

MINUTES OF ARA COMMITTEE MEETING

THURSDAY 13TH FEBUARY 2014

PRESENT – MC, CI, FC, SN, BB, AD.

APOLOGIES – NONE

1) Delayed minutes from meeting on 21/11/13.

Agreed and cleared.

Matters Arising:

BB put together response re traffic issues – this has been done.

Dec meeting did not take place re spotted bull with Simon Grover.

Photographic evidence has been submitted by CI which we are all grateful for.

All other issues arising are covered on the Agenda for today's meeting.

2) Minutes for meeting 8/1/14.

Agreed and cleared.

Matters Arising:

MC – to write to County Council re Drovers Way – MC with mandate opposed application on the grounds of traffic volumes and lack of parking facilities, however all agreed ARA would welcome a sympathetic well planned development.

BB – has written to Simon Grover re potholes. CI noted that Britton Avenue is excluded from the 7.5 tonne restriction for Lorries as this is the exit point for the Lorries from Drovers way.

FC – Prestige Italian van – has been given 2 weeks' notice to rescind parking permit as it is as we suspected, too big.

ALL – Newsletter – Mary has received good feedback.

Constitution - on the agenda for later in the meeting.

3) Meeting with Street Reps – CI

Scheduled for 26th Feb 2014. At the moment we have reps for Selby, Church Crescent, Etna Rd and Russell/Britton Avenue coming to meeting. We have reps for Gombards, Stapley and Worley top that are not able to attend. We need to agree venue and a time for meeting. CI also suggested that we agree dates for further Street Rep meetings for the rest of the year which we can inform them of at the welcome meeting. Format of the welcome meeting was discussed. MC happy to host meeting. Agreed that meeting will be 8-9.30pm, with the Committee meeting at 7.30pm for short preliminary get together. Suggested that meeting should be informal with some refreshments. Purpose of meeting is to let Reps know who we are, what the ARA stand for and what we can do for them and what their role is. Also let Reps know about the AGM and ask them to encourage more street members to come to AGM.

FC – highlighted the need to be clear about what we can and can't do. Show that we are involved in the bigger picture of campaigning as well as the minutiae of potholes! A management of people's expectations. Suggested that this could be conveyed in the next Newsletter. Felt that this would be clearer after second part of tonight's meeting with Chris White as CI pointed out everything raised so far by street reps is Chris White's territory – important for reps to know where our limits are as a Residents Association.

CI – Also suggested that we agree on dates for further Street Rep meetings – MC suggested 3 times a year – Mid June, October and Feb.

Also need to inform Reps when committee meetings are so that they have a point of contact for any arising issues.

MC - suggested that we need a contact sheet with name and Mob No so that reps can contact us if necessary. MC, BB and CI happy to give contacts plus the use of the ARA Gmail account.

ACTION: MC/SN to put together an agenda and paperwork for Reps meeting and send out.

4) Subscriptions and Membership cards.

CI – CI and FC have sorted out a prototype membership card with Roy Bellamy. All agreed to style of card.

Accounts - CI raised the issue of level of subscription and definition of concession. We have 330 properties + 46 housing association properties. Initially we set £5/household and £3 for concessions. Discussion followed as who fits into which category. CI has looked at present bank balance and been thinking about possible potential running costs. Previous running costs have largely involved printing costs which we don't have on the same scale as a result of email use and council printing our newsletter free of charge. Potential cost will be incurred

when creating our RA website. CI has also looked at membership fees for other RA's and found a range from £5 to free. We have received £100 grant to cover housing association representation from the Local Authority. CI pointed out that it is important to have a fighting fund and money to cover website costs.

After much discussion it was agreed that we should set a flat rate subscription fee of £3 per household to be collected annually after the AGM by the Street Reps with discretion left Street Reps for individual households.

5) Arrangements for the AGM and Discussion on boundary changes.

i) As required by the constitution the AGM has been announced in the newsletter.

