

**Whinfield Residents Association**  
(incorporating the Friends of Beech Wood)  
website: [www.whinfieldresidents.co.uk](http://www.whinfieldresidents.co.uk)

**Minutes of the meeting of 21/09/2016 at Oban Court**

**Attendees:** Anne Rudkin, Judith Murray, Alan Hutchinson, Cllr. Helen Crumbie, Rosemary Adams, James Eddy, Barbara Reynolds, David Reynolds, John Atkinson, Chris Upton, Roger Fitzpatrick-Odahamier, Linda Davidson.

**Apologies:** Cllr. Tom Nutt, Barrie Newton, Pat Newton, David Milner, Carol Milner, Mike Haw, Graham Foster, Jean Foster.

**Approval of Minutes:** It was agreed to amend the minutes to correct the spelling of Roger Fitzpatrick-Odahamier's name. Roger also proposed, and Judith Murray seconded, that the following words be inserted into the section of the minutes about No 10 Bus Route Survey between "...was not adequate." and "A useful detailed discussion....": "A few concerns were raised by an attendee in relation to the proposed changes and ". This was agreed and the amended minutes were then signed as a correct record of the meeting.

**Matters arising from the Minutes**

**No 10 Bus Route Survey:** As anticipated, following completion of the survey, Arriva is not prepared to make a change to the existing bus route. This was based on the result of the survey, which was: 518 people were surveyed, 444 said it would make no difference to them, 70 were in favour and 1 person was against. Cllr. Helen Crumbie suggested that the matter may well come up again as a Ward issue in the future.

**Visit to Houghton Residents Association:** The planned visit for 6<sup>th</sup> October has been deferred until later when key WRA members will be able to attend.

**Asda:** Judith Murray had written to Asda head office and had received a reply which confirmed that only bucket and food bank collections would be allowed as fund-raising events in future, but no table-top sales. Asda had refunded the £50 loss which WRA had incurred. The meeting generally felt that Asda's position is very unsatisfactory and the Committee will consider the issue further.

**Chair's Report**

David Milner had sent in a written report summarising some things that have been going on since the last meeting in July, some of which are addressed in more detail during this meeting:

- Another litter pick was carried out on the 31<sup>st</sup> July.
- He had a meeting with Jon Malcolm from North Road police regarding the future of our PACT meetings.
- A letter has been written to DBC expressing concerns about any future housing development in our area re. the Local Plan, in particular Muscar House Farm.
- The next WRA meeting in November will be our AGM where we will be electing our officers and committee members for the following year. Anyone wishing to apply for any of the positions should contact Anne, our secretary, for a nomination form in advance. No additional business will be included in the meeting but a December General Meeting may be arranged instead. A raffle and refreshments will be organised at the end of the meeting as this seemed to go down so well last year. More committee members are needed.

**Treasurer's Report**

Judith Murray gave a brief report. Income was the £50 Asda cheque and £13 had been spent on stationery. Balance at the bank stands at £1189.51.

**Beech Wood**

Cllr. Helen Crumbie had met on site with DBC officers and residents to discuss the wild flower situation. 2 residents had complained prior to the flowering of the meadow. While the flowers look good now, concern was expressed about leaving them to die. Helen explained that the council wild flower fund was no more and that the local community may need to be more involved in future. Members voiced concern about the consequences of a lack of maintenance of the flowers, agreeing that management of the flowers is essential if they are not to degenerate into a monoculture like other plantings, such as on Houghton Road. (continued....)

Helen will seek clarification from DBC on their intentions. Cllr Crumbie was under the impression that WRA had been consulted but this was not the case.

### **Darlington Local Plan**

Judith Murray and Jean Foster had attended the Local Plan meeting at the Dolphin Centre on behalf of the WRA, and Roger Fitzpatrick-Odahamier had attended in his own right as a resident. The day had turned out to be more of a workshop on suggestions about areas where development could take place and acrimonious discussions had occurred. The DBC interim planning position does include Muscar House Farm as an area for development. Judith reported that she had been told by a DBC officer that previous submissions made to the "Making & Growing Places" consultation are to be disregarded re. the Local Plan, and residents will need to make their submissions again when the Local Plan is presented. Disappointment was expressed that we had had no feedback from our councillors. Conversely, Cllr. Helen Crumbie had been assured that objections would be carried over and taken into account and Cllr Chris McEwan is chairing a cross-party forum on the issues. Alan Hutchinson had made a personal objection to the Scoping Consultation, just in case. It was agreed by the meeting that Judith Murray write to DBC to seek definitive clarification on the issues of why previous objectors have not all been contacted and whether their earlier objections would stand.

### **Website**

Alan Hutchinson had little to report other than the posting of routine information and regular maintenance. New ideas on what to publish on the website are needed. John Atkinson asked about online safety classification of websites and Google rankings and it was explained that is largely beyond our control.

### **PACT Meeting**

David Milner had sent in a written report:

- At some point in the future PACT meetings are to be done away with in the Town. The exception will be four of the well attended meetings. An officer from the North Road police station is prepared to come and talk to us in the future about this. A suggestion has been made for PACT officers to attend the councillors' ward surgery at the beginning of each month at Asda.
- Current issues are some burglaries being carried out in the area, including garages in Sparrowhall Drive, speeding in Whinbush Way, and fly-tipping. A person has been sleeping rough in Beech Wood and there has been an increase in the reported use of off-road motorbikes and quad bikes.

### **Litter**

Judith Murray thanked participants in the last litter pick, covering Beech Wood, Barmpton Lane and Whinbush Way. The next one will be on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2016, meeting at Asda Foyer at 10am. At the November AGM it is hoped to present a framed certificate from the former Mayor to a particular regular litter volunteer.

### **Any other business**

John Atkinson reported on several anti-social and other problems:

- After another incident in Springfield Park, concern was expressed whether the CCTV camera is working and the video is available. Cllr Helen Crumbie will investigate. Horseriders have also been seen in the Park.
- Public footpath signs, such as on Sparrowhall Drive, have been vandalised and not replaced and a black car has been seen parked on the grass play area nearby.
- The barrier at the junction of Whinbush Way and Whinfield Road has been smashed and not repaired, the suggestion being that such reports to DBC only occur if there are injuries. A bollard at the top of Barmpton Lane is also frequently damaged.
- Parking partly on the paths can be a nuisance, especially in Barmpton Lane where increased traffic due to future housing development would create serious problems.

**Date of next meeting:** Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November (AGM) 2016 at 7pm in Oban Court

The meeting closed at 8.15pm.