

THE BOOKHAMS RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Company Limited by Guarantee - Number 10053863

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on

Monday 3rd August 2020 at 7.30 pm

Via Conference Call

Present: Peter Seaward (chair), Chris Pullan, John Howarth, Les Huett, Andrew Matthews, Nick Forrer, David Cox OBE, Dan Coffin, Frances Fancourt, Carolyn Elson, Andrew Freeman, Paul Kennedy, Richard Davey, Julia Dickinson, Geoff Tranter,

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

Apologies: Cllr. Richard Moyse, Margaret Lawson, Michelle Smith, Cllr. Metin Huseyin, Cllr. Simon Edge, Keith Francis, John Allen, Martin Hollins, Diane Poole, Arthur Field, Marian Williams, Michael Agius, David Smith,

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 **AGM:** John Howarth reported that he feels it is unlikely that the BRA would be able to hold a public AGM in the Barn Hall in September, although this may change. John's opinion is that the best way of managing the meetings is to have a short "Zoom" AGM on 17th September just dealing with the basic formal legalities and then to have a much more substantial public meeting in the Barn Hall later in the year – or a "webcast" if the Hall is still unavailable.

2.2 The AGM agenda should only take ten or fifteen minutes and the following is proposed:

- An explanation of the reasons why the BRA is taking the Zoom approach
- The Minutes of last year's meeting
- The Chairman's Report
- The Treasurer's Report
- The 2019 Accounts
- Description of the procedures that members will have to follow if (a) they want to submit a question, (b) they want to appoint a proxy for the meeting.

2.3 Keith Francis reported, for information, that the Fetcham Residents' Association successfully held their AGM via Zoom in June 2020.

2.4 **Land Auction: The Garstons and Mead Crescent:** To help protect the access to the Old Barn Hall field via The Garstons and Mead Crescent, to date the local residents, with help from the BRA, have taken action to post a letter to all residents living in The Garstons, Mead Crescent, Stonehill Crescent and Vicarage Close (100 properties). The letter and call to action has also been posted on the BRA web site.

2.5 Protecting the accesses is important as the field must have at least 3 access/exit points for Village Day. Losing one access would jeopardise the future of Village Day.

- 2.6 A meeting is scheduled on 6th August to coordinate a plan of action. This could include a village green, obtaining a Rights of Way, as asset of community value and/or a long-term lease (the field is owned by MVDC).
- 2.7 The situation is quite complicated as the two strips of land are designated as Highways land, but in private ownership. The owners could apply to de-designate it as Highways land and therefore develop it (although the Mead Crescent land is too small).
- 2.8 It was also suggested that some work could be done to The Garstons strip of land to enhance its community value. Frances Fancourt to investigate. The land also has 2 mature trees on it.
- 2.9 Other pieces of land have also been auctioned, e.g. the grassy islands in The Lorne and the wooded area at the junction of Hawkwood Rise and the A246.
- 2.10 **Bookham Common:** A further meeting, bringing together representatives of, the BRA, Friends of Bookham Common, Bookham Councillors and the National Trust has been held.
- 2.11 Recently it has also been informally reported that there had been three reports of dogs attacking ducklings in the pond although the police have not been notified of any incidents. This highlights the need for the public to report all incidents to build a profile of the issues.
- 2.12 The NT has erected some signs asking owners to keep their dogs under control. Due to furlough, no further signage has been possible, i.e. to warn walkers of sensitive areas during breeding time, etc. The Friends of Bookham Common are continuing to progress a responsible dog owners initiative. The answer is education, which will take time to have an impact.
- 2.13 Good action has been taken on dog fouling and reporting overflowing bins has been made easier.

