

## **Whinfield Residents Association**

(inc. The Friends of Beech Wood)

[www.whinfieldresidents.co.uk](http://www.whinfieldresidents.co.uk)

### **Minutes of the meeting of 17/1/2018 at Oban Court**

**Attendees:** David Milner (Chair), Alan Hutchinson (Secretary), John Thompson, Andy Keir, Ralph Bradley, Cllr Helen Crumbie (part), Linda Davison, James Eddy, Barbara Reynolds, David Reynolds, Roger Fitzpatrick-Odahamier, Ruby Keir, Allanah Robinson, Peter Voss, Peter McIntyre, Dix Binks, Val Binks.

**Apologies:** Frederick Greenhow, Alan Macnab, Simon Bainbridge, Judith Murray, Harvey Harris, Rosemary Adams, Anne Rudkin, Graham Foster, Jean Foster, Joan Thompson, Carol Milner, Cllr Tom Nutt, Pat Newton, Barrie Newton.

It was agreed that because of an injury to the Secretary's hand John Thompson would take the minutes and a voice recording of proceedings to support this could be made.

**Approval of the Minutes:** It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting of 13/12/2017 be signed by the Chair as a correct record, proposed by James Eddy and seconded by David Reynolds.

#### **Matters arising from the Minutes**

**Dumped bottles in Barmpton Lane:** The Secretary had written to our PCSOs, who are monitoring the situation, and he had emailed members for information about the perpetrators. The problem appears have reduced subsequently, but not ceased. We shall continue to maintain a watching brief. Ward councillors are also liaising with the PCSOs.

#### **Chair's report**

David Milner explained that he had attended the ward surgery and talked to our councillors. Cllr Tom Nutt is not well, both have a busy schedule but they are happy to be contacted about issues.

Cllr Helen Crumbie gave a comprehensive report of matters being dealt with:

- Inspection made of Beech Wood and work has been done by the street champions.
- The goalposts had been reinstated in Springfield Park and it is hoped to source a seat.
- Street champions have been picking up litter and a ward litter pick event will be organised.
- An update about the problem of Asda trolleys has been sent to Jenny Chapman MP.
- The Order for yellow lines at Oban Court is being advertised, the work will be done in March.
- Parking at Whinfield School has been monitored.
- Helpers are needed for a dog fouling survey exercise to be carried out.
- Volunteers needed for another Speedwatch; John Thompson mentioned using Barmpton Lane.
- There is no change re. Muscar House Farm and Elm Tree Farm.
- Plans for both routes for the Northern Bypass have been submitted, but Route A is preferred.

Roger Fitzpatrick-Odahamier asked Cllr Crumbie about the link between the Northern Link Road and the Skerningham Garden Village, bearing in mind that the TVCA is looking to part fund the Northern Link Road from schemes dedicated to housing developments (The Housing Infrastructure Fund), as the original pot of money from the Department for Transport (The Large Local Major Scheme Fund) is not large enough to accommodate the full cost of this scheme. Cllr Crumbie replied that she did not know about this. The Chair explained that Cllr Chris McEwan has been invited to the next meeting to answer our questions. Roger expressed disappointment that we have not had answers to questions put to him from almost a year ago.

## **Secretary's report**

Alan Hutchinson reported that:

- We currently have 93 members.
- WRA information on the DBC website has been updated.
- Website articles have been produced about improvements to facilities in Springfield Park and Route A being chosen by TVCA as their preferred option, and information received via John Thompson re. a Volunteers Fair at the Dolphin Centre on Feb 1<sup>st</sup> has been put on the website.
- Email sent to ward councillors about inclusion of WRA information in the ward newsletter. Reply indicates they will do this when space allows.
- Email sent to ward councillors about damage to grassy areas by DBC vehicles cutting hedges. Reply indicates that the damaged grass will be repaired.
- Email sent to DBC to seek assurance that they will consult, inform and meet with WRA about any important matters which might affect the ward before any decision is made, such as developments impinging on Springfield Park. Reply confirms that we are on the consultee list but suggests that no meetings between DBC and other groups have taken place. Evidence to the contrary has been sent and a further reply is awaited.

