially enjoy meeting other Lakers from all parts of the estate and having a little chat. Indeed, I don't know where they live and it doesn't matter.
- I have nothing to profit from my work on the committee, other than the satisfaction of helping to create an inclusive community that is built upon treating everyone equally and that enables people to live their lives peacefully in an environment that supports one another. I have tried my best to do this.

#### **RA activities throughout 2024**

- The termination of First Port has been a significant undertaking, requested by residents who were dissatisfied with their services. We have attended numerous meetings and exchanged many emails with First Port, Andersons, and lawyers. The RA has successfully negotiated a fixed service charge with Anderson for the next three years to ensure financial stability for residents and support during the cost-of-living crisis. All residents pay a service charge, either directly or as part of their rent through WKHA, so it is crucial to keep costs down for everyone. (Andersons will provide more details during their section).
- The RA has established a good relationship with Andersons on behalf of residents, who fully support the RA.
- Andersons have approved the installation of a street light in Corning Close, although there have been delays due to planning issues. A location has been agreed upon with the residents in Corning Close.
- The ongoing work on the substation in Tonite Lane is finally complete, despite delays due to planning issues. Thank you to the local residents for your patience during these works.
- Andersons have generously donated £1,000 towards the Community Heart defibrillator fund.
- In collaboration with Kent Fisheries, Andersons have put up signs to deter fishing and poaching and consideration is being given to netting the stock pond to prevent poachers.
- Several residents reported issues with delivery vans driving through the restricted bollard area at the junction of Bethell Road, leading to Evangelist Drive. Andersons have now moved these bollards closer together to prevent this.
- Several broken fences have been funded and repaired directly by Andersons.
- Andersons have funded and installed a notice board in Bethell Road, which we will use more frequently going forward.

- Andersons have also funded and installed dog waste bins.
- The RA maintain regular contact and meetings with our local counsellor Alex Eyre and have attended the Save Ham Farm meetings."
- The recent street lights not working have been passed to Andersons to take forward
- Cordite road sign at the Evers Road end to be installed by Andersons.
- WE have developed relationships with key departments within WKHA to support their tenants. This includes
  - ✚ attending several collaboration meetings with WKHA, which resulted in the summer event near the scout hut and the recent Christmas event. Moving forward, we plan to organize more events to bring the wider community together.
  - ✚ WKHA has appointed Sky Crook as the Community Development Officer for Wider Kent
  - ✚ WKHA have installed CCTV cameras on their flats to provide better protection for their tenants.
  - ✚ Additionally, the RA and WKHA have designed a leaflet introducing the RA to their residents.
  - ✚ To address ongoing parking issues, WKHA has informed the RA that they have written to all their tenants about the parking restrictive covenants and will support the RA with any other notices or updates their tenants need to receive

### **Communication and Engagement Strategy**

- Given the growth of the estate, we need to explore alternative ways for the community and the RA to engage.
- Navigating the numerous group chats has become impossible. We require a secure, dedicated communication channel that can be shared equally among any future elected committee members.
- Consideration must be given to confidentiality, legislation, inclusivity, and accessibility to effectively manage the issues raised by the community.
- As you are all aware, there are numerous unmanaged open WhatsApp groups that anyone can join. These groups were initially created to bring the community together. However, over the past year, we have received feedback and concerns from residents, including
  - ✚ instances of cyberbullying, challenging personal views, personal attacks, and arguments.
  - ✚ Some residents have decided to leave these groups.
  - ✚ Please take into consideration it is easy for comments to be misconstrued or taken out of context when not spoken directly. People tend to be more confident and less guarded with online comments than they would be face-to-face.

### **Ideas and suggestions:**

- We need to consider more flexible meeting options, including both face-to-face and hybrid formats, ensuring they are accessible to actual residents and our invited community partners.
- It's important to take into account legislation, governance, GDPR, and other factors to scale up our engagement with all residents and the wider community.
- We should implement a periodic survey tool to gather residents' feedback, ideas, and comments on how things are going.
- For voting at the AGM, we could introduce a proxy vote system, requiring voters to agree to a declaration and provide specific information to meet voting criteria and prevent multiple votes.

- Additionally, we should consider opening a bank account to support community events, fundraising, and the potential need for public liability insurance to run our own events.