The style and content of the AGM was discussed agreeing that MC to do a welcome and introduce the ARA and to give them the picture of what has happened so far. Then the committee members to say a few words about their roles.

At AGM Formal business to be covered – Constitutional issues, Officers reappointments and Accounts.

MC to do Chairs statement.

ACTIONS:

CI – to produce the accounts and present at the AGM (needs to clear them with previous post holder).

We need copies of the Agenda, Accounts and Constitution and a few copies of the newsletter to be available on the night. Who is doing this? Organization of this needs to be agreed.

FC to contact Colin Kember to confirm booking of the Lodge Room at Aboyne Lodge School for AGM.

FC also to draw up a A5 reminder of the AGM with a suggestion of RSVP to the Gmail account after meeting with Street Reps. This is to be distributed by Reps.

ii) **Boundary Changes – re Folly Lane.**

Boundary changes on Folly Lane were discussed and agreed that it makes sense geographically for us to include the Odd No houses and to not include the Even No houses. The legality of this change needs to be covered by the re written constitution. The constitution has been rewritten by MC (the chair). This amended constitution will be the one

proposed and put forward for the AGM on the 27th March 2014. This also covers the minor changes to the boundary of the ARA.

ACTION: MC to double check with Nora re the change of constitution and the process of adoption.

8) Discussion items for Councillor Chris White – preparation section. (Appears out of number order as a result of visit from CW).

CI has collated a list of issues from Street Reps for the meeting with Chris White. It covers most items that we have already raised with Chris White in the past.

Issues to be raised tonight are:

i) We need to ask CW to explain where the dividing lines are in the responsibility of the County Council and the remit of SADC with a view to roads and pavements and lighting. We feel that there is a lack of joined up-ness.

ii) Safety and volume of traffic and its effect on our roads around us. We need to raise the issue of the jamming of our roads around the car parks on a Saturday morning. This is potentially a big issue for access for emergency vehicles. Is there an overall plan for the roads in the city centre and how are you working with SADC to make improvements. A proper review of the whole area is required. Repainting of the road markings would initially have a huge impact. Including Drivers Way issues.

iii) Relationship between the economic development and social impact. The bigger picture with planners and how do we as a RA have a better voice?

iv) Section 106 money – what is happening to this?

v) Spotted Bull – update.

NB – Return to Agenda after CW left)

6) Planning applications update.

Dealt with during session with CW.

7) Funding update and running costs.

Agreed a rate for photocopying costs incurred by any committee members undertaking ARA work at the rate of :

6p for double sided sheets of paper, 3p per sheet for single sided paper.

Agreed actions:

- 1) Walk Drovers Way - 12pm MC and SN and possibly FC if MC not available.**
- 2) CI to send CW list of problems as presented from Reps.**
- 3) CI – to send letter regarding the Spotted Bull and photos**
- 4) SN/MC – minutes of meeting and invite to AGM.**

AOB

AD – Look St Albans – Insurance - Mary will check with Nora.

CI – Gmail account – on agenda to discuss next time

FC – Look St Albans – on the agenda for next time.

ARA MEETING WITH COUNCILLOR CHRIS WHITE – 13TH FEB 2014.

Welcomed by MC who gave CW a brief history of the resurrection of the ARA and brief overview of what we have been discussing tonight outlining issues that we would like to raise with CW:-

- i) What is the dividing line between the County Council and the SADC.
- ii) Section 106 spend.
- iii) Drovers Way.
- iv) Spotted Bull – update.
- v) Outline the bigger picture between the social/economic relationships. How do we have a better voice and a better balance? Concern of a lack of overall plan. How can we work together, for the sake of all residents.

RESPONSE FROM CW.

Outlined who he represents – CW is a County Councillor for St Albans Central Division which comprises of 2 Wards which are St Peters Ward and Clarence Ward for 21 years. Recently become a District Councillor for Clarence. And he is also leader of the opposition on the District Council.

Distinction between District and County Council -

County – Highways, pavements and lighting, social services, fire services. Libraries.