Ralph Bradley queried whether we should consider presenting a united front with Barmpton & Skerningham Action Group but the Chair explained about divided opinion among WRA members re. the need for a bypass and that we are not an action group. Roger Fitzpatrick-Odahamier worried that WRA had not taken a position on Route A, bearing in mind the Northern Echo poll showing 66% against both routes. The Secretary queried whether B&SAG and WRA had the same objectives re. the Local Plan & Bypass. WRA will continue to act as an information hub.

## **Treasurer's Report**

Judith Murray had sent a written report on a quiet month financially.

- The raffle at the December meeting generated £23.00, thanks to everyone who took part.
- Bank and cash balances currently stand at £1,308.00.

## **Beech Wood**

David Milner reported that there was little change.

- John Thompson had supplied information about DOVES, and WRA affiliating to obtain their public liability insurance, but there were queries about whether we would have to adopt their constitution, which John will pursue. The next meeting of DOVES is 24<sup>th</sup> January in South Park.
- Judith Murray had spoken to Pippa Smaling about the wildflower seeds.
- A co-ordinator for the Beech Wood sub-committee was still needed.

## **Springfield Park**

- David Milner explained that we are not aware what is happening about the vandalised hedge.
- Andy Keir reported that the requested air quality data had not been forthcoming from DBC.
- Alan Macnab is pursuing DBC about a lack of response to his application for an Asset of Community Value.

## **Litter**

Judith Murray had sent a written report that she had drafted a letter to send to Asda Head Office re. our concerns about trolley dumping in the area, along with photos as evidence. Hopefully a report back with their response will take place at the next meeting.

## **Darlington Local Plan**

Judith Murray had sent a written update on recent developments:

- Housing targets were approved by DBC Cabinet members in January 2018.
- Approved target is 492 dwellings per annum or 9,840 dwellings over a 20yr period (2016-2036)
- Recent figures published by Central Government suggest a housing need for Darlington of 177 dwellings per annum or 3,540 dwellings over a 20yr period.
- DBC's figures are 178% higher than that suggested by Central Government.
- Central Government have said that housing need must be clear, transparent and justified - the report to evidence DBC's need was not.

Discussion ensued and David Milner explained that Cllr Chris McEwan can be challenged about these figures at the next meeting. Roger Fitzpatrick-Odahamier stated that DBC always said that it was government forcing housebuilding but these figures contradict that and are unsustainable. David Milner said that CPRE are also in conflict with DBC on housing figures. Andy Keir suggested compiling questions in advance for Cllr McEwan, and this was agreed. David Milner explained that a public consultation will follow definite proposals and Ralph Bradley pointed out that Skerningham Garden Village is not actually in the Local Plan yet.

## **Northern Bypass**

Judith Murray had sent a written update on recent developments:

- TVCA have chosen Route A as their preferred route to take forward and investigate further.
- TVCA are applying to the Department of Transport for £4m to proceed further and develop a business case.
- Currently TVCA do not have any funding secured to build the road - they need to apply to other funding sources for this as the original source of funding is not big enough to build the road
- They are looking at funding streams such as the Housing Infrastructure Fund which is linked to housing development.
- It is becoming clearer that the funding to build the road is reliant on building houses which is why the Skerningham Garden Development is so important to having the road built. There is clearly a definite link between housing development and the road being built.

Roger Fitzpatrick-Odahamier questioned the fact that we were initially advised by the council at our Special Meeting last year that a decision on the bid for the bypass would be made by The Department of Transport in mid 2018. It appears now that this is not the case and TVCA are now requesting additional funding for further evaluation studies. Ralph Bradley pointed out that a possible alternative northern link route already existed via Great Stainton.

**Date of next meeting:** Wednesday 21st March 2018, at 7pm in Oban Court.

**Any other business:** None.

The meeting closed at 8.09 pm