

THE BOOKHAMS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Company Limited by Guarantee – Number 10053863

Committee Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 3rd May 2023

Church Room St Nicolas Church

In Attendance: Peter Seaward (Chair), Simon Edge, Keith Whale, Geoff Tranter, Margaret Lawson, Les Hewitt, Keith Francis, Nick Forrer, Neil McDowall, Frances Fancourt, David Armstrong.

Apologies: Cllr Roger Adams, Dianne Poole, Andrew Matthews, David Cox OBE, Cllr Monica Weller, Carolyn Elson, Andy Freeman, Julia Dickenson.

1 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted as an accurate record with two Changes. In paragraph 4.4, the street party in Lower Shotts was being organized by the litter pickers. In paragraph 7.5, litter collections take place on the first Sunday of every month except on bank holidays when it takes place on the Sunday of the second week.

2 Matters Arising & Actions:

The Chairman had received a query over a flag over the library and had advised that this was the responsibility of the SCC.

3 Correspondence:

None to report.

4 Management Group: (Finance, Project Control)

4.1 The Treasurer stated that the bank balance now stood at £22,000, the increase over the previous month being mainly due to the receipt of subscriptions.

Network Rail had provided £12,000 for a TV information display and another £12,000 had been secured via the NVDC CIL system for the installation of a second. It is hoped that the installation of this would be soon.

4.2 Geoff Tranter gave a run down on the state of the three benches meant for public use in the Bookhams. The bench at the bus shelter in Lower Road required the wooden slats to be replaced. The second outside Weales in Little Bookham Street needed strimming but was otherwise sound, and the third outside Shirleys Garage was covered in weeds and needed a missing slat replaced. £1800 had been set aside to cover the cost of bench repair but it still to be determined who would carry out the work.

4.3 It was noted that Mr and Mrs Castledean were retiring and it was agreed that a parting gift should be given to them in view of the work they had done over many years for the Bookhams.

4.4 Francis Fancourt stated that the order for the circular bench to be placed at Lower Shotts had been agreed but not ordered. The Chairman requested that the order be placed as soon as possible.

4.5 The Chairman reported that the BRA bid for outline approval for the new Bump Track at the Lower Road Recreation Ground was taken to the North Mole Valley CIL committee a few weeks ago. We will not know the outcome until later this month. From the hostile tone of the meeting it is expected that the bid will either be rejected or we will be asked for a further input which will not be considered until the early autumn. Three quotations had been received even though MVDC officers had said that at this early stage only one was needed. This was a very disappointing result considering the community support and the effort that had gone into completing the very comprehensive application form. BRA along with current and former Councillors plus the Bookham Youth Project have been trying to progress this project since 2018. A letter had been written to the CEO of the MVDC complaining about the rejection and it was hoped that the forthcoming local election could result in a more favorable outcome.

5 Planning

Keith Whale, Chairman BRA Planning Committee, had attended to get a feel of BRA procedures. He advised that the Bookhams had more Planning Applications than other areas of the MV. There were currently concerns as to the unreliability of the MVDC Planning Office Website which did not contain accurate and reliable information relating to the Planning Applications being circulated. This made it very difficult for the committee to make sensible judgements.

6 Community Group

6.1 Simon Edge reported that the two local Medical Centres were close to full capacity and progress albeit slow was being made with MVDC, SCC, and the NHS to find a resolution. It was also noted that the situation at Boots in the High Street was very unsatisfactory whilst renovations were being carried out in the interior. It was hoped the situation would be greatly improved when the work had been carried out.

6.2 Keith Francis reported that one of the two buses provided by the MV Connect service had a brake and battery problem and was currently out of service. It was intended to provide 4 buses to provide this very useful service whereby customers could request transport to any location within this area on any day excluding Sundays for a very reasonable cost.

7 Environment Group

7.1 It was noted that the condition of many roads in the Bookhams were poor with many potholes which although reported had yet to be filled.

7.2 Police activity had been seen in Bookham recently and anti social behaviour at SPACE including damage to sports lighting .

7.3 Francis Fancourt reported that funds existed to plant more trees along the Lower Road opposite the Recreation Ground. The deal with the SCC was very advantageous as for £25 a length of 50 metres could be planted with trees whose value was over £200 each. Another road for planting was Durlston Road.

7.4 Margaret Lawson advised that the last Litter Picking had been very successful with 27 bags of litter being collected. The youngster's of the Beaver Group had joined the party, spurred on by the receipt of a badge. It was hoped that the addition of sweets could encourage them to stay. The MVDC were to be approached for the supply of more bags.

8 Communications and Membership Groups

8.1 Les Huett reported that the Newsletter advising the forthcoming AGM and an account of all BRA activities was being circulated to all members.

For roads where little response had been observed, a simplified letter was being circulated.

8.2 Les Huett also advised that emails to members permitting payment on line with a suggestion that a larger payment to serve as a donation had proved a great success and had boosted BRA,s funds as noted by the Treasurer. Responses were averaging out at about 15 per day.

8.3 Some of the Notice Boards were in need of repair.

9 Business Group

9.1 The granting of funds to local traders to enhance the appearance of the High Street had met with a complete lack of response from the local traders.

10 Project Updates

Nothing to report.

11 Any Other Business

11.1 Les Huett noted that no elected Councillors were present and appreciated the contribution Councillors make to the meeting but maybe part of our meetings should be committee only and Councillors can leave at that point. The Chairman stated that they had always been invited in the past to contribute to matters raised at the meeting, and that any signs of political bias was immediately put down. It was agreed that the matter would be considered again at a future meeting.

11.2 It was noted that the National Trust Ranger, Ian Swinney, for Bookham Common was retiring after many years of excellent service. It was hoped that the NT would appoint a worthy successor.

11.3 Keith Francis enquired what was happening to the Report on Flooding in the local area. It was agreed to ask County Cllr Clare Curran.

The next meeting would be BRA Directors on Monday 5th June 2023.