

Agenda - The Reddings Residents' Association Committee Meeting

Time, date and venue: 19-30 hours, 13 February 2019 Community Centre, North Road West).

Attendance:

TRRA

Gary Fulford – Chairperson (GF)
Adrian McKie - Secretary (AM)
Simon Willis (SWi)
Lorraine Fulford (LF)
Peter Smith (PSm)
Clemens Orth (CO)
Rob McCausland (RMc)
Guy Ravenscroft (GR)
Sonia Jones (SJ)
Fiona Milden (FM)
Cliff Naylor (CN)

Guests and speakers:

James Russell (JR)
Nigel Britter (NB)
Mike Collins (MC)

Apologies:

Simon Wheeler (SWh)
Peter Swales (PSw)
Rob Macpherson (RM)
Joanne Yates (JY)
Martin Zwart (MZ)

1. Previous minutes. AM said he had forwarded the minutes to GF but, unfortunately owing to a possible computer malfunction, GF had been unable to send them to the committee members. GF will check his email sent box.

2. Matters arising from previous minutes and update on actions: NA in view of point 1.

3. Grovefield Public Enquiry, Complaint, Blenheim Villa – updates (GF). GF advised the new members of the current situation about the aforementioned:

- a) Grovefield: there had been a week long public enquiry and the decision was expected to be announced on March 1st. It was difficult to say what the outcome would be but GF explained that the Inspector was concerned that there were no green credentials to the plan. GF felt that the first application defeated itself, but whether the second application (without the Costa drive thru) would be accepted is open to question. MC said he felt better about the discussion of the potential conditions for an approval after hearing the inspector's questions to the appellant's barrister. GF felt that CBC had backed themselves into a corner by failing to forensically analyze the technicalities of both applications and make proper reasons for refusal. Some of CBC's expert witnesses said as much at the hearing.
- b) Complaint: GF said TRRA had put forward a complaint about CBC's planning department to the previous interim head of planning, who had taken some time to respond. When the response was received GF felt it was very technocratic and did not address the issues raised. GF offered to go back to the interim head for a discussion, only to find that he had left CBC. GF therefore went back to Tracey Crewes at CBC two weeks ago but was still awaiting a response. CN said the new head of planning would arrive in April. At that point TRRA will pursue the complaint; as far as it needs to go if necessary.
- c) Blenheim Villa: GF explained the application to build two new houses on the Blenheim Villa site had been rejected twice by CBC. The refusals did not object to two new houses being built per se, but reflected the vehicles pulling out directly onto Grovefield Way with all the associated traffic issues, including blind spots. The appeal was now being handled in a closed door review and TRRA would have to wait for the decision. This meant that the appeal looked at all the paperwork submitted and would not be open to discussion, like the public enquiry.

5. Local Plan updates (GF, SWi, AM)

13 -28 February 2019 Local Plan Enquiry sessions.

GF explained that committee members of TRRA were attending all the sessions for the Local Plan public enquiry. This would last two weeks with a one week break over the half term holiday. GF, AM and PSw attended already. GF said TRRA had commented that the Local Plan was not fit for purpose and indeed there were a total of 1394 complaints about it from the local community. TRRA's view was that there were serious concerns about the expansion of the Principal Urban Area (PUA) which would open the door to development on the greenbelt in The Reddings.

GF and PSw attended the first session which looked at the Cheltenham plan and vision. GF felt it was purely aspirational in nature and did stand up to any robust scrutiny.

PSw was unable to come to this meeting, but submitted the following email:

I attended the first session this morning.

Attendance included: CBC: Tracey Crewes, John Rowley + Hannah Millman (probably both contributing authors and Rob Jameson (Legal adviser, actually sub-contracted from a firm of solicitors) Barbara Carroll (Enfusion Ltd) who provided sustainability arguments, and Anthony Muller (Natural England) TRRA (me) Robert Hitchis (Sarah Hamilton-Foyn), Miller Homes (Tim Partridge), Alice Ross and Ken Pollock (both local residents) Plus the Inspector (Wendy Burden)

In her introductory remarks, the Inspector summarised the contents of her Guidance Note (ED007 from the examination library), in particular the section setting out her roles and responsibilities (see Section 4 of ED007) . She emphasised that she could only make 'main modifications' to the plan as described in Section 4.4 but that 'additional modifications' could be made by the Council without further examination (Section 4.5).

Rob Jameson then made an opening statement for CBC which said very little that was useful apart from what was still missing - transport policy, and retail policy - the latter waiting for inclusion in an update of the JCS.

