

# THE BOOKHAMS RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Company Limited by Guarantee - Number 10053863

## Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on

Monday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2020 at 7.30 pm in

Via Conference Call

**Present:** Peter Seaward (chair), David Cox OBE, Carolyn Elson, John Howarth, Les Huett, Nick Forrer, Julia Dickinson, Michael Agius, Chris Pullan, Andrew Freeman, Geoff Tranter,

**Invited Councillors:** Cllr. Clare Curran, Cllr. Nancy Goodacre, Cllr. Elizabeth Daly, Cllr. Roger Adams,

**Ordinary Members:** Andrew Matthews, Monica Weller, Paul Kennedy,

**Apologies:** Cllr. Richard Moyse, Cllr. Metin Huseyin, Cllr Simon Edge, Keith Francis, John Allen, Martin Hollins, Richard Davey, Diane Poole, Michelle Smith, David Smith, Margaret Lawson, Frances Fancourt, Dan Coffin, Arthur Field, Marian Williams.

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## 1 Minutes

1.1 Subject to a few amendments, the Minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as an accurate record.

## 2 Matters Arising

2.1 **Ashdale:** It was noted that the Definitive Map Modification Order process has commenced. Clare Curran clarified that should the council receive the required number of petitioners then the request would go to Local Committee, after which, it would go out for consultation before a final decision is made.

## 3 Correspondence

3.1 **Headley Court:** It was noted that Headley Court will now re-open and serve as a temporary community hospital for Surrey Heartlands during the current Covid-19 pandemic.

## 4 Coronavirus

4.1 **Committee Meetings:** Due to Government advice regarding the Coronavirus and the need to comply with social distancing and avoid groups of people congregating, it was agreed via email that future meeting would be held via video call, using Zoom.

4.2 **Local Support:** It was noted that the BRA website - <https://www.bookhamresidents.org.uk> - provides links to the following:

4.2.1 **Central Surrey Voluntary Action (CSVA)** is registering a pool of potential volunteers who may be able to assist.

- 4.2.2 **MVDC Business Support – COVID-19:** Provides a link to a Government dedicated webpage for Coronavirus Business Support which has information on access to support, who is eligible, when schemes open and how to apply. In addition MVDC have issued guidelines and written to all Mole Valley businesses
- 4.2.3 **Essential Businesses:** Leatherhead Rotary has compiled a directory of local businesses that are open, and in many cases, delivering.
- 4.2.4 **Community Coronavirus Care:** Has a team of volunteers who can provide services such as collecting and delivering food and prescriptions, walking the dog, etc.
- 4.3 **I Live in Bookham:** ILIB also has a list of Bookham retailers that are still open and offering services:  
(<https://www.iliveinbookham.com/?fbclid=IwAR2IOH9MWrlridtOnQ7onADbrh6pKuKJFi7hsvDc5lqXSAivRHKITOiRTyE>)
- 4.4 **Surrey County Council:** Clare Curran reported that SCC is continuing to provide social care to vulnerable people which never has this been so important, both for adults, the disabled and for at-risk children and young people.
- 4.4.1 It is of critical importance that these services continue and can reach everyone who is in need. The focus of the council is to continue with front line social services and to work with health partners, the district and borough councils and with voluntary, community and faith sector partners across the county to ensure that all those people who are in need are identified on a continuous basis and are offered support and assistance if they need it. A helpline has been set up - 0200 300 1008 - which members of the public can ring to ask for, or to offer, help. Clare Curran said that elderly and those deemed at risk should register with the CSVA as a precaution, even though they may not need help at the present time.
- 4.4.2 In Bookham we are seeing wonderful community support through our churches and from residents' groups, and it is vital that these efforts are recorded and coordinated, so that no-one in need falls through the net and also so that the assistance can be sustained, as it now seems likely that the restriction on movement is likely to continue for some time.
- 4.4.3 These services have meant that a large number of council staff have been diverted from their other roles to assist with the efforts of supporting vulnerable people. All council offices are closed to the public and all staff are working from home. In addition, to comply with government restrictions, other council services have closed - all libraries are closed, although digital services are still available on-line, the community recycling centres are closed to the public (the MVDC waste collection services continue) and all non-essential highway maintenance services have paused, with only critical safety work being carried out. Schools (not strictly a council service) remained open to the children of key workers (it is now Easter holidays).
- 4.4.4 Surrey Fire & Rescue also has many staff who are first responders and they are able to add their support and have called off their forthcoming strike, given the emergency.
- 4.4.5 SCC is still able to host meetings on a virtual platform, using video conferencing. The cabinet meeting took place as normal on Tuesday, virtually.

- 4.4.6 Surrey is one of a few areas in the country which has moved significantly forward with the integration of health and social care and this has been advantageous in making arrangements in several key areas, such as procurement of Personal Protective Equipment for both health and social care staff, identifying temporary accommodation for NHS staff, opening additional hospital capacity (at Headley Court), arranging temporary mortuary capacity and expediting hospital discharges to maximise bed capacity at the county's acute hospitals, so that they are as well placed as they can be to accommodate the expected surge in COVID-19 cases in the coming days.

