

Whinfield Residents Association

(inc. The Friends of Beech Wood)

www.whinfieldresidents.co.uk

Minutes of the meeting of 13/12/2017 at Oban Court

Attendees: David Milner (Chair), Alan Hutchinson (Secretary), Judith Murray (Treasurer), Simon Bainbridge, Ralph Bradley, Linda Davison, Roger Fitzpatrick-Odahamier, Andy Keir, Ruby Keir, Tim Ellis (+2), James Eddy, Alan Macnab, Carol Milner, Pat Newton, Joan Thompson, John Thompson, Allannah Robinson

Apologies: Anne Rudkin, Rosemary Adams, Tyler Nixon, Peter Voss, Graham Foster, Jean Foster, Barrie Newton, John Atkinson, Cllr Tom Nutt, Cllr Helen Crumbie

It was agreed that because of an injury to the Secretary's hand Judith Murray 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 21/09/2017 be signed by the Chair as a correct record, proposed by James Eddy and seconded by Andy Keir.

Matters arising from the Minutes

PACT meetings: Alan Hutchinson had written to our 2 PCSOs. PACT meetings continue at Rockwell House at 6pm on the last Wednesday of the month, but are not on the police website. Our PCSOs do not seem interested in attending WRA meetings. It was agreed that PACT meetings are not needed on the WRA agenda and members could bring any items back from PACT meetings to WRA meetings.

Matters arising from the AGM

The Secretary had notified all members about the new WRA officers and committee and reminded the meeting that there are still vacancies for 6 Committee members and a Fundraising Officer.

Chair's report

David Milner explained that:

- Alan Hutchinson is developing the role of Secretary and it is likely that more input at meetings will come via him.
- There are 87 members we communicate with and we have an encouraging attendance at meetings.
- The challenge for 2018 is to persuade even more to become involved, especially the younger population, because we need to hear people's ideas and concerns.

Secretary's report

Alan Hutchinson reported that:

- The meeting was advertised on Facebook and we may produce our own page when time allows.
- The website had been updated re. contacts and meetings, the WRA files have been sorted and old minutes have been archived. The Local Plan and Northern Bypass webpages have been updated.
- Lines of communication have been established between committee members who had set the dates of meetings for the coming year, confirmed by Oban Court, and following the usual pattern of 3rd Wednesday in the odd months. The AGM will be in December in 2018. Oban Court had requested that we do not park in their car park.
- We currently have 90 members.
- Members mentioned that wine and cider bottles are still being dumped every day in Barmpton Lane and the Secretary will again take this up with our PCSOs and ask members for information.
- A resident had been in touch about 'back alleys' in Kilmarnock and Glamis Roads where DBC are consulting residents about absorbing them into their gardens. Alan had inspected the Kilmarnock Road one and it was agreed that we keep a watching brief.

Treasurer's Report

Judith Murray reported that:

- The raffle at the AGM generated £26 and she thanked everyone who took part.
- We will be looking at our fundraising activities for 2018 and aim to continue with the car boot sales, coffee mornings and any other sources of income which may transpire.
- We will also be looking at potential projects that we can develop and ideas would be welcomed for this from members.
- Bank and cash balances stand at £1285.00.

Beech Wood

- David Milner explained that a Co-ordinator of the Beech Wood Sub-committee is still needed.
- The Friends of Beech Wood no longer seem to be active and it would be helpful if they were, but Judith Murray and Roger Fitzpatrick-Odahamier are still involved in activities.
- Graham Foster had met with Pippa Smaling of DBC and a document has been revised detailing what DBC is willing to do and what residents are able to do. Proper training will be available.
- We currently have £60 worth of wildflower seeds that could be planted if DBC do the preparation.
- John Thompson reported that the DOVES meeting he attended discussed the wildflower meadow.
- Discussion ensued about the possibility of joining DOVES and utilising their public liability insurance, saving us £87.50 per year. John agreed to report back with updates from future meetings.
- The only requirement from DOVES is compliance with Health & Safety.
- Judith reported that WRA have planted some bulbs on Whinbush Way and discussed how to progress further planting, perhaps involving Whinfield School.