District – Parking function and he recognised this has been very problematic. Believes it has recently improved with the appointment of John Charlton.

Relationship regarding RA and the Councils –

District council now has set up the City Neighbourhood chaired by Michael Green. (MC represents the ARA).

Fix My Street – an effective way of reporting problems. We have advertised the use of this in our Newsletter.

CW – stressed how important it is that he receives a copy of the ARA newsletters and our Agendas. Also made sure that we are receiving his newsletters – an effective notice board.

MC asked if he would like to be invited to our AGM – yes he would.

Plan:

It has been established that the housing need for St Albans is 400 units/annually. There is a greenbelt review around St Albans and Harpenden identifying possible sites for building. House building has been too low for many years nationally. In terms of a plan we are one of the Authorities most behind in the country. This will probably be resolved within the next year. There is also likely to be a new Head of Planning.

There is a lack of vision in St Albans. We are looking for a vision. CW stated that this is why it is so important that the RA's are becoming robust and active and the City Neighbourhood Committee could also be very important.

Issues Re Land Use:

Drovers Way – A lot of development in a small space and bringing with it higher vehicle volumes, when we already have problems with delivery issues, parking and safety issues.

CW - This is a service road and should be kept that way, but make it better - otherwise the alternative is to use Britton Avenue as a service road – Not an option in our or CW's view. One of the problems is that the Traffic Orders that should channel delivery traffic onto Drovers way are currently defective.

At present there is a consultation about the Traffic Calming Table - CW to do a site visit to Drovers Way on Sat the 22nd Feb at Noon, to assess the traffic movement on Drovers Way with HCC highway planners. CW very worried about the impact of the traffic especially once the hotel is open. There are concerns about safety issues of the pelican crossing behind BHS and queues in to the Tesco/M&S car park and the multi-story car park. Is there a parking bay for Lorries next to the hotel for the Hotel deliveries? CW thinks that there is one planned. It was agreed 2 members of the ARA will accompany CW on this walk.

Section 106 Money.

This is money bid for by both the County and District councils. County have not spent the money that was available. Lack of communication. Misuses of money eg: Lifts at the station were paid for from Section 106 money – should have been paid for by Network Rail. The solution is in transparency and accountability. There should be a policy and local councillors and RA's should be consulted. All agreed with CW on this.

A list of Issues raised by Street Reps was passed CW. The list was discussed and the importance of reporting faults to 'Fix My Street' was reiterated – Report, Report and Report!!!

CI - has been taking photos around the area of worn out road signs and white lines and concerns about traffic driving the wrong way up Britton Avenue. Some of the One-Way signs are too high or with poor visibility - Will send this evidence to CW.

ARA discussed with CW our priorities with the highway safety signage and other area of road safety; eg 20 Miles/Hour signage – not visible enough within the centre of town and approach roads.

CI – raised the continual issue of the potholes on Britton Avenue, we asked about the planned programme of repairs and asked if it is to be prioritised and bought forward.

Parking.

We raised the concern that the next residents parking review for St Albans is not until 2016. ARA very concerned that we have big parking problems now. We cannot wait until 2016 with no action. We want the residence permits extended until 10pm on weekdays and Sunday cover. A full review of parking for residents is urgently required. CW said he would look into this.

Spotted Bull.

The latest concerns from the ARA's point of view was outlined. This is a Very Urgent Issue. A key concern is over speculative building without permission. There have been 3 expansions without permission with additional bi-folding doors and a major increase in internal space. Developer has been given a notice to stop but this has been ignored. This is going to have a huge effect on the local area, noise, traffic, deliveries etc. CW to email the District Council to question urgently what is going on.

ACTIONS:

- 1) Notify CW who will join him on the Drovers Way walk on the 22/2/14**
- 2) CI – to email list from Street Reps and objection letter from the College Street RA and photos regarding the Spotted Bull.**
- 3) SN – copy of the minutes of tonight's meeting and an invite to our AGM will be forwarded to CW.**