

# THE BOOKHAMS RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Company Limited by Guarantee - Number 10053863

## Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020 at 7.30 pm via Conference Call

**In Attendance:** Peter Seaward (chair), Chris Pullan, John Howarth, Les Huett, Paul Kennedy, Nigel Smith, Frances Fancourt, Andrew Matthews, Dan Coffin, Carolyn Elson, Luke Tye, David Cox OBE, Geoff Tranter, Diane Poole, Monica Weller, Michael Lowes, Martin Hollins, Richard Davey, Andrew Freeman, Julia Dickinson.

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

**Apologies:** Margaret Lawson, Keith Francis, Cllr. Metin Huseyin, Cllr Simon Edge, John Allen, Marian Williams, David Smith, Michelle Smith, Nick Forrer, Michael Agius.

### 1 Minutes of the Last Meeting

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

### 2 Matters Arising & Actions

- 2.1 **The Garstons/Mead Crescent:** A request had been submitted to MVDC to reactivate the Asset of Community Value (ACV) application, however it has since transpired that a new application has to be submitted. This will now be actioned although it does also mean that new letters of support need to be submitted by members of the public. Les Huett will arrange for details to be put on the website, making it easier for people to respond.

### 3 Correspondence

- 3.1 Andrew Freeman reported that there had been a number of pieces of correspondence:
- 3.2 **White's Garage:** A resident in Lower Road has been in contact regarding the Fox garage site and whether the BRA was aware of any plans. The Committee wasn't aware of any proposals.
- 3.3 **Old Co-Op Site:** Peter Seaward said he had a conversation with the owner who confirmed that there are conversations going on with potential new leaseholders for the old Co-Op building at the top of the High Street.
- 3.4 **Christmas Lights:** Residents and local shop owners appear very pleased with the lights. There was one suggestion from a local resident for a tree to be illuminated on the Lower Shott side of the A246, although getting power there might be an issue, which could also illuminate the village sign. Peter Seaward said he would meet with DCI, who erect the lights, to see if a power outlet would be possible, and also at the St. Nicolas Lynch gate (which could also provide power for a sound system to be used at events like the Remembrance Day service). Battery power might also be an option.

- 3.5 **Electric Vehicle Charging Point:** It was suggested by a local resident that a couple of EV charging points could be put in the Lower Shott car park, some of which do a 60 - 80% charge in 30 mins while you shop.
- 3.6 Les Huett explained that there is an opportunity to establish a central base that could enable owners of electric vehicles to visit the village to shop or if there was a shuttle bus to Poleston Lacey. Both MVDC and SCC are looking at EV charging points so may be interested.

## 4 Group Updates

### 4.1 Management Group (Finance, Secretariat, Project Control)

4.1.1 **Company Limited by Guarantee – Tax Return:** John Howarth reported that the BRA owes £5.51 although he believes this is likely to be waived.

4.1.2 **Christmas Lights:** Chris Pullan said that an invoice for £3,120 had been received from DCL UK Ltd to put up and take down the light. John Howarth said that the MV Chamber of Commerce would be donating £500. Chris pointed out that there was a small shortfall to cover the lights this year and if there was to be any expansion, i.e. Lower Shott, then this would need to be funded.

### 4.2 Planning Group

4.2.1 **Planning Committee:** During the last month the Planning Committee considered 20 applications and made 2 representations. A further urgent letter had also been submitted in respect to a 5G mast application.

4.2.2 Nigel Smith reported back that he had reviewed to outcome of the planning committee's endeavours and, during the 12 months to the end of September, 208 applications had been submitted, including tree applications. Of these, the committee had submitted a letter of representation on 30 (4 in support and 26 opposing). Of these only 4 or 5 went ahead as per the officer's recommendation. The rest were either overturned by the Committee or conditions imposed which suggests that the planning committee's input is valid and, in most cases, listened to.

4.2.3 **Youth Centre:** SCC has submitted a planning application for a Youth Centre on the Lower Road Recreation ground. The Planning Committee has submitted a response to MVDC, some of the points being that this site would make it much more available to youngsters residing in Bookham with over 500 pupils a day pass this location on their way to and from the Howard of Effingham School. Being Green Belt land, it would need to satisfy the 'very special circumstances' test, i.e. officers and councillors need to be satisfied that there is a unique set of circumstances here that will not be repeatable elsewhere and so will not create an unacceptable precedent for other green belt development.

4.2.4 It is anticipated that the application would go to the Development Control Committee with an officer recommendation of refusal, although at this stage it is an outline application to test the principle of erecting a building in the rec. It was noted that the new proposal is virtually equivalent to the old centre plus the existing changing hut so there is no attempt to increase the overall footprint.

4.2.5 If the application is refused then SCC is likely to submit an application for the existing site but smaller and enabling funding would be reduced.

