

## **Whinfield Residents Association**

(Incorporating the Friends of Beech Wood)

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

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### **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2018 at Oban Court**

**Attendees:** David Milner (Chair), Alan Hutchinson (Secretary), Judith Murray (Treasurer), Ralph Bradley, Andy Keir, Ruby Keir, Jim Chalk, Dave Clark, James Eddy, Roger Fitzpatrick-Odahamier, Jeanette French, Rosemary Adams, , Allannah Robinson, Fred Greenhow, Alan Macnab, Helen McIntyre, Tom Medhurst, Carol Milner, Pat Newton, Anne Rudkin, Joan Thompson, John Thompson (22).

**.Apologies:** Kath Keogan, Peter Voss, Simon Bainbridge, Jean Foster, Janine Lee

**Approval of minutes:** The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Oban Court on the 22.11.2017 were signed as a correct record of the meeting, proposed by Anne Rudkin and seconded by Andy Keir.

**Matters arising from the Minutes:** None.

#### **Chair's Annual Report**

It had been another positive but difficult year, perhaps dominated by the Local Plan and Elm Tree Farm. Membership and attendance at meetings had continued to grow. Special thanks were given to the current Officers and Committee members for all of their often unseen hard work and efforts throughout the year.

There had been successful and well attended litter picks, and successful fundraising events, but there was a need to do more. Other successes included the double yellow lines painted outside Oban Court, and the work of Judith Murray and Roger Fitzpatrick-Odahamier re. the wild flower beds in Beech Wood and bulb planting along Whinbush Way. The solving of the long-standing Asda trolley issue was also worthy of note.

Moving forward, WRA was in good shape to face what may be another challenging year and success was fully dependant on the continuing support of our members, so recruitment was still needed.

#### **Secretary's Annual Report**

Alan Hutchinson reported on a very busy year for WRA. The implementation of GDPR was challenging and we lost 20 members, but membership has recovered to 93, the same as it was in January, the highest ever, and we have in place a strong data protection policy document.

Through necessity, WRA had become much more of a campaigning organisation than in the past, which not all members might feel comfortable with, but the development issue has returned multiplied many-fold in the form of the Skerningham Allocation, the Northern Bypass and Elm Tree Farm. We have had to take a stance where we could, but at all times acting in members' interests and those of the wider community. It seems as though the developers and DBC are aligned against us, but the consequences of doing nothing would be loss of our woods, walks and green spaces and intolerable pressure on the local roads and infrastructure of the Ward. We might not win, but perhaps we might be able to make a difference.

Our communications had become much more effective, mainly through efficient use of the website, which the Secretary enjoyed authoring and maintaining. Thanks were given to individual members of the Management Committee for their contributions and personal support given. Special reference was made to Chair, David Milner, for his strong leadership and wise counsel.

#### **Treasurer's Annual Report and submission of audited accounts**

Judith Murray reported as follows:

The accounts show a balance as at 21/11/18 of £1,276.43. The accounts were audited by M L S Accountancy Services. I have the signed audited copy with me should anyone want to see it.

The net surplus for 2018 is £16.94, lower than in 2017 mainly due to a decrease in income. We only conducted 1 car boot sale this year due to circumstances and we did not attend Haughton Fair. However, it is a surplus so this shows we are covering our costs whilst still continuing to grow.

(Treasurer's report continues overleaf >>>)

The public liability insurance has remained the same, and is important as it enables us to continue with such activities as the litter picks and any other events we may organise, knowing that the committee and association is financially protected in the event a claim is brought for damage or injury. The other main cost this year was for the Local Plan leaflets which we distributed across the Whinfield ward as part of our Local Plan campaign.

The coffee morning was also a great success and raised £64. We will look to hold further coffee morning events going forward and hope they will continue to be well supported. We also held another successful car boot sale at Durham Tees Valley airport raising £55. I must also take this opportunity to thank Pippa Smaling from DBC for her kind contribution of bulbs for the Whinfield planting project and also to the friends of Fryers Field and an anonymous donor for their donation of bulbs for this project. The association has also been put forward for ASDA's 'Green Token Giving Programme' by one of our members (R Fitzpatrick-Odahamier) and we await the decision on this with the winners receiving between £200 & £500.

The association receives no funding from DBC however it is important that we recognise that we now have the use of Oban Court for our meetings without charge, which has not always been the case and makes a massive difference to our ongoing costs. DBC recognise the importance of having an active residents association for the ward of Whinfield and I am pleased they are willing to continue supporting us in this way. The committee continue to look for other fundraising opportunities and also for projects within our area which we can get involved in going forward.

As you are all aware we have made some minor changes to the Constitution this year and going forward amending the constitution will be something I will be raising with the Committee. I have been made aware that one or two people are also beginning to question some elements of our constitution since it has been raised and it is important we get this right. I believe The Constitution as it stands currently lacks clarity in many areas, Finance being one of those areas, so I will be looking into how this can be changed to fit in with best practice in relation to stewardship of the Association and its funds.

After very brief discussion, Alan Macnab proposed, and James Eddy seconded that the accounts be accepted, and this was agreed. [A copy of the accounts was filed with the minutes.]

#### **Appointment of Auditors for the Coming Year**

It was agreed that MLS Accountancy Services be asked to act as auditors for the coming year.

#### **Election of Officers**

It was agreed that Judith Murray conduct the procedure for election of Chair. Elected unopposed were:

**Chair: David Milner**, proposed by Allannah Robinson and seconded by Peter Voss.

**Secretary: Alan Hutchinson**, proposed by Ann Brown and seconded by Monica Anderson.

**Treasurer: Judith Murray**, proposed by Bridget Hutchinson and seconded by Anne Rudkin.

**Fundraising Officer: Tom Medhurst**, proposed by Alan Hutchinson and seconded by David Milner.

**Vice-chair:** vacant. The Committee will look to fill this post during the year and it was agreed that ad hoc arrangements will be made on occasions when a Vice-Chair is needed.

#### **Election of Management Committee Members**

**Anne Rudkin** was proposed by Judith Murray and seconded by Joan Thompson,

**Alan Macnab** was proposed by John Thompson and seconded by Peter Voss,

**Fred Greenhow** was proposed by David Milner and seconded by Alan Hutchinson,

**Helen McIntyre** was proposed by Simon Bainbridge and seconded by Fred Greenhow,

**Peter Voss** was proposed by Judith Murray and seconded by David Milner, and all 5 were elected.

The Committee will try to fill the 7 remaining Management Committee posts by co-option during the year.

#### **Motions to amend to the Constitution**

The Secretary spoke to 15 minor amendments to the WRA Constitution which the Committee considered should be made [briefing note filed with minutes]. Discussion then ensued about other amendments that might be needed in future to address possible shortcomings of the existing Constitution, and the Chair gave an undertaking that the Committee will look at these issues. Allannah Robinson then proposed and Tom Medhurst seconded that the 15 amendments be accepted, and this was unanimously agreed.

**Date of next meeting:** Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2019 at 7pm at Oban Court.

The meeting closed at 7.50 pm, followed by an informal social gathering, with refreshments and raffle.