

Minutes of the meeting of 14/12/2016 at Oban Court

Attendees: Anne Rudkin, David Milner, Judith Murray, Alan Hutchinson, Graham Foster, Roger Fitzpatrick-Odahamier, Allannah Robinson, Carol Milner, Peter Plant, Tom Watson, Chris Bean, Dave Watson, Peter Voss, James Eddy, Pat Newton, Rosemary Adams, John Atkinson, Brian Roberts.

Apologies: Cllr. Tom Nutt, Cllr. Helen Crumbie, Barrie Newton

Minutes of the last meeting

It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting of 21/09/2016 be signed by the Chair as a correct record, proposed by James Eddy and seconded by Allannah Robinson.

Matters arising from the Minutes

Asda: David Milner reported that Asda are not allowing independent fundraising, except by registered charities. Following the problems caused re. our recent fundraising we were given £50 as a goodwill gesture. In the new year Cllrs Tom Nutt and Helen Crumbie plan to meet with Asda and go through their community policy. David Milner also pointed out that Asda are supposed to be community orientated but in this instance it was not the case and that we should pursue this.

Springfield Park: David Milner explained that feedback from Cllr Helen Crumbie about the anti-social behaviour incident was awaited, and he would contact her. John Atkinson reported that the pole of the vandalised Public Footpath sign had been left in Springfield Park and asked that if this had been caught on CCTV would it have been reported. David Milner will pursue this at the same time.

Barrier at Whinbush Way/Whinfield Road junction: David Milner reported that this had been replaced.

Parking on footpaths: It was generally agreed that this is a widespread problem which the police seem unable to do anything about. John Atkinson suggested that if the Muscar House Farm development goes ahead it would make it more difficult for transport if people parked on the roads in Barmpton Lane and it would change the dynamics, even though the council have said it is acceptable for traffic flows. David Milner will contact Cllrs Crumbie and Nutt re. the traffic in Barmpton Lane.

Visit to Houghton Residents Association: Alan Hutchinson will try to arrange a suitable time for WRA representatives to visit a HRA meeting in the New Year to discuss matters of mutual interest..

Matter arising from AGM Minutes

- It was noted that members being nominated for co-option to the Committee must be present at the meeting when this happens.
- Nomination forms for the elections at the AGM will be sent out with the minutes and agenda next year and will be made available on the website.
- The Chair asked that the Beech Wood Sub-committee nominate at least one member to come onto the WRA Committee, canvassing would take place in the locality and on the website, and Tom Watson agreed to consult The Friends of Beech Wood and report back to the next meeting.
- A Fundraising Officer is still needed and there are currently 10 vacancies for Committee Members.

Chair's report

David Milner reported that at the end of our AGM a Mayor's community award was presented to David Currie as token of our appreciation for singled-handedly trying to keep Whinfield free from litter. In response, David Currie had sent his thanks for the award, said that he felt honoured, and with his permission Alan Hutchinson had published an article about this on our website and had sent a press release to the Northern Echo. David Milner had contacted the Darlington magazine which will run the story in the January edition and also mention about our meetings in the March edition.

Treasurer's Report

Judith Murray reported income of £30 from the AGM raffle and that there was £1190.80 in the bank.

Beech Wood

Judith Murray outlined ideas about how the flowers in Beech Wood could be maintained since DBC are unwilling to do so due to lack of resources. She had contacted Pippa Smalling about self maintenance and Friends of the Earth regarding free seeds through their 'Bee World' projects. Friends of the Earth were willing to help with this and Judith suggested the local school might also become involved. Graham Foster believed that the latest Ward Newsletter is to canvas views. Much positive discussion ensued. Peter Plant agreed that he thought Friends of the Earth would be able to provide seeds and as Vice-chair of the Banks Renewables steering group in connection with the wind farm he had managed to have Whinfield and the Skerne included in the area within which groups could apply for grants for environmental projects. There will be £30,000 per year available in total and it may be possible for WRA to apply for a grant to improve Beech Wood. The meeting agreed that a separate meeting needs to be held in the new year with this as the sole item on the agenda.

Darlington Local Plan

Judith Murray explained Stage 1 of The Local Plan, the Issues & Scoping Consultation, the Call For Sites and the proposed Strategic Framework report was presented to DBC Cabinet on 8/11/2016. The basic results of this report suggest that the North, North-East, North-West and South West are ideal areas for large scale developments. Although no specific sites were named, sites at Beaumont Hill, North of Great Burdon, Whinfield and Skerningham have been identified as being available for significant development taking the form of a large urban extension. The range of available sites in these locations means dwellings can be delivered early in the plan. The Council has also confirmed that any objections or comments made in the original Making & Growing Places Plan Consultation in 2014 will not be taken into account and any objections/comments regarding sites identified in the Local Plan will need to be raised again. Those who took part in the original consultation will not be automatically notified of the Local Plan so people will need to be made aware of this consultation. The final consultation for the Local Plan takes place in 2017 and WRA will keep members informed of any progress. It was asked if our local councillors were aware of this and it is believed that they are.

Website

Alan Hutchinson explained what had been updated on the website recently and outlined the issues with the WRA Outlook email account, which had now been deactivated. There was still a problem re. the info@whinfieldresidents.co.uk account where some members do not always receive emails sent to them, without any error messages alerting sender or receiver. This is believed to be a Virginmedia/ntlworld spam filter issue, which may prove difficult to solve. The recent minutes and agendas were successfully emailed out in the WRA's name using a workaround for now. The main address still receives emails without difficulty, and Whinfield School had contacted WRA via this about using Beech Wood as an educational resource with their children and a reply had been sent very much encouraging this initiative.

PACT Meetings

David Milner had attended a meeting at The Education Village and was informed by PCSO Gemma Smith that PACT would soon be officially wound up, but that she would like to try to keep it going locally from January by holding meetings on the last Wednesday in the month at Rockwell House.

Litter

Judith Murray thanked all who had taken part in litter picks and presented Carol Milner with a bouquet of flowers for her sterling efforts in attending every one. Residents have been picking up a spate of mini wine bottles left in north Barmpton Lane and Alan Hutchinson agreed to make a report to our PCSOs.

Any other business

Parking on the grass verge next to Oban Court: This is unacceptable as it is causing damage and David Milner will send photos to Ward Councillors to highlight the problem.

Telephone box, Drummond Close: This is earmarked for removal but the objection period is long past and it has been vandalised again. Alan Hutchinson will seek clarification from the Ward Councillors.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 18th January 2017 at 7pm at Oban Court.

Members were wished a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and the meeting closed at 8.20pm.