

Great Langborough Residents' Association

Defending our environment  www.glra.org.uk

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Salvation Army Hall, Sturges Road

13th June 2018 at 7:30 p.m.

Attendees

A substantial turnout of 57 residents signed the register plus 6 GLRA Committee members, 1 WBC Director and 3 councillors. Residents who signed the attendance sheets, those who sent apologies and attending councillors will receive a copy of these minutes. A copy will appear on the Association's web site www.glra.org.uk

Committee Members:

Robin Cops *Minutes*, Paul Ibson, Anita McPhilimey, David Nash *Secretary*, Philip Robinson, Pat Smith *Chair*

Councillors:

Julian McGhee-Sumner, *Borough & Town*; Oliver Whittle, *Borough*; Philip Mirfin, *Borough & Town*

Apologies

Philip Lawman *Treasurer*, Andrew Pearce *Web Master*, Gwyneth Garrad, Patricia McIntyre, Elizabeth Ramsay, Aileen & Nick Wood

Guest Speakers:

Cllr Philip Mirfin, Executive Member for Town Regeneration + Bernie Pich, Head of Regeneration WBC

Introduction:

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed residents, councillors and guest speakers. She outlined the agenda for the evening.

Annual General Meeting Business

Opening

The Chair asked all residents present to sign the attendance sheets with their E-Mail addresses and this would also act as their acceptance of the GLRA's GDPR published policy and allow documents to be sent to them.

She also directed the meeting to the GLRA web site www.glra.org.uk for the 2017 Chair's Newsletter, the 2017 AGM Minutes and the 2017 Treasurer's Report. Copies of the 2017 draft minutes and a summary of the 2017 Questions put to our 2017 AGM guest speaker, Andy Couldrick and subsequent Answers, plus developments to date, were distributed amongst the members present.

Minutes of AGM meeting 2017.

In relation to those questions asked in 2017, most of these would be addressed in the Chair's Report later.

Anita McPhilimey proposed that the minutes be accepted. This was seconded by Philip Robinson Approved unanimously.

Chair's Report – Pat Smith

Town Centre Regeneration Update

You may have noticed that things have been changing in the town... not least that we have all achieved far more steps on our pedometers in getting around the town.

We are assured that the Market Place will return to more normal use by July, and hopefully it will be before that.

Peach Place is clearly taking shape and Elm's Field development has started with a sad loss of trees and traffic issues for Langborough Road again. Hopefully that too will be short lived. I do not propose talking any further on this topic as I anticipate that will be Philip Mirfin's specialist subject!

The committee contributed to the **consultation on the carnival pool** development on September 17 which has been passed by the planning committee.

We provided individual responses to the proposed closure of **Luckley Path**, the result of which is still awaited.

Meetings

Committee members have also set up and attended a number of meetings with **WBC and WTC** representatives. Reports on these are on the website, so I do not plan to go in to much detail.

Our meetings included a number **attended by our local Wescott Ward Councillors**, Oliver Whittle and Julian McGee Sumner, who are here today. As you may know, Julian has been elected town mayor and also deputy leader of WBC recently. We congratulate him on these.

There has been a meeting with the regeneration team and David Nash attended a short lived Highways Advisory Committee.

We also had a meeting with councillors and officers from the development company (McLaughlin and Harvey) for Elm's Field to discuss the impact of the development and road closures proposed for Denmark Street and Langborough Road. As a result, we got agreement on 2 separate occasions that Langborough Road should remain 2 way down to the Western end of LR but inevitably the closure of half of Denmark Street recently by WBC has caused major disruption to traffic flow around the town.

There has also been a Forum for Southern Wokingham Distributor Road. The first section and bridge from Montague Park to Easthampstead Road now has planning permission. However, there is no time scale to build the Spine Road or Western Gateway at the Tesco roundabout.

The next follow up forum has however been cancelled - quite possibly for lack of a firm decision.

Parking Issues.

As an update to last year's minutes, we note that since the council have taken on the control of parking enforcement from the police, parking in our roads has improved.

Election of Committee and Officers

All current committee members had indicated their willingness to serve another year. In addition Lesley Kendall has volunteered to join the committee. She was proposed by Pat Smith and seconded by David Nash.

It was proposed by Melanie Allen seconded by Chris O'Donnell that the Committee should be elected en bloc. This was approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report - Philip Lawman (presented by The Chair in his absence)

Pat presented the details of the accounts in the GLRA financial year ending 31st March 2018 plus provisions for expenditure in the current year to date. The bulk of the GLRA funds (£568) were deposited in the Association's bank accounts at National Westminster. The largest expenditures of the Association were associated with the AGM – hall hire and printing of publicity – plus expenses associated with the GLRA web site: a total of £105. The only source of revenue is from voluntary contributions by members and guests at the AGM. Pat encouraged the attendees to give generously to support the continuing work of the Association. The statement of accounts to 31.03.18 will be available on www.glra.org.uk

Note: There was an exit collection which raised £169. Many thanks to those who contributed.

Any Other Business – Pat Smith

Q: Chris O'Donnell, Howard Road: What is the outcome of the proposed permanent closure to vehicles of Luckley Path? This was proposed without proper consultation and local residents were against this. He was organising a demonstration against this and asking for volunteers.

A: (by Cllr Julian McGhee Sumner). WBC recognised that consultation was lacking and so the proposal is on hold until a full consultation can be held. This is currently being organised with a leaflet drop to residents and shopkeepers explaining the reasons for the proposed closure.

Q: John Brennen, South Drive: Is South Drive part of the GLRA area?

A: We understood that South Drive/Close had its own RA but residents are welcome to take part in the GLRA by signing on at the meeting or E-Mailing us.