3 Correspondence

3.1 Walking and Cycle Routes:

- 3.2 Julia Dickinson reported that the Department of Transport has published “Gear Change A bold vision for cycling and walking” that wishes to see a step-change in cycling and walking in the coming years, encouraging cycling and walking so that it becomes a natural everyday activity, and less reliance on cars, etc. The Government is making £2b available over 5 years and money for Surrey will be channelled via SCC.
- 3.3 Bids can be submitted to SCC to help improve the walking and cycling infrastructure. Further discussion took place regarding the Howard of Effingham and the need to improve safe access for cyclists, and that cycle lanes and pedestrian access must be a major consideration for the new build. It was agreed that a small group comprising Richard Davey, Dan Coffin, Nancy Goodacre and Richard Moyse. Julia Dickinson and Andrew Matthews would discuss.
- 3.4 Access to the High Street was also discussed and the need for cycle racks. Dan Coffin pointed out that most fatalities occur on rural roads and these should be prioritised. Julia will discuss ideas with the Cycle Forum. Clare Curran asked that bids be submitted quite promptly so that they could be discussed with the Council’s Safer Travel Officer.

- 3.5 **Telephone Box – Bookham Station:** Cllr. Simon Edge reported that Local Councillors have been contacted by a MVDC Planning Officer who is taking a further look at the removal of the phone box by Bookham station. Councillor views have been requested by Monday 3 August.
- 3.6 The BRA supported its removal but MVDC objected as it "is located close to the railway station and has a relatively high level of usage (72 calls in a 12 month period)" and the Council's Planning Policy Working Group has said that "removal of any telephone box near a railway station should be objected to."
- 3.7 Simon has written to support the BRA's view that it should be removed as it is often vandalised, is an eyesore and mobile phone usage is widespread.
- 3.8 However, there were several members that felt the telephone box should be retained. It was agreed that Peter Seaward would speak to MVDC to see if the telephone could be relocated to the station which would hopefully result in less vandalism. Francis Fancourt asked whether a bench could also be provided.
- 3.9 **Donations:** Mask Tree: The Committee agreed to make a donation of £75 to Mark Tree. MVDC was also making a donation of £1,000. An application has also been made to the Council for £4,000 for Lavender Catering who have been providing meals to vulnerable people. It was noted that the Anchor Public House was also funding circa 120 meals per day.

4 Group Updates

4.1 Management Group:

- 4.1.1 **Save Leatherhead Theatre:** The theatre has started a campaign to raise £30,000, and a donation of £100 has been pledged.

4.2 Planning Group

- 4.2.1 Weekly running list: The committee considered 5 applications and decided to submit a letter of representation regarding 20/1055 - 17 Lower Shott.
- 4.2.2 39 The Park: Peter Seaward will take this up with senior MVDC officers at a meeting on the 27th as the Council's response concerning the removal of trees that formed part of a planning application was not considered adequate.
- 4.2.3 Wisley Airfield: Julia Dickinson and David Cox will write regarding the need for a school at the airfield assuming a new development will be built there. Clare Curran pointed out the SCC would not support a new school with less than 3 forms per year.
- 4.2.4 **Local Plan:** MVDC was due to publish the draft plan in October/November but this has now moved to April/May 2021.

4.3 Environment Group

- 4.3.1 **Litter Pick:** It was reported that Fetcham Residents' Association are looking at starting an anti-litter campaign. It was noted that litter issues are an issue at Bookham Splash, Spring Grove and areas along the A246. The BRA will look into reviving the "Only Losers Litter" campaign, but to make a difference littering should be reported to MVDC.
- 4.3.2 **Street/verge tree planting:** Frances Fancourt mentioned that discussions have been ongoing with SCC. The issue is that the BRA tree wardens want to plant trees again but have been stopped from planting themselves. Getting SCC or an SCC approved and

qualified person to plant trees will cost from £150 - £300 per tree, whereas the tree wardens could plant for around £30 per tree.

- 4.3.3 Clare Curran said that if the BRA was to send a proposal to Highways the Cabinet Member responsible could waive this requirement. Francis will submit an application to plant 7 trees.

4.4 **Community Group**

- 4.4.1 High Street: There had been previous discussions regarding the High Street and making it more attractive, particularly now with the need to encourage residents to continue to shop locally now that Covid restrictions are easing. Prior to Covid MVDC had some plans in place for Dorking, Leatherhead and some of the surrounding villages, and Bookham needs to formulate plans for improvements and/or encouraging people to visit, for example:

- Lower Shott: Rebuild with retail units with housing;
- a campaign to promote Bookham, e.g. as a “cycle haven”, work with Poleston Lacey to encourage visitors to visit the village too, perhaps a new distinguished restaurant, advertising along the A246, free parking, etc.