There then followed a protracted (40 mins) discussion on the new school project, in particular whether alternative sites had been considered. I think the discussion concluded that other sites had been considered, but none were deemed suitable, and it was agreed that further information referencing this be added to the examination library. I would have thought that this could have been readily addressed by adding a brief para to the CP, but CBC appeared very defensive about making ANY changes to 'their' document.

On the issue of whether the 'Vision' was positive and justified, I attempted to summarise the arguments set out in Gary's notes, but how the plan was eventually implemented was ruled outside the scope of her remit. One (slightly) positive thing that came out of the discussion was that if anyone was not happy with the wording of any part of the plan, they should set out their proposed wording, and the inspector would either accept, modify or reject it. Ken Pollock was sent away to do this on a point he raised.

In summary we have to accept that the basic plan is a given, and put forward detailed changes in writing in advance of discussion on each specific issues. So TRRA reps at future sessions need to be forearmed!

AM attended the economy session and noted that the most prepared and briefed person in the chamber was Paul Fong, director of Ridge/Hunter Page Planning, who was acting on behalf of the developer to build on Grovefield Way. By contrast the members of CBC said on several occasions that they would need to refer back before giving any firm answers.

The Inspector carefully listened to all speakers. AM said TRRA which had a particular interest in the development of the Grovefield Site.

AM made the following comments in response to Ridge/Hunter Page Planning's arguments:

- a) AM explained he had carefully read the 140 page economic assessment on Cheltenham in the examination library on CBC's website. This report had been commissioned by CBC and AM noted that the central theme was that there was not sufficient good quality office space for high quality jobs, needed to ensure Cheltenham's economic prosperity in future. Therefore AM argued that it was essential that any available land should not be wasted on building ancillary services that were already there. While the mixed use business park argument was sound, Grovefield was only about 4 hectares and Aldi's sales forecasts indicated it would take 64% of its new business from the two existing supermarkets nearby. The new Aldi would even take £1.6m of trade from its own existing store 2.5 miles away. AM queried Ridge/Hunter Page Planning's argument that the supermarket/coffee shop would create more jobs. In reality it was likely that with the existing facilities nearby, at best it could be job neutral, but with increased technology, it may even be job negative.
- b) AM said that any decision should not be swayed by short term aggressive expansion policies of the retailers, namely Aldi and Costa. History had shown that such expansion leads to contraction, especially in the case of Tesco which had to subsequently close 33 stores. A look at Costa's website showed that there were already 31 existing Costa Coffee shops and outlets in Cheltenham. A review of 192.com showed 57 results when a search for "coffee" was entered.
- c) AM said that any ancillary services should be of an appropriate size to purely service the needs of the employees on the site. Again using the Aldi sales forecasts, shown in the Hardisty Jones economic assessment on the Hunter Page Planning application, it would suggest that each employee would need to spend £212 per week, every week to meet such targets. This was clearly unrealistic and would mean shoppers would be attracted from outside the area. Also any ancillary services should be restricted to business opening hours only.
- d) The Inspector asked AM if there should be any amendment should be made to policy EM3 which covered the Grovefield Site. AM said the use of Sui Generis should be restricted as it could mean virtually anything could be built on site. AM explained that the building of BMW had already contradicted Policy SL1 of the local plan and read out this clause in full, where it clearly stated no development should cause harm to land users and living conditions in the locality.
- e) Ken Pollack asked why the land behind the new Lidl and Starbucks at Tewkesbury Road could not be used, instead of using greenbelt land.
- f) The question of the 20% of land being used for ancillary services was raised and queried. The Inspector dismissed this saying that this was not in the plan, but the views of GFirst which was a business friendly lobby group.

6. Road issues (SWi/SWh/MC/NB)

As Simon Wheeler could not attend he submitted his answers (in red) via email as below:

