



ELLISFIELD VILLAGE ASSOCIATION

Chairman's Report AGM 2015

Welcome to everyone – firstly I would like to thank the whole EVA committee for all their hard work over the last year. We all play to our strengths and there has been plenty to do! Thanks to Tony for holding up the finances so efficiently as Treasurer and Hannah HL for her role as Secretary over the past year.

Hannah has recently let me know that she is to bow out of the post of Secretary and I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for all her hard work over the first formative years of EVA's life.

I am pleased to be able to announce that Alison Swanston has offered to step into the role as EVA Secretary and we are very grateful to her for standing in at such short notice. Elections later....

It has been a busy year. Since our last AGM, we have seen the positive effects of Village Action.

We continue to work closely with the Parish Council on a number of issues including Broadband and local planning issues, more of which to follow.

Firstly, I reported at our AGM last year that we had written a comprehensive response to the application for Veolia to extend their operations to include animal waste from Marwell Zoo. In February 2014 we wrote to Hampshire County Council to object to additional material coming into Veolia for two main reasons;

Firstly, their inability to manage their existing Leachate runoff, which was being sprayed onto fields over the winter and into woodland classified as a SINC (Site of Interest to Nature Conservation).

Our second reason for objecting was, an increasing problem of queuing HGVs blocking the junction with the A339 and causing a traffic hazard.

Great News; on March 31st the application was refused.

Why?

There was **no objection from** Highways, Basingstoke and Deane, The Environment Agency and Herriard PC so we have to assume that between us, EVA and the EPC had convincing arguments that swayed the committee.

So, we **are** having an effect, and thank goodness we did set down our objections to that application because it was followed in September 2014 by the AD Plant asking for a 140% increase in throughput of waste, leading to a massive increase in HGV movements. Trucks were to go up from 16 to 40 movements per day.

The problem behind this was the price that they receive for the food waste. It was £30-35 per tonne when they started but they fear it is heading towards £10 per tonne and may even go into the negative (they may need to pay for their food waste in future).

We believe that one of the reasons for this is that there is too much competition for food waste in Hampshire. In this area, there are four AD Plants within 12 miles of each other – Farliegh Wallop, Selbourne Brick works, Hartley Farm between Selbourne and Alton and Barfoot Energy in Herriard.

At times like this we have to debate what response to make. Forming a thoughtful response is time consuming and requires a lot of research. We very quickly came to the conclusion that although we felt it was unlikely that we would win; **we absolutely had to mount a campaign** against such a large increase in food waste with its attendant HGV traffic, increase in digestate and further impact on the surrounding wildlife.

What a campaign it was! EVA members and Ellisfield residents wrote to HCC in large numbers (with, crucially, copies to Basingstoke and Deane, which meant that Basingstoke **did** support us this time and as a Consultee, wrote to object). Thanks to our esteemed editor of the village website for helping to publicise this.

The original HGV numbers were dropped from 40 to 32, which triggered the Highways department to withdraw their objection, ultimately leading to the application being reluctantly accepted by the Regulatory committee. The vote was split 7/7 with the Chairman's casting vote in favour of the applicant. County Councillors – Anna McNair Scott and Mark Kemp Gee have been a great support and both spoke at the hearing, as did Pat Pegg from Herriard who has done a lot of work on the ecology side.

The fact that the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) has engendered an atmosphere of **fear** in local authorities was a large contributing factor to this decision. An appeal costs a lot of money (our money) and members are loath to risk triggering this if Highways are not objecting. The Inspector would inevitably allow the application.

So, there is work to be done;

1. Publicise the imbalance of AD Plants in Hampshire (I have already spoken to Seán Woodward who is in charge of the Waste, Minerals and Environment in Hampshire who is unimpressed and says they

cannot have a policy about geographical positions or quantities of AD Plants)

2. Next time we need to talk to Highways and produce evidence of road safety issues. Unfortunately Highways cannot declare a junction unsafe until it is proved to be so.
3. We need to record dates, times and images of any incidents of traffic safety or flouting of conditions that we witness. Could I appeal to anyone who does see problems associated with Barfoot or Veolia to report it to one of the EVA committee as we are now compiling a **database**. There is also a phone number at HCC to ring plus email addresses which will be circulated to all residents by the Parish Council clerk, Christina Veasey.

Veolia will be up for re-application of their Planning Permission in 2018 so we need to be vigilant if we are to persuade the Regulatory Committee that they are on an unsuitable site or that they must have a safer access and HGV movements should be restricted. At the moment they are able to have an unlimited number of HGV movements and last year **9,877 movements** were recorded with **90 movements** on their busiest day.

Add Barfoot's **11,440 HGV Movements per year**, we could be experiencing a very dangerous situation on that junction.

Our other projects have taken a bit of a back seat this year but we haven't given up on them –

They include;

- A cycle and walking track between Alton and Basingstoke using parts of the old railway track – a large project that we see as long term but nevertheless important, especially as the A339 becomes increasingly busy with traffic.
- A possible Art Exhibition in 2016 or 17
- A quick look at the feasibility of Tree replacement after the storms of 2013 has indicated that it may be shelved as it involves too many landowners and agencies. If anyone feels strongly about this, come and see me later as it would need someone with plenty of time to coordinate it.
- We continue to support other campaigns where relevant to Ellisfield such as Keep Hampshire Green's opposition to windfarms at Bullington Cross and Woodmancott

So – a busy year for all of us in the committee and I would like to thank everyone here for coming to support us today and everyone who wrote to support the campaign against the AD Plant's increased throughput. I hope you will keep up your memberships – and if anyone hasn't paid their subs, please see Tony afterwards. I would now like to hand over to Tony to give you his report.

Dee Haas,
Chairman