



NEDRA AGM Minutes

15 April 2026, 7.00pm

Rickards Hall, Edenbridge

Status	Minutes prepared from AGM transcript
Chair	Sally Ann Vine
Purpose	Summary of key matters discussed under the published agenda
Note	These minutes capture main points, decisions, and actions rather than a verbatim record.

1. Chairman's Report

- The Chair welcomed attendees, confirmed the meeting was being recorded for minutes, and thanked volunteers, committee members, and residents for their active support over the past year.
- A major focus of the year was the Regulation 18 consultation, where 71% of respondents in the district rejected the proposed planning options.
- NEDRA raised serious concerns that the planning process risks diluting this democratic majority by filtering feedback through "material planning considerations" only and by wrongly reframing resident concerns over infrastructure capacity as conditional support for growth.
- The Chair firmly stated that the council's urgency to avoid government intervention must not be used as an excuse to push through a rushed and unsound plan.

2. Treasury Report

- The Treasurer, Clare Taylor, reported a total income of £4,280 for the year, which included £2,280 from members and a £2,000 grant from the Great Stone Bridge Trust.

- Total expenditure was £4,144, with the majority (65%) spent on promotional and advertising efforts surrounding Regulation 18, alongside costs for social media, public meetings, and insurance.
- A positive balance of £1,705 was carried forward, and the draft budget for 2026/2027 projects an expenditure of £4,235.
- The river water testing project is managed separately and has successfully secured £1,400 for 2026/2027 via a KCC member grant, Edenbridge Town Council, and the Edenbridge Angling Society. NEDRA highlighted the need for continued funding to introduce regular E. coli testing.
- NEDRA will continue with a simplified membership model consisting of a one-off joining fee followed by voluntary donations, as managing an annual subscription system exceeds volunteer capacity.

3. Election of Officers

- The minutes of the previous AGM were accepted as a correct record.
- The nominated committee members Sally-Ann Vine (Chair), Ian Jones (Vice Chair), Clare Taylor (Treasurer), Debbie Buckley (Secretary), alongside Daisy Diana and Penny Brook (Committee Members), were unanimously elected with no objections.

4. Regulation 19 Local Plan

- Debbie Buckley provided an update on the Regulation 19 consultation, the final step before the plan reaches the planning inspector.
- NEDRA will argue the plan fails the four tests of soundness: Positively Prepared, Justified, Effective, and Consistent with National Policy.
- Key objections include the disproportionate 63% population growth forced on Edenbridge, a narrow "showstopper" list that inappropriately brushes aside massive constraints like non fluvial flood risk, the lack of cumulative impact appraisals on the roads in Edenbridge and the uncoded "wish list" for infrastructure.
- A significant concern is that Edenbridge's wastewater treatment works is under a national enforcement investigation and in serious disrepair, frequently discharging untreated sewage into the River Eden. NEDRA is demanding that "Grampian conditions" be applied to block building or occupation until verified infrastructure upgrades are fully completed.

5. Water Testing Update

- Peter Brook reported on the citizen-science water testing programme jointly run by NEDRA and FREE (Friends of the River Eden Ecosystem), which monitors 22 sites across the catchment.
- The data highlights widespread nutrient pollution (phosphate and nitrate) and sewage contamination (ammonia and E. coli) originating from both agricultural runoff and inadequate wastewater treatment works.
- E. coli levels spiked to nearly five times the safe bathing limit following July rains.
- Future goals for the programme include expanding surveys and securing more funding to establish an alert system for the public when the river is unsafe.

6. SES Water Presentation

- Dr. Ria Woodfield, Catchment Manager at SES Water, explained that 15% of their supply comes from the River Eden, treated at the Bough Beech works.
- Treatment involves multiple steps including coagulants, rapid gravity sand filters, granular activated carbon (to remove pesticides), UV treatment, and chlorine.
- The main surface water challenges in the Eden catchment are pesticides and phosphates, while in some groundwater there are threats from nitrates, solvents, and PFAS (forever chemicals).
- Dr. Woodfield emphasised tackling issues at the source and requested residents ensure septic tanks are functioning, carefully dispose of old garden chemicals like metaldehyde (slug pellets), and report sewage spills.

7. Member Feedback

- During open discussion, members raised questions regarding the disposal of household solvents, inconsistencies in billing practices between SES Water and Southern Water, and agricultural nitrate vulnerable zones.
- A member shared that pollution events can bypass water companies and be formally reported to the local council as a statutory nuisance. Edenbridge Town Council said they could signpost if people came to them with this issue.
- Members asked if SES Water could realistically supply 2,800 new homes, with speakers directing residents to the Water Resource Management Plan for strategic capacity details.
- Deep concerns were raised regarding the future of the local area, including confirmation that the old War Memorial Hospital site had recently been sold, and

fears over the severe traffic impact of thousands of additional cars funnelling onto local roads like Swan Lane.

8. National Day of Action and Close

- The meeting featured "Breaking News" regarding a protest installation of 28 scarecrows in Swan Lane, with each scarecrow representing 100 proposed homes on the green belt.
- Attendees were urged to support the National Day of Action on Saturday, 18 April 2026 at Bridges Cafe and the Stone Bridge.
- Residents were encouraged to attend, take photos for social media, and sign letters directed to the government demanding protection for the countryside and rivers.
- The Chair closed the meeting by reiterating the call for volunteers and thanking members for their ongoing financial donations.

[YouTube Video with transcript can be found here on YouTube](#)