

Whinfield Residents Association

(inc. The Friends of Beech Wood)

www.whinfieldresidents.co.uk

Minutes of the meeting of 21st November 2018 at Oban Court

Attendees: David Milner (Chair), Alan Hutchinson (Secretary), Judith Murray (Treasurer), Alan Macnab, Joan Thompson, John Thompson, John Atkinson, Simon Bainbridge, Ralph Bradley, Jim Chalk, Dave Clark, James Eddy, Jeanette French, Fred Greenhow, Jo-Anne Karim, Janine Lee, Peter Voss, Peter McIntyre, Roger Fitzpatrick-Odahamier, Carol Milner, Tom Medhurst, Pat Newton, Tyler Nixon, Allannah Robinson, Andy Keir, Ruby Keir, Andrew Ward, Jamie Bartch, Mike Sowerby, David Phillips, Helen McIntyre, Ian Dent, Marie Dent. (33)

Apologies: Cllr Tom Nutt, Eric Davison, Linda Davison, Jean Foster

Approval of the Minutes: It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting of 26/09/2018 be signed by the Chair as a correct record, proposed by Ralph Bradley and seconded by James Eddy. The Secretary acknowledged that the minutes had become too long in recent times, caused by the sheer volume of business transacted, and that he intended to try to make them more of a summary than a transcript in future.

Matters arising from the Minutes

Damage to grass verges: The Chair had spoken to our ward councillors, and to Cllr Nick Wallis who is looking at the costs and legality of solutions and he will update us.

Metal container, Drummond Close: The Chair agreed to ask our ward councillors about this.

Asda trolleys: The Chair and Treasurer had attended a photocall at Asda and a piece appeared in the Asda newsletter. Now that locks are being fitted to all trolleys it was agreed that this case is closed.

Chair's report

David Milner reported as follows:

- The last 2 months had been busy and frustrating because of the tight time-scale of the Sparrow Hall Drive/Elm Tree Farm planning consultation. The Committee had held an emergency meeting about strategy re. our response, a webpage of guidance was produced by Alan Hutchinson, Judith Murray had written the WRA submission, and lots of other things were done. Thanks were given to Judith and Alan for their terrific work, to the Committee for their support and to the B&SPG for getting behind this.
- Regrettably, John Atkinson had resigned from the WRA Committee, and Graham Foster had resigned as Vice-Chair and from WRA altogether, because they felt that the direction they believed WRA should be going was different to that of the Committee. The Chair stated that he had a duty to always lead in accordance with members' wishes, in a credible, professional and transparent way, and the work of the Association must go on.

Secretary's report

Alan Hutchinson reported that:

- We currently have 89 members.
- The website had been updated, including a new page about the Elm Tree Farm consultation.
- The WRA 'info' email address is being phased out for technical reasons and replaced with the more reliable 'gmail' address. An automated message is sent back to anyone contacting the old address.
- May Green Marketing in Aycliffe had been recommended by Dave Clark for web hosting instead of GoDaddy, the Secretary had met with them and obtained a competitive quote of £228 for 3 years, including both websites, of which the Secretary will pay 50% for his. The Committee was recommending that we switch to May Green Marketing for our web hosting, and this was agreed.
- Nominations are required for the posts of Officers and Committee ahead of the December AGM. Nomination forms are available on the "Meetings" page of the WRA website and have been sent to all members. Individuals had been approached to ask them to consider putting their names forward.

(Secretary's report continues on next page>>>)

Secretary's report (*....continued*)

- The Committee will propose some minor amendments to the WRA Constitution at the AGM as part of a tidying-up exercise, and these had been circulated to all members for information.
- Dates of General Meetings 2019 will follow the usual pattern of 3rd Wednesday of the 'odd' months, except January (4th Wed). Committee Meetings are switching to Mondays to accommodate members.
- Oban Court had requested some support since we do not pay fees for meetings, and members had been circulated. A real Christmas tree had been offered via Mike Haw and Barmpton Lane Allotments Association, but another WRA member had already provided one. Our councillors had agreed to include something in their Ward Newsletter, and other support. Oban Court says that help is needed from bingo callers and leaders of community singing. The Chair had suggested an Age UK ukulele band and this information had been passed on to Oban Court. It was agreed that we may provide such as raffle prizes.

Treasurer's Report

Judith Murray reported on unchanged finances of £1271. There was no word on the Asda Green Token scheme. A meeting with Louise, the Asda Community Champion, discussed what they can do for us re. contributing items for projects. The Banks community fund issues will be followed up.

