

Agenda - The Reddings Residents' Association Committee Meeting

Time, date and venue: 19-30 hours, 12 December (small hall Community Centre, North Road West).

Attendance:

TRRA

Gary Fulford – Chairperson (GF)
Adrian McKie - Secretary (AVM)
Simon Willis (SWi)
Lorraine Fulford (LF)
James Russell (JR)
Peter Smith (PSm)
Clemens Orth (CO)

Guests and speakers:

Cllr Nigel Britter (NB)
Cllr Mike Collins (MC)

Apologies

Peter Swales (PSw)
Joanne Yates (JY)
Martin Zwart (MZ)

1. Previous minutes. Agreed.

2. Matters arising from previous minutes and update on actions:

a) Speed sign update (SWh). Still missing – No update from Cllr Simon Wheeler

b) Park and Ride - barriers/warden update (SWh). NB said that the standard proposed system was not perfect as its installation would result in a loss of parking spaces. The Council was liaising with the manufacturers to come up with a hybrid scheme that would be introduced in the Spring. JR said there was a proposed scheme for motorists, parking at the P&R but not using the bus, to pay £6 a day or £3 after 1 p.m. Fines would be issued for those not paying.

David Norman (Councillor for Hardwicke/Kingsway) had been consulted and there would be a consultation period about how the free parking issue would be handled, especially as GF noted that there were only a few free parking spaces in The Reddings, that were not already being used. MC said there needed to be a response on the free parking issue as there was no one single solution and that other areas, such as Swindon, had experienced the same problems. CO emphasised that the Park and Ride should remain a Park and Ride service. JR suggested that David Norman should come to a TRRA meeting.

NB said that the Grovefield and BMW parking issues would depend on the outcome of the Grovefield appeal. There would be a parking consultation on 21 December and any feedback would be given to

David Norman. MC said the problem was that there were no minimum set requirements for parking. He said that the issues needed to be recognised as any (charged) parking would lead to displacement of cars looking for free parking. This had been an issue for the last 20 years, but there were no answers.

GF suggested subsidised buses, but MC commented that there was not the demand for particular bus routes into town. However AVM said that taking the bus was fantastic way to get into town, but there was little point paying £3.90 for a bus when an hour's parking in town for £1.50. NB said the construction of the Cyber Park may take some strain off the parking issue.

JR to prepare TRRA feedback on the consultation to David Norman

c) North Road West - road repairs update (SWh). Not discussed.

d) Other residents' organisations liaison update (JR). JR said he was keeping in the loop with the Benhall Residents' Association, but contact was not as good with the Hatherley Association. Hatherley would welcome The Reddings into the Parish, but there was fierce opposition previously and joining would incur a precept charge for all residents. Benhall do not have the same planning/developer problems as The Reddings, but are happy to collaborate with TRRA. JR to continue attending others meeting on behalf of TRRA.

e) Email arrangements/WhatsApp (CO). CO will place AVM on whatsapp.

AVM asked if anyone had seen the report on BBC News which said that neighbouring Bamfurlong had the slowest internet speed in the UK . GF explained that Bamfurlong shared the same exchange as The Reddings, namely the one in Churchdown. The slow internet speed was due to the distance of the cable from the exchange to The Reddings.

NB said that the government had a grant scheme which could be claimed by residents. He had been involved in getting the grant for Grace Gardens where they all claimed their individual allowances and this was enough to get the cables laid. PS said that the issue in The Reddings was that the cable to the Churchdown exchange could not be laid across the motorway.

f) Hayloft update (PSw). As PSw could not come to the meeting he had sent an explanatory email:

Dear all

Since the last committee meeting, work has continued on site. As far as I can tell, (by viewing from the road) the main item of progress has been completion of the roof (and this appears to be in compliance with the submitted plans). Yesterday, various plant items were removed from site, so we can probably assume that there will be no further work until after Christmas.

What is not possible to see from the road is what (if anything) has been done at the rear of the building. Of particular concern is whether the new fire escape staircases at the rear (and not shown on the plans), which were demolished prior to the appeal hearing, have been reinstated.