1. *The ongoing state of North Road West*
Rob Vale says he still has no information regarding the flooding issue and as it is on private land it is proving difficult
2. *The state of Reddings Road / The Reddings (between the Hatherley Lane / North Road East roundabouts)*
I have brought this up with the Highways Manager and I am pushing him for a response. his previous response to the state of this road was that although not in a good state it was in his view, safe
3. *The ongoing Park and Ride situation.*
I believe it has been relayed previously that a system involving a parking ticket gained from a machine with reg number then logged on the bus or a space booked and paid for on line for non bus users if spare capacity is available. the car park will be patrolled and cars not booked on the system will be ticketed I am told this will come into effect in the spring.
4. *Planning enforcement on Grovefield Way / BMW - a secondary formal complaint?*
Planning enforcement is a CBC function
5. *Camera on mini roundabout, The Reddings/North Road East.*
I am not aware of a camera at this junction and it is not there now so I am unable to comment
6. *Speeding in the area and mitigation proposals*
Some time ago when the speed aware group where checking speeds locally there where very few vehicles exceeding the speed limit, however I don't know if that has changed. In the mean time I am working with borough member locally to adopt a 20mph scheme for many of the smaller roads (this would not include roads such as Up Hatherley Way) However GCC cabinet members are being most obstructive over this but I am still trying to pursue it with Highways and integrated transport.
7. *Park & Ride & local parking in general*
See b) Local parking if illegal will be down to the local police
8. *BMW parking*
If by this you refer to off site then I can only reiterate the comments above f) However BMW have suggested they would like to build another parking block though I have seen no application for this
9. *Planning response on advice that the weekly lists are inaccurate?*
Again Planning is a CBC function

There was a very detailed discussion on this issue by the members present as follows:

- a) PSm and CO commented on the state of Reddings Road, near the prefabs. Here it was felt that it was not just a safety issue for road users, but there was the possible impact of vibration on the houses. CN said it was not safe to cycle on. The problem was that the road was laid with concrete slabs where there were cracks between them. MC said

it was a major issue in that there were 10 million or so of these slabs in the county and it was not just a question of strengthening Reddings Road. GF (structural engineer) said that the problem was compounded by the chestnut tree roots undermining the base and causing vibration. The contraction and expansion of the concrete slabs could be solved by injecting a special filler between the cracks . However MC said this would not be able to be done. NB will ask for more robust meetings with Rob Vale and the Highways Agency.

- b) GF asked if the cycle signs could be replaced on Grovefield Way and NB replied that this was on the list.
- c) GF asked about the 20 is plenty campaign but it was believed that the whole of The Reddings would remain at 30 mph.
- d) Regarding the cameras placed on the roundabout on North Road East/Reddings Road NB and CN believed that it was Amey monitoring traffic flows ahead of the upgrading of the Arle Court roundabout. It was about counting the volume of traffic and not about the speed of traffic. NB said he thought it was about calculating a base line of figures to work from. GF added that if the Grovefield application was approved then traffic would increase and, unless Junction 10 was upgraded, Arle Court roundabout would reach its forecast 187% capacity. He felt that no one would then be able to get out of North Road West and this was a case of not joined up thinking.
- e) PSm discussed his experiences with his Speed Awareness Group where they found that out of 579 vehicles monitored 12% were speeding and of the 241 at Brock Close 18% were speeding. GF recalled the Cotswold View traffic monitoring where 50% of cars were speeding and although he could not recall the exact figure he thought 10% exceeded 50 or 60 mph. It was mentioned that PSCOs were limited in their activities as they were limited to certain hours and would not work in rush hours. PSm said there had been 3 accidents on the Badgeworth Road/Reddings Road junction, including one which had knocked out the communications box, which was still waiting repair. PSm mentioned the problem of not being able to see properly if one was turning right out of this junction and there was a need for a mirror to be installed. NB said CBC did not like people putting up private mirrors. GF said Badgeworth Road was due to become a major through road for the Cyber Park ,hence the plan for traffic lights at Shurdington Road/Badgeworth Road.
- f) CO asked about the possibility of having double yellow lines on Grovefield Way and GF said this was requested at the appeal. It was felt that there could be an issue with enforcement and added that the Police had said that BMW unloading its car transporter on Grovefield Way was not illegal. It was pointed out that the transporters parked on the diagonal lines making it dangerous for cars to overtake this obstruction. MC pointed out the ongoing issue with people parking on the double yellow lines such as in Bath Road , where there was no enforcement. SWi said anyone parking on the pavement near the Lakeside junior school should be ticketed. He said that the head teacher was trying to sort it out but no one took any notice. CN suggested that the police commissioner Martin Surl should be asked why PCSO's cannot deal with it. NB said bollards had been placed at the Benhall School. MC said it was a shame that parents had to take their children to different schools, as every local school should be good enough to give a good education. CO suggested a walking bus which

worked well in Germany, even with a relay system in place with parents placed at different stops on route. AVM said that there was a different culture in Germany, being very organised and CN said the issue was societal in that people needed to rely less on their cars.

7. Connecting Cheltenham Update (SWi) SWi sent an email previously to save time at the meeting.

SW attended the second Connecting Cheltenham workshop on 06.02.2019. This was a follow up to the previous workshop which had been generally for information gathering. This workshop was aimed at developing a strategy which can then be put forward for funding and implementation.