The Friends of Beech Wood

The Chair explained that the Committee had discussed this issue at length and because of its complexity it recommends that further consideration be deferred until sometime next year. This was agreed.

Elm Tree Farm

The Secretary brought the meeting up to date with events:

- By starting to involve his line manager, this elicited a prompt response from David Hand, but it was confusing because he retracted his earlier statement that ETF is not in the Skerningham Allocation and he seemed to say that it might be, but in a convoluted way.
- WRA was then alerted by a member and a Northern Echo article that the planning application for ETF had been submitted to DBC by Bellway, and the WRA Committee held an emergency strategy meeting.
- The Secretary twice sent out a press release to the Northern Echo, but they did not use it. A meeting took place between a BBC Radio Tees reporter, the Chair, Secretary and Anne Rudkin.
- Because DBC had again failed to even inform WRA about such a major planning issue impacting on Whinfield, the Committee asked the Secretary to write to Ian Williams of DBC about lack of consultation. This eventually produced a response whereby we were formally notified about ETF, given an extension to the deadline to put our submission together and given assurances that procedures are now in place for future consultations to occur properly.
- A dedicated webpage had been produced giving advice to readers on how to submit comments about ETF to DBC, and Facebook posts had been used to distribute the message to a wider audience.
- All WRA members had been emailed to urge them to make their own individual submissions to DBC so as to carry more weight, and copies of several had been received for our information.
- The Chair and Secretary had been invited to attend an informal meeting of the Barmpton & Skerningham Preservation Group (B&SPG) at Skerningham, which produced a useful exchange of ideas.
- Cllr Tom Nutt had sent a written report that site notices have been displayed near the ETF site from 16th November which allows 21 days from that date to make representations.
- Judith Murray had agreed to formulate the WRA submission to DBC and this had been done and it was being edited ready to be sent in.

Discussion then took place about such matters as: complications of ETF as a cross-boundary issue; some individuals have been notified by DBC; the various confusing extensions of the deadline; the need to have many objections; the DBC process should be followed; receipts are needed; 58 objections received so far.

Judith Murray then gave details of the WRA's submission, with some further discussion of the main issues, and the meeting greeted this with acclamation. It was then agreed that the Secretary sends in the WRA submission to DBC as soon as is practicable.

Local Plan

Cllr Tom Nutt had sent a written report that there was nothing further to report re. Muscar House Farm. The next phase of the Local Plan is awaited by WRA.

Northern Bypass

Cllr Tom Nutt had sent a written report that the Tees Valley Mayor is still pushing this project with Route A as the preferred option.

Beech Wood

Judith Murray had met with Pippa Smaling to produce a plan for the planting and management of the wildflower meadow, and 3 silver oak trees will be planted soon. We have been given 2000 bluebell and 1000 snowdrop bulbs for the Wood. 500 daffodil bulbs had been obtained from DBC, plus 500 others donated to continue the planting along Whinbush Way. The Friends of Fryers Field will also be donating daffodil bulbs. The Secretary reported that Whinfield School had informed us that educational visits to Beech Wood have been organised, and his reply was to give encouragement to such activity.

Litter

Judith Murray reported that a litter pick might be organised for January, weather permitting. DBC's Street Scene has limited resources but WRA follows procedures re. collection of the orange bags.

Springfield Park

Alan Macnab reported on a reply received from Theakston Land. Green Lane is to be retained but the tree line is yet to be decided. A road across the Park is still an option but they are seeking to minimise the impact on the Park. Green Lane at the east side may remain as a pedestrian/equestrian/cycle route. Cllr Chris McEwan has not replied to queries about these issues. DBC are still opposing Local Green Space designation for the Park since it is part of the Skerningham masterplan. Alan viewed all this with suspicion.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 12th December 2018, at 7pm in Oban Court, the Annual General Meeting, followed by an informal social event and raffle.

Any Other Business

Judith Murray reported that a **broken litter bin on Whinbush Way** had been replaced. John Atkinson commented on the mess caused by **cable replacement in Killin Road**. Helen McIntyre mentioned ongoing **quad bike problems at Skerningham** and that any such incidents anywhere should be reported to Police 101 who will collate information for intelligence. A question was asked whether our ward councillors had made any **objections to the Elm Tree Farm planning application**, but this was not known.

The meeting closed at 8.24pm.