*Committee members will recall that one of the conditions imposed by the inspector in allowing the appeal was that the building must comply with the drawings submitted with 16/0225/FUL which also implies that the building is intended to be used as a **single dwelling**, and that any attempt to convert it into multiple dwellings (for which fire escapes would be a prerequisite) would require a further planning application (see attached file for further detail).*

At the last committee meeting someone (it may have been Clements) said that he hoped to have access to a drone in the near future which could be used to take aerial photos of the Grovefield site. If this is the case, perhaps it could also be used on the Hayloft to find out what (if anything) is going on at the rear of the building.

g) Chestnut Farm update. None – awaiting local examination and Inspector view on the PUA extension.

h) Blenheim Villas – appeal (GF). GF said that he had spent 5-6 days trying to forensically analyse the appeal and make sense of the comments made by officers. There was a comment by the developer to suggest that noise and pollution would be attenuated by the 2 houses. The size of the hedge visibility splays indicated there would be 20m of hedge cut back either side with a 5m gap.

CO said that no one trims the hedges at the moment. GF felt that the unilateral agreement to maintain the hedges was very badly drafted. MC said that no one would take responsibility for the hedge as the purchasers' solicitors would recommend taking out one off indemnity insurance for any claims.

LF stressed very strongly that it was a community hedge for the benefit of the whole community.

GF had prepared detailed drawings of the hedge as a way of clearly explaining the situation to the inspector, which would otherwise be obscured by the amount of inaccurate and confusing text. It was also revealed that the height of the 2 proposed houses was 10.5m, considerably higher than the average house height of 6.5m. (This led to the speculation by the committee as to whether another Cotswold View situation would arise).

It was felt that the drawings of the houses were not accurate and that as the landowner of the hedge had not been served notice, the whole application was invalid anyway. The developer David Jones had said the application had only been objected to by a "handful of residents".

i) Grovefield enforcement esp. car transporter parking, bus stop parking (LF/PSm). LF had advised the local PCSOs of motorists parking in the Grovefield Way bus stop with the result that the offending motorist had been ticketed. Since then there had been no further incidences. NB said had had put in an application for the council to paint lines on the road to confirm it was a bus stop. LF had stated to the police that any parking here was a safety issue. NB advised that planning was in hand to provide bus stop marking on the road.

PSm said that the Minis and the hut on the undeveloped land at Grovefield had now been removed, but other older cars had now appeared. SW stated that there were apparently ongoing snagging and landscaping issues from the last update from the CBC enforcement officer.

j) Air quality (SWi/ GF) – NB/MC to advise findings of CBC monitor at KFC. SWi said there were 37 air quality points in Cheltenham with the most polluted area being the junction between Gloucester Road and the High Street.

NB said the air quality management area was being reviewed but the Boots Corner experiment was being extended for another 3 months. The air quality management would be looked at when the local plan was finalised. JR said the data for Boots Corner was not available but NB will request them. NB said that air quality was now becoming a very important issue but the peripheral areas would now need to be looked at.

GF said that the pollution figures in The Reddings were now going up with SWi adding that it was expected that the January and February were predicted to be worse. This would be due to prevailing wind conditions at this time of year. GF felt that the figures for the monitor at KFC would be interesting.

3. CBC formal complaint update (GF). CBC response to the complaint had been received earlier that day and had been circulated, but had not been read properly. GF felt that the only solution to the complaint and the response was to go and see Simeon, the interim head of planning at CBC. It was felt that the planning department had experienced a steep learning curve.

NB said he was not happy with the performance of the planning meetings, especially the way the Grovefield meeting was handled. NB felt the complaint response regarding the way information was given at this meeting was wrong. He felt the information given at the meeting had been misleading. NB will follow this up with CBC and GF suggested they go together to CBC. However they both felt the exercise should be treated as a learning exercise by CBC.

NB advised that it was recognised that additional training was required for the officers and the Simeon Manley (SM) was organising it. NB thought that SM's contract with CBC was going to be extended to February 2019.

4. Grovefield Public Enquiry update (GF). GF has made a further submission to CBC and will be speaking at the enquiry.

5. Cotswold View enforcement re road obstruction (LF). Here it was noted that the barriers to the site had been removed.

6. Crime (AVM/JR/MC). AVM warned everyone about the need to be vigilant and take precautions against burglary such as making sure their houses were lit up at between 6-7.30 pm. He had been advised by the Police that if a house was dark at this time, burglars would assume the householders would be out shopping or some other activity and would not be home for some time.