## 5 Group Updates

### 5.1 Management Group

- 5.1.1 **Annual General Meeting:** John Howarth reported that, because of the Covid-19 crisis, the AGM scheduled for May 21st has been postponed. The latest date the BRA can hold an AGM is 10th October 2020, i.e. no later than fifteen months from the last AGM that was held on 10th July 2019.
- 5.1.2 This means that the revised Calling Notice will have to be in the September issue of "Look Local", which in turn means it will have to be ready by early August.
- 5.1.3 John will keep the situation under review. The BRA will not be the only UK company that will be faced with the postponement of an AGM.
- 5.1.4 As a contingency, the Old Barn Hall will be booked for a date in September and October. Action: Les Huett.
- 5.1.5 **Church Room Bookings:** Action: Peter Seaward will cancel the Church Room bookings for the foreseeable future.
- 5.1.6 **Accounts for 2019:** Chris Pullan reported that the accounts were signed off by Lawrence Penney on 10 March and show a surplus of £692. John Howarth added that the accounts have to be filed with Companies House by the end of September and with HMRC by the end of December. However they have to be approved by the Directors. Doesn't have to be in April's meeting, but the sooner the better. The accounts were approved by verbal assent.
- 5.1.7 **Public Liability Insurance:** The additional policy that the BRA was required to take out to increase the BRA's public liability insurance from £5m to £10m expired on 23 March. The new single policy covering the entire £10m, which started a few months ago, is now through R J Waters Brokers.
- 5.1.8 **March Income:** MVDC paid £1,250 towards Christmas lights and subs amounted to £51.38.
- 5.1.9 **Expenditure:** Two leaflets in respect of the MV Plan for £423 and £122 were paid. The intention would be to charge against Bookham Vanguard monies.
- 5.1.10 Les Huett had expenses of £274.32 for 11 November to 31 March. He had a float of £100. At his request the BRA paid £350 giving a float of £174.68.
- 5.1.11 **Possible expenditure:** Peter Seaward is concerned about the watering of the hanging baskets and has proposed that a professional contractor should do the work. The amount is significant and would need the approval of the Committee. Peter can explain.

### 5.2 Planning Group

- 5.2.1 **Planning Committee:** The Committee had considered 17 applications via email due to Covid-19. Two letters of representation have been sent on:
- 20/0241 - Bookham Railway Station, Church Road - Refurbishment of station house and footbridge
  - 20/0364 - Kildary, 104, Woodlands Road - Erection of 1 No. dwelling to the rear of the existing dwelling at 104 Woodlands Road following demolition of existing storage sheds.(27-03)

5.2.2 **Local Plan:** Geoff Tranter had led a small sub-group to review the Local Plan on behalf of the BRA and the Committee thanked Geoff and the rest of the sub-group for their endeavours. Les Huett submitted the BRA's final submission to MVDC online and as a print version on the 23th March.

5.2.3 MVDC is committed to publishing the number of responses received and the officers are currently reviewing them.

### 5.3 **Environment Group**

5.3.1 **Litter Pick:** The monthly litter pick is temporarily suspended due to Covid-19.

5.3.2 **Trees:** Frances Fancourt reported on the sprouting growth along the A246 near Lower Shott and opposite Dobbes. The contractor was ready to remove the growth and the Virginia creeper on Co-op/Rusts but did not have anywhere to discard the cuttings as the tip is closed and he does not have his own facility for this. Frances is in contact with MVDC about a possible collection from Lower Shott car park (as has been done previously in conjunction with the litter pick) to hopefully resolve this quickly.

5.3.3 **Plants:** Work to the beds in central Bookham: stalled for the moment due to stay-at-home requirement.

5.3.4 **BT Frontage:** This has been planted with wild flowers and seed and will start looking good soon.

5.3.5 **Hanging Baskets:** It was noted that the new summer baskets were on hold due to The Vineries being temporarily closed, therefore no action should be taken to remove the winter flowers. Peter Seaward added that should summer baskets be forthcoming then the BRA would need to appoint a third party to water them at a cost of circa £1,500, as the previous year was fairly ad hoc, relying on Peter Seward watering them with some help from others, which wasn't sustainable.

### 5.4 **Community Group**

5.4.1 **Education:** David Cox said that he had been in contact with SCC regarding the admissions policy and linking that to the number of new developments likely as outlined in the draft Local Plan. It appears that they had not been aware of the Local Plan and the possible impact this would have on increased population figures. SCC will now amend their schools' plan, following which further discussions will no doubt ensue.

5.4.2 **Howard of Effingham:** It was noted that the Howard of Effingham is almost certainly going to be delayed, not least due to the current lockdown and availability of building materials.