- 4.2.6 **Local Plan:** Elizabeth Daly reported that the MVDC Cabinet have agreed a new development scheme for the Local Plan with the Regulation 19 consultation planned for summer 2021. MVDC does not expect to undertake a further Regulation 18 consultation on any new Green Belt sites, but will be redoing its land availability assessment in light of Covid and climate change as well as consultation responses. This will result in a new assumption on expected brownfield sites, and a reassessment of Green Belt proposals. Any Green Belt sites which are considered potentially suitable for development will be subject to an individual reassessment to determine whether there are exceptional circumstances such as community benefits to justify taking them out of the Green Belt.
- 4.3 **Environment Group** (Roads, Paths, Drainage, Flooding, Trees Horticulture, Litter Pick)
- 4.3.1 **Street Cleaning:** Peter Seaward reported that Nancy Goodacre and Clare Curran had recently got Amey to clear the top of the High Street and the surrounding paths, and that he himself had been working with local residents to get the service road that runs along the A246 Guildford Road (between the High St and Yelverton Court) swept of leaves. Peter feels the street cleaning that MVDC has with Amey is inadequate in that it relies on Amey deciding what streets to clean based on national standards. Previously street cleaning was done on a regular basis dependent on location, e.g. the High Street would be done more frequently than a more distant and less used location.
- 4.3.2 It was noted that the four north RAs would like to meet with MVDC to discuss street cleaning. By coincidence MVDC's Scrutiny Committee will be meeting with Amey to debate the contract and any issues arising. Whilst not ideal, it does seem that Amey does response when asked.
- 4.3.3 **Trees:** Frances Fancourt reported that an application had been made to SCC for planting at the Garstons Triangle, although they want the outcome of the Asset of Community Value decided first.
- 4.3.4 **Planters:** Frances also said she was seeking quotes for some planters between Lower Shott and the post office.
- 4.3.5 **Rectory Lane:** Clare Curran and Michael Agius are looking at safer crossing options near The Grange/All Saint's church. It was suggested that a footpath could be painted on the road to make it safer.
- 4.4 **Community Group** (Education, Police, Transport, Emergency Services, Health, Churches Together)
- 4.4.1 **Eastwick School:** Michael Lowes reported that the school has signed-up to work towards becoming plastic free. The first to do so in Bookham.
- 4.4.2 **Howard of Effingham:** Michael Lowes reported back of what he had learnt about the school:
- 4.4.3 Regarding the handover date, the following statement has been agreed: "The current construction programme would enable Berkeley to handover the new school facilities to The Howard in the summer of 2023, subject to the completion of all outstanding planning matters."
- 4.4.4 With regard to delays, it has taken time to prepare the technical design work for a

number of pre commencement conditions. Planning decision making has slowed across the country generally this year due to staff absences and many Council planning departments have found staff are moved to Covid-19 response which can create backlogs. However, Berkeley are confidently on track for a start on site in February next year.

4.4.5 The main point of change in the plans which is that the sports hall and sixth form will now be incorporated into a single building.

4.4.6 The design supports adaptable school management. Flexibility in spaces proving to be hugely important in future pandemic planning and something we find really concerns parents on the schemes we have worked on in 2020.

4.4.7 Firstly, further information has just been published, find using the link below:

[The new home for The Howard update – December 2020 \(mailchi.mp\)](#)

4.4.8 David Cox said that there will need to be additional capacity between now and when the new school opens. This remains an outstanding point that needs addressing.

4.4.9 It was noted that a representative from Berkeley would be willing to attend a future committee meeting.

4.4.10 It was also noted that a planning application has been submitted for the former British Legion centre to be used as a Special Educational Needs and Disabilities centre.

4.4.11 **Buses:** Keith Francis emailed prior to the meeting to report that at SCC's Cabinet Meeting on the **24 November 2020**, they discussed:

4.4.12 "Accelerating the Introduction of Ultra-Low / Zero Emissions Buses and Community Transport Vehicles into Surrey", which includes a proposed financial support from the council with supporting investment from the bus operators which will see the introduction of between 70 and 80 ultra-low or zero emission buses, alongside over 50 Community Transport ("CT") minibuses over the next five years.

4.4.13 On Community Transport the papers states that "In conjunction with the financial support element of the scheme, to improve rural mobility in Mole Valley District Council, a new Demand-Responsive Transport service accessible to all residents is proposed to be introduced, to supplement the normal bus network."

4.4.14 **Vehicle Activated Signs:** There has been limited progress. Clare Curran has met Peter Harris who represents the Surrey Camera Safe Partnership, an organisation that can provide such signs. Following an exchange of emails a meeting will be scheduled for January to look at potential sites, etc.

4.4.15 **Christmas Box:** Martin Hollins said that Churches Together plan to produce 500 'Christmas Boxes' this year with some festive treats, families and elderly people.