Recapping from previous information provided in terms of travel to work in the Borough (using latest census data) each day in terms of travel to work there are:

*29,462 journeys within of which 44% are driven
19,467 journeys out of which 78% are driven
23,776 journeys in of which 78% are driven*

The session was split over four topic areas:

1. Mode Share Targets

Mode share within the Borough is currently high for walking. Public transport use is increasing slowly against general trends.

It was also quoted at 11% for cycling which surprised a number of people in the room and was going to be confirmed.

[16% cycling apparently represents the start of a “cultural shift”]

A high percentage of driven journeys in the borough are under 2km (in The Reddings it is between 50-60% of all journeys!)

90% of school kids live 15 minutes cycle from either school (or a school bus top).

This session involved discussion around setting achievable targets e.g. increase cycling mode share to 19%, public transport from 7% to 9%.

Become the best cycling town in UK?

We have a long way to go to achieve the best cycling town in the world:

<https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/jul/29/how-groningen-invented-a-cycling-template-for-cities-all-over-the-world>

Groningen is often quoted as the exemplar with Copenhagen not far behind.

<https://www.theguardian.com/cities/gallery/2018/jun/11/copenhagenize-case-urban-cycling-graphs>

While both are cities Groningen is relatively compact and flat and with some historical restrictions much like Cheltenham.

2. Healthy Streets

This session was aimed at making streets quieter and safer to help encourage modal shift. This involved looking at speed limits across the town and where they could potentially be lowered.

Inevitably this covered 20mph limits – GCC do not currently support “20isplenty” schemes as they believe the limits are not enforceable. A bus representative stated that buses can and do travel through these zones in other areas but available policy documents suggest this is not currently possible in Cheltenham.

All the data shows that implementing blanket 20mph limits without any other measures has very little effect and may actually increase the number of incidents (as vulnerable users perceive the area to be safer and take more risks) and produce more pollution. Reducing limits can only be a good thing but needs to be done in conjunction with improved street design.

There were also suggestions for pilot schemes for more urban 20mph zones such at St. Pauls Road, Bath Road shopping area, The Suffolks as well as an automatic designation in all residential suburbs.

3. Cycle Super “Cheltways”

Proposal for potential “cycle superhighway” routes were discussed with the intention to better link outlying areas and key destinations with the town centre e.g. Bishops Cleeve, Kingsditch, Prestbury, Brockworth, railways station etc. It was felt the network needed to be more radial to achieve this and routes still need to be properly segregated. Possible travel interchanges locations along these key routes allowing people to park and cycle / cycle + bus.

4. Bus network and Travel hubs/interchanges

This was concerned with potential locations for a central “travel interchange” aka a new bus station and potential additional Park and Ride sites. Dealing with the intricacies of the bus companies will be an issue on this as well as finding a location considered central enough – there is a strong desire to empty The Promenade of buses (and taxis). Linking to the railway station is also an issue.

New Park and Rides suggested for Tewkesbury Road and A46 (Shurdington) and possibly further out on the Evesham Road to replace the racecourse one, as well as increasing size of Arle Court.

As usual there was a lot of aspirational talk which relies on funding and the political will to make what are likely to be unpopular decisions (see the Groningen article above). CBC have shown by their recent spending that the money is there so it seems to be a question of making the correct long term investments in the town rather than chasing short term return.

8. Ongoing pollution monitoring and funding. GF said TRRA had been monitoring pollution over the last 6 months at 5 pollution stations. The data showed that pollution was steadily going up and that The Reddings’ figures were higher than the official figures at GCHQ. TRRA had spent £200 and there was a potential for receiving a grant for another £200. The existing pollution tube suppliers had stopped supplying them and the new supplier was charging twice as much. There was £130 left in the TRRA coffers which would pay for 2 more months, but after that cash would need to be raised. GF asked if we should continue and AM felt that we could only have worthwhile statistics after a meaningful period, such as one year. JR suggested

approaching local businesses. CO suggested we keep monitoring until the Grovefield appeal was known. If the appeal was dismissed then we should carry on monitoring. SWi will prepare a report on what the figures show and suggested everyone in the committee could chip in. GR will prepare a crowd funding page (for local residents to see.) GF asked NB if the pollution figures for the CBC monitoring at KFC were available and NB replied that he was still waiting for them. NB thought CBC may be relocating the pollution monitoring sites and will find out.