5.4.3 **Youth Centre:** Nil to report.

5.4.4 **Bookham Station:** Keith Francis reported that extensive refurbishment works are planned at the station. See also Planning Committee above.

- 5.4.5 There was a subsequent discussion regarding disabled access to the London bound side (Platform 1), the only path being from the National Trust Tunnel Car Park which is across NT land and, during the winter, is virtually impassable, particularly for wheelchair users and for pushchairs/prams. Several ideas were suggested which members had seen in operation elsewhere, e.g. a swing bridge from Platform 2 to Platform 1 or glass lifts attached to the existing bridge. Both options would be expensive and probably not a priority for the rail operator. Action: Peter Seaward to contact Ian Swinney regarding the possible improvements to the footpath.
- 5.4.6 **Buses:** Keith Francis also reported that a government initiative was announced on Friday to keep rural bus services running. It is not known as to whether this will be sufficient to keep all our local buses operational.
- 5.4.7 Keith added that a new temporary 479 timetable has been issued by Arriva to cover the COVID19 emergency effective for journeys from 23rd March. This covers the route between Guildford, Bookham, Leatherhead and Epsom.
- 5.4.8 London United takes over the 465 from 25 April 2020 and Falcon Buses (Coaches) takes on the 408 from 4 April 2020, and will operate Monday to Friday.
- 5.4.9 From the 23 March 2020 Arriva have put in place an each way full Epsom to Guildford hourly timetable removing the Bookham station from Epsom loop service, but, running at its times.
- 5.4.10 Stagecoach are still operating the two-hourly Sunday service on behalf of SCC.
- 5.4.11 Due to lack of use, Chatterbus have suspended the weekday C1 service, but is still operational at weekends.
- 5.4.12 **Trains:** Currently a Rail Bus Replacement Service is in operation via Effingham for trains to London Waterloo. All local ticket offices are closed. There will be no services over an extended Easter time shutdown due to the Guildford railway station works.
- 5.4.13 **GP Surgeries:** The Molebridge's Fetcham premises are currently under-going a re-vamp, to be followed by Leatherhead.

## 5.5 **Communications & Membership Group**

- 5.5.1 **Future Mole Valley Draft Local Plan:** Les Huett reported that at the beginning of March 6,000 leaflets were distributed by Road Stewards and volunteers to all Bookham households and shops etc. asking for residents to submit their contributions on the Draft Local Plan. This was followed up with a public meeting on 11th March with a progress report on BRA findings.
- 5.5.2 Les also reported that five MailChimp campaigns were run through the month – significantly more than normal, on:
- MVDC Future Mole Valley Draft Local Plan Exhibition
  - Public Meeting Reminder
  - Future Mole Valley Draft Local Plan – Last Chance to Respond
  - Think Social Distancing when in Bookham Shops
  - Future Mole Valley Draft Local Plan submitted; COVID19 Local Information; Newsletter; Litter Pick and Committee Meetings cancelled

- 5.5.3 **MailChimp:** In the past month 35 new contacts have signed up giving a total of 753 contacts on our email service. We are still able to use the free Mailchimp service.
- 5.5.4 **Website:** The web site is normally updated once a week, but with the COVID19 a lot of additional content has been added so more frequent updates have taken place. A COVID19 section has been added.
- 5.5.5 There were just on 2,000 page views during March and website posts are added to the BRA and I Live in Bookham Facebook pages for further coverage.
- 5.5.6 **Membership:** In the current circumstances we will not produce a Spring Newsletter for distribution or collect subs, **which may result in a considerable shortfall in subs this year.** It was agreed that, subject to the lockdown being lifted in adequate time, that the Autumn Newsletter would be a hard copy and road stewards should be encouraged to collect subs as soon as possible. An email will be sent to Road Stewards advising them of this over the next couple of weeks. An email will also be sent to online subscribers to ask them to pay online again for 2020.
- 5.6 **Business Group** - Nil to report.

## 6 **Any Other Business**

**Supporting the NHS:** It was noted that a banner in support of the NHS had been erected, by I Live In Bookham (ILIB), above Brackenbury's although a better location could be Fine Fettle on the corner of the High Street. Action: Clare Curran to suggest this to Dan Coffin of ILIB.

**Leatherhead Chamber of Commerce:** Johan Howarth reported that the Chamber was extending its catchment areas to the whole of Mole Valley and that, during the current lockdown, the Chamber will be offering 6 months free membership to local businesses and providing experts to offer advice.

Paul Kennedy added that MVDV was offering reductions in business rates and that the Government also had a scheme in place. Elizabeth Daly also said emergency grants are also available for charities.

A subsequent discussion took place as to the timeliness of payments being made to businesses, but businesses should be encouraged to contact the council as soon as possible and, if payments are not forthcoming in timely fashion, then to raise it with one of the district councillors.

## 7 **Next BRA Meeting:** Monday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2020 at 7:30 pm.