



ABOYNE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION
Committee Meeting
21 July 2015

Present:

Mary Conneely (Chair)	Julia Duschenes (Sec)
Cynthia Ireson (Treasurer)	Brian Benson (Vice-Chair)
Fiona Couper	Barry Cropper
Christine McLauchlan	

1. Welcome

MC welcomed the committee.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies received from Sue Noon.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

Following amendments: Item 3. Street Reps also needed for Catherine and Adelaide Sts.

Item 6. Bashir *Jirvani*

After which the minutes were approved.

4. Matters Arising

Item 5: cheque signatories processed.

Item 6: see Comms report below.

Item 7: see Planning report below. It was noted that The Brickyard has lost its appeal to extend outside smoking area.

Item 9: Councillors have been added to mailing list.

Item 10: see Comms report below.

4.1. Minutes of the Street Reps Meeting 10.6.15

Minutes agreed.

4.2. Matters Arising

Item 7: MC & BB attended Scrutiny Committee and wrote to the Council.

5. St Claire's, Update

MC set out the current position as she sees it: There has been a great deal of concern raised about this change of use locally, a great deal of it justified. The core issue remains, how can the needs of local homeless people be met, who are by the nature of this proposal transitory, balanced alongside, mainly families, who feel threatened by it?

There was much discussion as to how this could be achieved. It looks as though, for legal, financial and duty-of-care reasons, the Council is minded to approve the proposal. The ARA wishes to make the best of the proposal and hold the Council to account. However, the Action Group look set to oppose it. After much discussion, it was agreed that the ARA will object to the planning application and will continue to express residents' concerns.

MC noted that Chris White has been tenacious on this subject, asking searching questions of the Council. Other Councilors were less impressive. The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, Roma Mills, was also clear and raised her concern, asked for requirements on the License and made clear her desire to be involved in that process.

Much hinges on what gets written into The License with Hightown Praetorian. There are the conditions and requirements which must be met to satisfy the Council and the local community. The Scrutiny Committee was keen that the license includes all eventualities: e.g. it is not currently clear what risk assessments will be done on candidates for places in St Claire's. Roma Mills wishes to be involved in the creation of the license, covering management of the services, staffing patterns etc. The license will need to be carefully crafted and, most importantly, safeguards included, but there is little local trust in either Hightown or the Council at present.

The Action Group will oppose it, on planning grounds, re: overdevelopment issues. Parking and the lack of communal space. ARA felt that their best arguments are rather the issues of management of the project, Council safeguards (or lack of) and potential money wastage. Fire safety issues were discussed, but most felt that the Fire Officer would raise any irregularities.

MC pointed out that the profile of homelessness is changing and that it does not necessarily involve the homeless being linked to criminality.

MC/BB to send letter stating the above concerns and requesting a 24/7 concierge to bolster the local trust issue and the letter will also address legitimate local concerns, crime, amenities and the character of the property. It was felt that in this way the committee would use the Council's parameters to respond, objecting to the proposal, but trying to make suggestions to mitigate that objection. MC/BB

6. Communications Report

FC, CM are now trained to edit the website and update newsletters etc. As it will already be a public document, the August newsletter will include ARA's response to St Claire's development. FC

6.1. Membership Lists currently held in two places: 1. On a spreadsheet; 2. Contacts list on gmail account. It is planned to reduce this to one Google.doc.

FC kindly agreed to take on the organization of the Street Reps with CM to co-ordinate working with CI.

The next Street Reps meeting will be on Wednesday 30 September with the need to concentrate on subscription collection.

There was discussion of a Noticeboard for the website with possible link to StreetLife site FC/CM/CI

7. Planning Report

BB reported that a planning application has been received for the already much-extended 3 Russell Ave. (loft conversion with dormer windows). Rita Waldron and BB will view documents at Council. It was felt that ARA might object on grounds of over-expansion of property, especially as neighbours backing onto the property were concerned that they would be overlooked and possible issue of privacy concerns. BB contended that ARA does not necessarily have a mandate to object to everything, but it was felt that ARA should uphold Council principles e.g. no PVC windows in conservation area. Objections due by 04.08.15 BB

8. Treasurer's Report

£497.70 in the bank. CI to apply to Council for annual subscription of £100. £60 owing for website training. All committee to supply thoughts on new Treasurer. ALL
MC thanked CI for all she has done and a vote of thanks was given to her by the entire committee.

9. Street Reps Meeting

See above. Consolidation of information on website and date set for next meeting. Parking continues to be an issue. JD to circulate committee minutes to Street Reps JD

10. AOB

BC reported from the Friends of Victoria Playing Fields. The Fields have now been registered as a community asset for 5 years which gives a little added protection. It is possible that they will become a Field in Trust (application ongoing).

Play Equipment: £44K is now available. Members have made proposals. Cllr. Alun Davies is meant to be progressing, but the committee has yet to see this come to fruition. Lottery applications and crowd-funding also being investigated to boost funds to £60-70K, in order to buy equipment more useful for older children, (akin to the Adizone in Verulam Park). Appeals to be made through the ARA newsletter.

There is to be a Greenspace Action Plan, draft due by September. There will be a walk around the field 6-7pm, 30 July. To be advertised in the Newsletter. FC

Look St Albans to be raised at next meeting. Should ARA be associated with them? For discussion next time. JD

12. Dates of Next Meetings

Street Reps: Wednesday 30 September, venue to be confirmed

Full Committee Meeting: 16 Sept, 8pm, venue to be confirmed [4 Selby Ave for a change?]

Meeting ended: 10.10pm