### **Solutions and potential costs:**

- Hybrid meeting solutions come with costs, so we need to consider how they will be funded and used, especially if all residents want to join online.
- A Zoom subscription costs about £140 a year. While you can join a meeting via a passcode, there's no guarantee it won't be forwarded to people outside the community.
- Once we agree on a solution, we may need to purchase a dedicated license and require people to register before joining. This will give us full control over attendees and any potential recordings we may want to share with residents.
- We may also need a dedicated laptop, which is relatively inexpensive at a few hundred pounds. However, we need to consider how it will be funded and maintained.
- Creating a FLRA website would cost around £200 a year to do it properly, including a domain name, hosting, and email account setup via Microsoft 365 for committee members management. We also need to consider if we need to pay for the design and management. Perhaps Anderson Estate Management Company could cover some of these costs and apportion them in the Service Charge, but this would need tight control and agreement.
- We should educate and guide residents on how to raise issues for the RA to address on their behalf.
- Better use of the Notice Board
- Distributing individual leaflets through all residents' doors will help ensure we reach the entire community. Again, we need to consider how these initiatives will be funded

### **Management and Maintenance of the Estate – Tim Chilvers from Anderson**

- The new email address for reporting estate management-related issues is [estatesmanagement@adgl.co.uk](mailto:estatesmanagement@adgl.co.uk)
- Andersons officially take over the management of the estate from 1st February 2025, they will write directly to all residents in the next couple of weeks with full details, including an invoice for the coming service charge period 1<sup>st</sup> February 2025 – 31<sup>st</sup> January 2026 and how to pay.
- Any service charge bills prior to 1<sup>st</sup> February 2025 will remain with and paid to First Port. Despite constant requests, First Port have still not provided Andersons with a full itemised breakdown of service charge bills for years ending 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023, 2024 & 2025. They have also asked for a breakdown of each plots statement of account, again this has not been forthcoming.
- Residents are strongly encouraged to raise service charge disputes directly with First Port for charges up to and including 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025. It is advisable to keep a full audit trail of communications.
- Andersons confirmed they will take forward the concerns provided to the RA to take forward.
- Andersons will organise a day to visit site to meet the committee to walk the estate to audit and list current and future items that need addressing.

### **Voting in the Committee** (Constitution/Terms of Reference to be updated)

- It is evident that we urgently need more people and roles on the committee to support our growing community.

- We propose the creation and appointment of two new ordinary committee roles, to create more capacity on the committee to support community needs.
- Rob Crayford, publicly expressed a desire to be an elected member of the committee. After reviewing your fliers and personal campaign, we propose creating a specific role for you, leveraging your extensive community experience. The aim of this role will be to foster a more inclusive community and bring people together by utilizing your valuable connections to improve and develop wider community relations. Rob put himself forward for the new role of **Community Liaison**.
- The second new ordinary committee role is **Country Park Development**. This role will be to work Andersons and their appointed partners on the future of the Country Park and Heritage Hub.
- The main elected committee positions include **Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer** elected at the AGM, these roles will require specific skills and represented in a nonpolitical capacity.

### **Voting in the two New Additional Ordinary Committee Positions:**

Positions: Community Liaison and Country Park Development

#### **Number of Votes:**

Objections	None
In Favor	45
Against	0
Abstained	0
Outcome	Both roles voted in

### **Ordinary Committee Position: Community Liaison (New)**

Names of candidates put forward: Rob Crayford was the only standing candidate

#### **Number of Votes:**

Objections	None
In Favor	44
Against	0
Abstained	0
Elected Member:	Rob Crayford was elected

### **Ordinary Committee Position: Country Park Development (New)**

Names of candidates put forward: Trevor Abram was the only standing candidate

#### **Number of Votes:**

Objections	None
In Favor	44
Against	0
Abstained	0
Elected Member:	Trevor Abram was elected

### **Main Committee Position: Treasurer**

Names of candidates put forward: Liam Waters the current Treasurer was the only standing candidate

#### **Number of Votes:**

Objections None

In Favor 44

Against 0

Abstained 0

Elected Member: Liam Waters was reelected

### **Main Committee Position: Secretary**

Names of candidates put forward: None

#### **Number of Votes:**

Objections None

In Favor N/A

Against N/A

Abstained N/A

Elected Member: Position Vacant

### **Main Committee Position: Vice Chair**

Names of candidates put forward: Linda Thomas the current Vice Chair was the only standing candidate

#### **Number of Votes:**

Objections None

In Favor 44

Against 0

Abstained 0

Elected Member: Linda Thomas was reelected

### **Main Committee Position: Chair**

Names of candidates put forward: Jacqui Chart the current Chair was the only standing candidate

#### **Number of Votes:**

Objections None

In Favor 44

Against 0

Abstained 0

Elected Member: Jacqui Chart was reelected

***If anyone would like to raise anything with the Residents Association, please contact us directly via [favershamlakes@outlook.com](mailto:favershamlakes@outlook.com)***