Q: David Robertson: Parking is poorly controlled down Fairview Road and Gipsy Lane and now the bin lorry can't get through. Can we get better control?

A: We will reflect this through to WBC and ask for better control using the Parking Wardens; Action: GLRA

This was the conclusion of the AGM business session of the evening.

Presentation by Cllr. Philip Mirfin and Bernie Pich "Wokingham Town Regeneration and After"

The Chair introduced Philip who has just taken on the expanded role of Executive Member for Regeneration supported by Bernie Pich, Head of Regeneration for WBC. Philip will now be responsible for all matters related to the Regeneration including town centre streets and highways.

A copy of the slides will be made available on the Association's web site at www.glra.org.uk

In Philip's presentation, he gave us a view of the following: -

- Context for the Town Regeneration.
 - "A growing town in a growing borough"
 - Core Strategy 2010. 10,000 new homes with right infrastructure. By 2026 20% growth in population.
 - Not about making money. The private sector not interested as they couldn't make money
- Objectives
 - Thriving town centre economy
 - 18 hour economy – social viability
 - Changing the face of retail. Clicks and bricks
- Letting Strategy
 - Strengthen the retail core
 - Differentiate between Reading and Bracknell
 - Build quality independent local retailers on the back of key aspirational nationals
- Strengthen the 18 hour economy

- Masterplan objectives
 - Spaces to breath
 - Streets as places
 - Setting the design standards
- Achieved
 - New station
 - Station link road
 - Peach Street replacement 2014
 - Carnival Hub phase 1 June 2017
 - Peach Place
 - Scaffolding down end June
 - Key Worker housing
 - New retail
 - Completed by November 2018
- Future
 - Market Place Improvements
 - Unforeseen difficulties mean late completion (March 2019?)
 - Elms Field
 - Foundation work started and on schedule
 - New road finished by December 2018
 - Carnival Hub
 - New pool
 - New library
 - New multi-use auditorium and sports hall
 - Completion by 2022

Questions & Answers to Philip and Bernie

Q: Tania Britz, Langborough Road: How are we ensuring that shops stay in the area with the recent spate of closures? What incentives are being offered? How about rate subsidy for shopkeepers hit by the regeneration work?

A: *Few have closed due to local circumstances. There is a remarkable list of people interested in shops (unable to be specific due to commercial confidentiality). For those that want shorter leases we have asked to examine their business plans.*

The Council have offered help in applying for nationally available rate relief. So far 6 have taken this up. Other incentives have been offered particularly to local traders. But the best help is if residents use the local shops for their shopping.

Q: John Milner, Gipsy Lane: How many new retailers have been confirmed for Peach Place and Peach Street?

A: *None - but 6 going through at the moment. Peach Place opening is on schedule for the end of November. Aiming for commitments by 3rd week in September to allow for 3 to 8 weeks fit out.*

Q: Chris Singleton, Crescent Road; With the predicted build up in traffic in the next three years what is WBC's timing on the Northern and Southern Distributor Roads?

A: *NDR will be completed by 2021. Work is on-going to complete the first section (Eastern Gateway + railway bridge) of the SDR but because of the slowdown in house building there is no commitment to complete the SDR for the foreseeable future.*

Q: Martin Spooner, South Drive: Why don't you start the roads, particularly the Northern and Southern Distributor Roads, before the developments are built to encourage building and relieve the town centre of traffic ASAP?

A: *We need the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to fund the roads. On average CIL brings in to WBC £42K per house of which 15% goes to WTC. CIL only becomes available once the houses are built and we don't want to over-borrow. This is similar to the town centre which we have kept going during the redevelopment.*

David Robertson, Fairview Rd: Will there be a west side cross route between Molly Millers Lane and Reading Road to take the pressure off Wellington Road and the new Elms Field Road which will act as rat runs?

A: *Nothing planned. We will review when the roads are opened*

Q: Barrie Thompson, Gipsy Lane: When will Langborough Road and Denmark Street return to normal operation?

A: *WBC is committed to a final opening date for Market Place of 27th July 2018. Langborough Road and Denmark Street will be fully open before that.*

Q: Will Denmark Street need to be shut or made one-way again after?

A: *Only once for one a 24 hour period. We also have some ideas we are investigating to ease traffic conditions in Langborough Road*

Q: Robin Cops, Langborough Road: Can you ensure that we are consulted on any proposed changes to Langborough Road and area before any decisions are taken?

A: *Absolutely – we will*

Q: Lucy Allen, Langborough Road: If there is any consideration of losing the on-street parking in Langborough Road can we have a reserved area for LR residents in the Denmark Street car park?

A: *No. Greater enforcement of parking under CPE will create better parking.*

Q: James Wooders, Gipsy Lane; Are there any plans for the existing Library site after it closes?

A: *Nothing decided yet. We've got 4 years and we are looking at traffic easement in the area.*

Q: Keith Greenwood, Murdoch Road; we've got single lane traffic running through the town after it is finished. How will emergency vehicles get through during busy periods?

A: *The town centre will be substantially levelled and emergency vehicles can use pavements and bays where necessary to get passed as they always did.*

Q: Terry O'Donnell, Gipsy Lane, Will the new stone surface in market Square be cleaned before opening to get the oil and tarmac stains off.

A: *Balfour Beatty will clean and seal the stones before handover which should last for 5 years. Every four months the surface will be cleaned by the Council.*

Meeting Closure

Pat Smith closed the meeting by thanking Cllr Philip Mirfin and Bernie Pich for the presentation; a copy of the slides will be made available on the Association's web site at www.gbra.org.uk. She also thanked attending residents and guests for coming to take part.

Members of the GLRA Committee will actively follow up the issues raised by our members at the AGM and provide information via email and our web site as it becomes available.

The meeting closed at about 9:00 p.m.