- 4.4.2 John Howarth reminded the Committee that Bookham Vision, albeit it 8 years ago, had addressed many of these issues and many of the recommendations probably remained valid. John agreed to circulate a list of the recommendations to inform further discussion, but to make changes needed enthusiastic volunteers and commitment from all agencies.

- 4.4.3 **Buses:** Keith Francis reported that changes to the 479 bus route should be notified in August 2020. Nil has been received to date. He also reported that the Merrow Park and Ride is not as popular as before with passenger numbers down significantly.

- 4.4.4 **Churches Together:** Martin Hollins, representing Churches Together, was unable to attend the meeting but requested that the Committee be made aware of the statement from the Presidents of Churches Together in England which speaks about the journey of racial justice, following the killing of George Floyd in the United States.

<https://ctbi.org.uk/call-to-address-racial-injustice-by-cte-presidents/>

- 4.4.5 **Epsom & St. Helier Hospitals:** Keith Francis reported that Merton Council have Petitioned the Minister of Health for an Independent Review of the decision to remove A&E from St Helier and Epsom hospitals without consultation. Apparently the new Acute hospital at Sutton will not be fully A&E compliant and patients could still be sent to other specialist hospitals, i.e. St George's, for treatment.

- 4.4.6 **Covid 19 and The Royal Surrey Hospital:** Keith also said that the hospital now has a Covid-19 Isolation 20 bed unit – a rapidly built unit in a car park. It is already in use by patients recovering from the Coronavirus. More locally, Headley Court is also operational.

4.5 **Communications & Membership Group**

- 4.5.1 **Newsletter:** Carolyn Elson said that she and Les Hyett are in discussions about their approach to the Autumn Newsletter. Carolyn is also talking to some of the Road Stewards to hear their feedback on a) delivering the Newsletter and b) collecting subscriptions to help us form a view.

- 4.5.2 **Membership:** Following the distribution to The Garstons, Mead Crescent, Stonehill

Crescent and Vicarage Close (see para 2.4 above) several more online subscriptions have also trickled in during the month. New ways of collecting subs are needed. Dan Coffin suggested using QR codes so that people can scan and pay. Another suggestion was to have donation boxes in some local shops.

4.5.3 **Website and Facebook Posts:**

- Auctions of Land on The Garstons and Mead Crescent
- Improvements to Bookham Station and Footbridge works
- Wild flowers and Village planting
- Control of Dogs on Bookham Common
- Oak Processionary Moth update
- MVDC communications

4.6 **Website stats:**

- 1,148 sessions up 25% from previous 30 days
- 2,307 Pageviews up 37% from previous 30 days
- 64% new visitors; 36% returning
- Device breakdown: Desktop 38%; Tablet 15%; Mobile 47%

4.6.1 **Mailchimp:** No campaigns since the last committee meeting but:

- We now have over 750 contacts on our email service.
- Over 82% are highly engaged and open our emails.

4.6.2 **Look Local:** The Look Local contribution this month centred on the Blue Hearts and Wild Flowers. Next month will be the AGM and asking people to pay subscriptions on.

4.7 **Business Group** - Nil to report

5 **Any Other Business**

5.1 **Vehicle Activated Signs:** Andrew Freeman raised the question as to whether the BRA should purchase a mobile VAS. The BRA previously owned 2 and also a shared one with Fetcham RA but these are now obsolete. The cost per camera is quite high starting at around £2,700 plus VAT depending on functionality.

5.2 **Youth Centre:** SCC are working on two plans for a new centre in parallel, one on its existing site and another in the Lower Road Rec.

5.3 **Unitary Authority:** The Government will issue a White Paper in September seeking applications for a new UA or UAs. Early indications suggest that this could be one Surrey-wide UA or perhaps 2 or 3.

5.4 **Electronic Sign:** Chris Pullan reported that £3k is sitting in the accounts for an electronic sign, and queried if it is still needed for that purpose. No decision was made but Andrew Matthews said that the station could benefit from an electronic sign.

5.5 **Libraries:** Clare Curran reported that libraries remain closed for browsing but books can be collected and returned.

6 **Next BRA Meeting:** Monday 7th September 2020 at 7:30 pm.