MC said Benhall was bad for crime, although this may be a reflection of its locality. He said that the Police worked closely with the Benhall Resident's Association and Neighbourhood Watch. NB emphasised the importance of similar bodies to work closely together.

MC is waiting for further Police drop in dates at the National Hunt pub. He said the landlord was very happy to host them there. However there was a current problem in that such meetings were very well attended or not at all. He hoped that there would be better attendance in the future, to ensure the continued interest of the PCSOs.

7. Planning list errors. MC had raised this with CBC as there had been occasions where planning appeals had been missed out from the lists. SW had noted that some applications submitted on Mondays or Fridays had not appeared on lists, which could be open to abuse by unscrupulous developers, GF notified CBC of TRRA's concerns. MC said that the weekly lists acted as a safety net (to ensure no applications were missed). No response has been received from CBC.

8. Local Plan Inspector hearing. MC confirmed that the hearing would be in February. TRRA will be participating in the meetings to try and reverse the proposal to extend the Urban Area into the greenbelt, thereby allowing development to occur in the greenbelt (houses and business). GF felt that the JCS questions on the ongoing review were impenetrable and simply a call for new sites. All committee members are asked to review & collate comments for TRRA to submit before 10/1/19.

CO hoped that developers would look at any available brown field sites, but MC said developers preferred green field sites because they were cheaper to build on, but garage sites were becoming increasingly useful. NB said that the Council had invested £100m into such sites.

GF felt that the cyber park development was not progressing fast enough. This will lead to a shortfall in CBC's 5 year housing supply and will be a developer's charter to build houses anywhere. Newland Homes would be expected to apply for permission for their development around the community centre under those conditions, certainly if the Urban area extensions are approved in the local plan examination.

9. Cycle path signs and markings. GF said there was a degree of confusion about the designation of cycle paths. The signs on Grovefield Way had fallen down, put back up again, rotted away and then taken away. Rob Vale said new signs will go up when they can be afforded.

10. Distribution of workload/ Possible merger with other residents' associations (GF/JR)

GF wondered whether TRRA was sustainable in its current form. He said the committee either needed more people or we had to merge with Benhall Residents' Association. JR had met with Benhall Residents who would be happy to collaborate with social activities, but declined to help with any actual work. JR felt Hatherley Residents may be happy to merge.

CO felt that any long term decision about the future of TRRA should be deferred until after the Grovefield appeal in January. NB pointed out that even if the appeal failed there was nothing to stop the developers making a new application and starting from scratch. Any new application could even see Costa Coffee coming back.

GF said much of the work by him and LF was resending emails from committee members who did not respond to emails by pressing "reply all". AVM suggested a "triage" system whereby emails could be forwarded to appropriate committee members to which NB said some committees operated on such a basis. JR said that no one in the committee could match GF's considerable technical expertise and without GF TRRA would be much poorer.

JR suggested another meeting in January to discuss the division of workload, especially handling of emails. GF will look at dates for the hall but if this was not available, the meeting could take place in a pub.

11. Cheltenham cycling/walking workshop (SWi) . SWi went to the Connect Workshop where there were 7 tables, each with 8 people and chaired by Systra, transport consultants. The intention was to discuss and formulate a new transport strategy for the town with an emphasis on reducing congestion and promoting "modal shift". The main issues highlighted were a need for improvement of the cycling infrastructure in the town, a call for new Park and Ride sites and a proper bus station, as well as improving the railway station and the connections to it. SWi said there may be another workshop at some point in the future.

12. AOB. None

14. Next meetings:

14 January 2019 – workload review.

13 February 2019 scheduled committee meetings

Awaiting confirmation of further meetings on 1st Wednesday of each month – starting 1/4/19, meetings to become monthly to shorten the agenda.

AGM – date?

15. Planning Committee meetings:

8 January 2019 Grovefield Public Enquiry starts
Blenheim submissions by 18/12/18
Local Plan – 13 February to 1 March 2019
JCS review – closes 11 January 2019