#### 4.5 **Communications and Members Comms and Membership - Year End Report**

4.5.1 Les Huett spoke about the Year-End Report as follows:

4.5.2 Our Q4 Communications and Membership Plan that we issued at the 7th September Committee meeting has been completed. Our strategy was to:

- To keep residents engaged with the BRA
- Maintain membership numbers and subscriptions
- Use Road Stewards and Noticeboards and third parties for physical media.
- Continue with digital communications which is proving an effective engagement channel

- 4.5.3 To deliver the strategy the Communications and Membership Team shall:
- 4.5.4 Produce a campaign in print and digital media with the simple headline message along the lines of:
- 4.5.5 "BRA - Still here for you": This we have achieved with a significant personal effort by Les and Carolyn and supported by our team of Road Stewards.
- 4.5.6 We have produced content for the Newsletter, BRA website, Facebook, Look Local, Bookham Bulletin and Effingham Roundabout throughout the year.
- 4.5.7 For the whole of 2020 we have had our online membership payment service available and circa 600 people have paid on line this year with a significant step up in subscriptions during the Q4 campaign. We included an option for members to make a donation in addition to their subscription which there has been some uptake. We also introduced the option to pay by phone for those residents unable to pay online which has also seen some uptake.
- 4.5.8 The bulk of membership payments are still coming through our Road Stewards and we are grateful to them for their continued commitment through what has been a challenging year. Some of our Road Stewards have also adopted digital media by communicating to their road WhatsApp groups that have come in to play this year.
- 4.5.9 Website: We continue with weekly updates on the BRA website with snippets of the posts made to our Facebook page and I Live in Bookham pages so that people can read more on the BRA website and catch up on other stories they may not be aware of.
- 4.5.10 The stats for the website are:
- Last 30 days: 3274 page views up 117% from last month
  - For the year: 22,174 page views.
- 4.5.11 **Email Service:** There will be a final Mailchimp campaign for the year which will have two versions - one to those members who have paid online and one for members who have yet to. Our MailChimp database stands at 1,100 - nearly double year on year.
- 4.5.12 **Membership:** We are waiting for a few Road Stewards to submit their membership schedules and payments but we expect to collect over £6,000 which is more than we anticipated but down on 2019 – (£9k), however there is an overall drop in membership numbers. We expect to close the year on circa 1,300 – 1,400 members which is less than 2019 (2421) but again higher than we anticipated. An encouraging point to note is that we have 146 new members who have joined online.

4.5.13 **Plans for 2021:** We shall be reviewing in the New Year our campaigns and activities and exploring what additional automation we can develop to reduce the amount of manual transactions we currently have to undertake. This has been a significant overhead this year due to the success of our campaigns but with a reduced availability of Newsletter distributors and Road Stewards.

4.5.14 **Newsletter:** It had not yet been decided when the next Newsletter should be published. Deliveries tie in with collecting subs so ideally the next Newsletter would be until perhaps May as collections for this year are not yet complete. However, the timing also needs to tie in with the AGM.

#### 4.6 **Business Group** (External Relations)

4.6.1 **Shop Local:** The Mole Valley Chamber of Commerce has introduced an initiative to encourage people to shop locally, and 11 Bookham businesses have signed up so far. The scheme works by displaying a sticker with a QR code encouraging us all to “shop local”. Shoppers will be able to scan the QR code at all participating businesses on every occasion they buy and will be entered into a monthly draw. In support, the Committee agreed to fund two £25 vouchers as prizes.

#### 4.7 **History and Memorials Group**

4.7.1 **St. Nicolas War Memorials:** Peter Seaward reported that the lettering on the St. Nicolas memorial is fading. Discussions are ongoing to find a solution, but it may be necessary to re-letter every couple of years.

4.7.2 **All Saints War Memorial:** Peter also said that 6 soldiers who died during WWI are not named on the All Saint’s memorial. As it is listed it is not possible to simply add them, but a plaque could be attached to name the missing soldiers.

### 5 **Project Updates** – Nil to report

### 6 **Any Other Business**

6.1.1 **MVDC Financial Plans:** Elizabeth Daly mentioned that MVDC have agreed a new medium term financial strategy ahead of the budget-setting process for next year. There is considerable uncertainty over future funding, so MVDC is proposing to fund its one-off Covid losses from reserves. New spending and investment will be restricted to priorities such as statutory obligations, the local plan and climate change, and other initiatives which will generate future savings.

6.1.2 **Council Tax:** Elizabeth also said that the Government have announced the maximum council tax increases for next year. For Band D, these are SCC £75 (5% increase), MVDC £5 (2.7%), Surrey Police £15 (5.54%).

### 7 **Next Meeting:** Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 7.30pm.