Springfield Park

John Atkinson had sent a written report:

- The new goalposts have been erected.
- Dean Scott of DBC is to replace the "no dogs" sign on the fenced play area and resources are available to re-lay the playing surface when weather permits.
- Since winning our appeal, the new fence across the gap in the hedge near Sparrowhall Drive has been vandalised. A meeting was planned for today between Anderson and Roxby and an update is awaited.
- A review has been requested for the Freedom of Information request for data on air quality for the A1150 and a response is awaited.
- An initial Freedom of Information request, shadowed by Andy Keir, has been made about the development of all green spaces in Whinfield, and a response is due on 3rd January.
- David Milner explained that DBC have no spare seats to erect as requested but that if WRA were to fund one then DBC would install and maintain it.
- Alan Macnab reported that a response from DBC to his Application for Asset of Community Value for Springfield Park is expected in about a week.

Litter

Judith Murray reported that:

- There may be a litter pick in January and the Big Spring Clean will follow in March.
- There has been a large increase in dumped Asda trolleys around the ward. After discussion, it was agreed that Judith will draft a letter to Asda head office in an attempt to persuade them to be more pro-active in preventing trollies being taken away and she will copy in our ward councillors and MP.

Darlington Local Plan

Cllr Tom Nutt had sent a written report:

- The expected application from Bellway for Elm Tree Farm has not yet been received.
- There is no change re. Muscar House Farm.
- A further consultation by Theakstons re. Skerningham Garden Village may take place in April. Thereafter the Draft Local Plan will go to Council Members and there will be a further consultation exercise by DBC.
- Housing targets are to be submitted to Council Members in January for agreement.
- Alan Macnab reported that CPRE are challenging the housing figures. He is concerned that planning applications are being allowed without infrastructure in place in communities and that s106 agreements are of little value.
- Roger Fitzpatrick-Odahamier observed that despite Cllr McEwan informing us that the government was forcing DBC to build houses, the government's figures contradict what DBC are actually proposing. Planning applications are already exceeding DBC's targets.
- Alan Hutchinson had written to the Woodland Trust about protecting the community woodland, but they are only interested in ancient woodlands. He had also written to Pippa Smaling of DBC who explained that the Tees Forest project had ceased in 2009 and the woods are now in private hands. Using the woods to try to prevent the development is unlikely to succeed, but loss of amenity is a legitimate planning objection. Alan expressed great concern that publicly accessible land is to be given over to a private golf club so that the private developer can benefit financially by building on the old course.

Northern Bypass

- Cllr Tom Nutt had sent a written report stating that there has been no change but Highways England are aware that Route A is the preferred option by the Tees Valley Mayor, DBC directors and officers, councillors and "...without exception everyone I have spoken to is in favour of Route A."
- Discussion ensued about whether this meant 'rather than Route B'.
- Roger Fitzpatrick-Odahamier commented that he believed that it was always the intention to have Route A and that Route B was just a 'red herring'.
- Ralph Bradley asked about costings, which can be found on the TVCA website along with the timescale. The documents appear to favour Route A.
- Members will be kept informed of any new developments.

Date of next meeting: General Meeting Wednesday 17th January 2018, at 7pm in Oban Court.
Committee Meeting Wednesday 3rd January 2018, at 6.30pm in Oban Court

Any other business

- Alan Macnab mentioned the public consultation on the **Medium Term Financial Plan** and the proposed savings.
- The next councillors' **Ward Surgery** is on Saturday 6th January 2018 10-11am in Asda Foyer
- David Milner will attend the surgery to ask our councillors about not attending WRA meetings, and he will raise James Eddy's enquiry about when the **yellow lines** will appear on the access road to Oban Court.

The meeting closed at 8.22 pm