

Whinfield Residents Association
(incorporating the Friends of Beech Wood)

(website: www.whinfieldresidents.co.uk)

Minutes of the meeting of 18.05.2016 at Oban Court

Attendees: David Milner, Judith Murray, Graham Foster, Alan Hutchinson, Jean Foster, Carol Milner, Pat Newton, Barrie Newton, Roger Fitzpatrick-Odahamier, Peter Voss, Allanah Robinson, L Davison, Suzanne Wood. Also present for the first part of the meeting re. Springfield Park, which was brought forward in the agenda, was Anna Willey, Anti-social Behaviour Manager for People Services at Darlington Borough Council.

Apologies: Anne Rudkin, Cllr. Tom Nutt, Cllr. Helen Crumbie, James Eddy, Tom Watson, John Atkinson.

Approval of Minutes: Carol Milner proposed and Pat Newton seconded that the minutes of the meeting of 16/3/2016 be signed as a correct record, and this was agreed.

In the Secretary's absence, Alan Hutchinson volunteered to record the minutes of this current meeting.

Springfield Park/Anti-social Behaviour

- David Milner gave details of the meeting he and John Atkinson had had with Inspector Caroline Dawson and several others. There seemed to be a lack of knowledge on behalf of the police as to what had transpired in the Park. The camera team was instructed to check the old CCTV and Inspector Dawson would ask DBC what the various clean-ups had cost. Subsequently, painting and refurbishment of the play equipment had been carried out. Recently, travellers with horses and trotting frames had been a problem.
- Anna Willey explained that she wants to be kept informed about incidents and that she obtains regular updates from Street Scene re. damage and anti-social behaviour. There have been fewer incidents recently. She outlined "Operation Staysafe" which was targeted at school leavers and vulnerable young people, particularly re. drugs and alcohol. Officers will be involved in an operation soon to coincide with year 11 pupils leaving school. Parents will be contacted if necessary to take youngsters home. CCTV will monitor offences and residents should always report issues to police on 101 even if the attendance of an officer is not required. DBC Highways Dept. deals with problems associated with travellers.
- During general discussion it was pointed out that Beech Wood can also be a problem area and that PACT meetings are tailing off. Anna explained that the ASB Team is under review and may involve staff cuts.

Matters arising from the Minutes

- **Trolley Competition:** David Milner reported that the prizes had been awarded and that the 4 best posters were being displayed on the Asda Community noticeboard. The view was expressed that Asda could do more to make the posters more prominent, and there appeared to be no reduction in the number of trolleys being taken away. It was agreed that Judith Murray write to Asda with our concerns.
- **No 10 Bus Route:** Alan Hutchinson reported that he had drafted a letter to Arriva, which went out in the WRA Secretary's name, re. a 10a/10b alternating bus service and an eventual negative, response had been received. Refusal was on the grounds of not being a viable commercial proposition, but many of our points had been ignored. After discussion of the merits of the plan it was agreed to defer a decision on how or whether to proceed until after Alan Hutchinson had consulted Cllr. Helen Crumbie.
- **Whinbush Way Traffic Lights:** Since there has been no improvement, it was agreed that David Milner again contact Cllr. Scott about what might be done to ease the congestion.

Chair's report

David Milner reminded members of several items which have cropped up since the last meeting:

- The anti-social behaviour meeting had been attended, along with John Atkinson.
- Two successful litter picks had taken place.
- The Committee had looked at the merits of obtaining third party liability insurance.
- A Speed Watch had taken place but no members turned up. After discussion of how to better promote such activities, it was agreed that David Milner contact Cllr. Helen Crumbie on the best way forward.
- A Table Top Sale is happening on Saturday 21st May in Asda foyer.

Treasurer's Report

Judith Murray reported on fairly static finances:

- Third-party liability insurance had been obtained to cover the WRA and its members for all events.
- A tombola is to be held at the Table Top Sale because Asda would not allow a raffle to take place.
- Monies in the bank stand at £1027.51.

Beech Wood

Graham Foster reported that the offending tree had been felled, but not removed, and that it transpires that it might not have been necessary to totally take it down. He also explained that WRA have taken a step back from the planting of wild flowers since DBC have failed to follow our advice and have started planting in unsuitable places. It was agreed that David Milner express our disappointment to Cllr. Helen Crumbie.

Residential Developments

Muscar House Farm: Judith Murray explained that DBC's "Making & Growing Places" plan has been scrapped and that a new "Local Plan" was being developed instead, increasing proposed housing from 5000 to 9000. Consultation will take place for 6 weeks in the summer, but previous objections will not be carried forward and residents are advised to submit them again and register with DBC to be kept informed. It was agreed that Judith Murray write to DBC to enquire if WRA is still a statutory consultee and whether residents are going to be consulted properly.

Darlington Golf Course: It is not clear whether this comes under the new "Local Plan" and no new information has come to light.

Website

Alan Hutchinson reported as follows:

- His personal hosting problems had been easily resolved by GoDaddy who had added his new domain name "www.alanbhutchinson.co.uk" to the WRA account and he had paid the modest necessary difference in price for 3 years of service. It was agreed that the WRA is happy to endorse this arrangement.
- The "News & Events" section of the website had been brought up to date, including news about Speed Watch and the Table Top Sale, plus articles about dog microchipping, theft from a resident's car and a report with photos about the Big Spring Clean. Items had also been added to the "Gallery" section. Longer sections can now be scrolled to reach information quicker, and members commented that this is a great improvement. Development of the site is ongoing and appropriate material from members for publication is very welcome. Advertising of the website in a variety of ways is vital to raise the WRA profile.
- Problems with the new "info@whinfieldresidents.co.uk" email address still not sending to Virginmedia and ntlworld email addresses are being investigated, but all messages can be received without difficulty.

PACT Meeting

David Milner reported that only 2 people attended the March PACT meeting and that the April one was abandoned when the PCSO arrived 35 mins late. Alan Hutchinson had written to Inspector Caroline Dawson about the shortcomings of the PACT system and a very long defensive reply had been received. It was agreed that David Milner write to the Police & Crime Commissioner, Ron Hogg, to ask about the future of PACT.

Litter

Judith Murray reported that the recent litter pick had been a great success, with 12 bags collected, and it is planned to make these a regular event, the next being in June. She had obtained 20 full sets of litter-picking equipment from Pippa at DBC for future WRA use. During discussion, it was suggested that through the website we should try to deter people from dumping garden waste on Springfield Park and in Beech Wood.

Any other business: None.

Date of next meeting:

7.00pm, Wednesday 20th July 2016 at Oban Court.

The meeting closed at 8.25 pm.