

HUGHENDEN VALLEY RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

‘PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE’

Chairman’s note for Special meeting of Executive Committee 2 May 2023

Since becoming co-chair in May 2022 I’ve expressed concern about the future of HVRA.

My concerns are driven by:

- The lack of potential succession of officers and Road Representatives, mainly due to the advancing age of active members.
- The fact that we are not engaging with the next generation. That can lead to being too tied to the past in our thinking and ambitions.
- In my view, from talking to residents, the next generation are a little unsure of what we are for and what we do.
- There is a perception that we react to residents individual issues but we are not pro-active in leading village affairs.

Underlying these concerns are:

- Some structural weaknesses in our organisation. They inhibit the progress we could make towards being the type of body we might wish to be in the future.
- Our committee structure is democratically deficient, only 4 are elected members. The remainder are self-selected (as Road Representatives).
- A feeling that younger residents do not wish to engage with our older group.
- Deficiencies in our methods of communication.

Some potential changes that could be considered:

- Increase the active membership of the committee by creating new posts for officers at the same time as removing the onus on all Road Representatives to attend monthly meetings.
- Changing the name to HUGHENDEN VALLEY VILLAGE ASSOCIATION - which means that we change the emphasis away from the individual to the village as a whole.
- Creating a new Forum for all Road Representatives - which means that attendance is optional and meetings held less frequently.
- Changing the name of the ‘Executive Committee’ to ‘Committee’ and redefining membership - which means that all officers and committee would be elected at the AGM by the membership.
- Modernising our communications.

Suggested next moves:

HVRA is so important in the community that its future should not be solely in the hands of its Executive Committee, the whole community needs to be engaged.

1. Establish sub-groups drawn from officers and Road Representatives and possibly other residents, to explore the issues in specific organisational areas and make recommendations.
2. Do something other than the above.
3. Do nothing.

A final thought:

That the HVRA has done a fine job over the last 50 years is not in question. Indeed in recent years it has increased in importance to the community as the Hughenden Parish Council has had its problems.

However, the world has changed; socially, in the world of work, the educational offer, the advent of social media and of course the pandemic. If there was no HVRA, there would still be a need for something like it; would it be set up in the same way, probably not.

Peter Spence
Chairman
Friday, 21 April 2023