8. Cheltenham Civic Society (RMc) RMc will attend the meeting on 2nd March to see what is on their mind and see if there are any opportunities for collaboration.

9. Parking/Traffic (JR) JR met with David Norman of Public Protection and Parking, Gloucester County Council who was very aware of the problems. JR suggested he got together with NB and MC to find out what local residents actually want. JR felt that residents did not want parking permits but wondered about a new Park and Ride at Staverton airport. There was a fear that if the existing P&R operated for genuine P&R users only, then it would displace cars elsewhere. MC said this was an issue with all parking and there needed to be a coordinated approach. He added that the barriers for the existing P&R had been rejected as it would require a person on site to deal with the barrier if it broke down. MC said Staverton airport was owned by Gloucester County Council and they would need to be involved. MC reiterated that if one problem was sorted out in one area (without joined up thinking) it could lead to displacement of cars into another area. AM asked about the possibility of car sharing lanes, such as in the USA, where priority was given where there was more than one person in the car. CN said there was the issue with enforcement. CN said there was a situation where people in Benhall were hiring out their drives to workers for a monthly fee, but then parking their own cars in the road. CN said that there was an issue with parking in that if you supplied parking spaces, people would use them. GF did say that many parking spaces in Cheltenham were not used in the day time because they were too expensive. MC said there was a need to have a complete parking policy for the whole county. He said that bus usage in the town was up 4%, compared to a 2% decline nationally. But the average car journey was still less than 2km. GF suggested we collated views at the TRRA AGM and go back to David Norman. GF said there needs to be a parking standards policy as any application where it has 600 employees, yet only has 200 spaces, will cause issues. MC will speak to David Norman.

CO said there should be a review of where the buses actually go. He said it would be better if all the bus routes were connected so preventing the need to drive to Gloucester. MC agreed with the concept but at the present time it would be prohibitively expensive.

10. What does TRRA want to become? GF gave the background to the history of TRRA in February 2017 after a group of local residents came together to oppose the Grovefield application. It was felt that a unified voice would be stronger than individual objections. Since then TRRA had become involved with the Joint Core Strategy and the Local Plan. CN asked the question of what TRRA was for.

GF said the Benhall Residents Association operated in a different way. CN asked about the possibility of forming a neighbourhood forum, but GF said it had been looked into and there were too many loops to go through for the size of the committee at that time. JR suggested that we go to all the local residents, via Facebook and leaflets asking them what they wanted from

TRRA. GF said that was the original idea of having street representatives as a way of disseminating and collecting information. CN said that his wife, who is a professional statistician would analyse any data collected and may be able to help formulate the questions to help get meaningful data from them. GR will also ask his neighbour about the possibility of having an article in the Parish Magazine.

11. Division of workloads and new responsibilities:

In view of the length of the meeting it was decided to discuss the roles at the next (and now monthly) meeting on 5 March.

Facebook	SWi and CO
CBC Website Monitoring	SWi
Councillor Liaison	AM
Email/data Controller	CO and GR
Technical Report Writers	GF, SWi and PS
Proof Readers	AM, MZ, CO, RMc, LF
Publication Writers	AM, LF
Press Liaison and Marketing	PSm
Police and Crime Liaison	SWi and RMc
Local Residents' Group Liaison	vacant
Business Liaison	vacant
Street Wardens -	GR, AM, RMc.
Street Warden Coordinator	SJ
Planning Meeting Speakers	AM, PS and MZ
Cycle Liaison	SWi and RMc
Community Centre Liaison	vacant
Cheltenham Civic Society Liaison	RMc
Chairman	GF (to stand down)
Secretary	AM
Treasurer	JY (but open to relinquish)
Neighbourhood watch/police co-ord	??
Public speakers	MZ, GF, SWi, AM, PS
Planning Dep't liaison & checks on appl'ns	SWi? Other?

Details needed to be discussed:

- What accounts / addresses we need e.g. streets, planning etc?
- Who is going to be responsible for actioning the e-mails in each account?
- We need to agree on a cut off day between old and new account.
- Agree date for switch over
- CO to provide new credentials to GF
- GF to enable forwarding
- CO to update website/Simon to update FB with new email contact detail.
- Emails to residents to direct to Website for updates as just a head line?

- “Neighbourhood Watch”?
- Monthly article in Parish Mag’

12. Date for AGM? March or April or May 2019

13. AOB: PSw & RM to attend the Cheltenham radio-active waste meeting on 26 February 2019.

14. Next meeting: Tuesday 5 March 2019 (First Tuesday in month going forward).

15. Planning Committee meetings:

- No applications in local area at present