

# **Minutes The Reddings Residents' Association Committee Meeting**

**Time, date and venue: 18-00 hours, 10 October (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 Swales (PSw)  
Peter Smith (PSm)  
Clemens Orth (CO)  
Martin Zwart (MZ)

### Guests and speakers:

Cllr Mike Collins (MC)  
Paul Fong (PF) – Ridge/Hunter Page  
Paul Barnes (PB) – Community Centre  
Paul Fong (PF) of Hunter Page

### **Apologies**

Cllr Nigel Britter (NB)  
Cllr Simon Wheeler (SWh)  
Joanne Yates (JY)

### **Paul Fong discussion**

***IMPORTANT NOTE: It should be noted that while MC was present at PF's discussion with the committee he did not contribute in any way and purely acted as an observer.***

PF explained that he was not there to persuade, but to answer any questions that had been raised about the application. He apologised for not seeking to engage with TRRA at an earlier stage. He wanted to tell us the latest with what was happening with the venture.

PF said that the Costa had been withdrawn because Hunter Page/Ridge wanted a new office building. He said that they had been trying to find a new office over the last year and with the new anticipated growth with the new parent company, they needed 8,000 square feet which was not available in town. He said that there was a dearth of offices in Cheltenham as many had been converted to residential, which were deemed to be more valuable e.g. John Dower House, which was the former HQ of The Countryside Commission was now going to be residential. Many Georgian buildings were old and tired and difficult to convert to modern office use.

PF had been talking to his client Bloor Homes who wanted a new office outside of Tewkesbury and a building of 30,000 square feet. Costa wanted to review their place in the scheme but Ridge/Hunter Page took the opportunity to turn that space on the development into a new Ridge office. PF acknowledged that there were other developments which were being constructed at Honeybourne Gate, and the nearby Robert Hitchens development (adjacent to Asda) would probably also be available within Ridge's 18 months requirement and would be suitable for their needs. However, PF felt that neither site were as prestigious as the proposed Grovefield Way site.

PF had read the concerns about Aldi and the Happy Days nursery but did not feel their presence would erode the quality of the business park. He said there were similar formats around the country and the LEP recommended a maximum of 20%, but here it was 14%. GF pointed out that this did not include BMW which would increase the overall exposure significantly. PF advised that essentially, Aldi paid more rent than offices and the cash was necessary to promote the infrastructure construction which would see the offices being developed. GF said that a similar argument had been advocated for the BMW development.

Overall PF said that it would remain an office park and that 2 offices would be built immediately. Ridge was looking to move into the site within 18 months and PF hoped that he would be able to improve the design, but did not want to offer false promises. The site owners wanted a Pavilion design to complement the existing BMW building. He said appreciation of architecture was very much personal taste, but he personally liked it.

PSm said there was a minimum of 2 storeys stated for the Ridge office but asked if there was a maximum. PF said what would be built would be based on what was approved. PF said he would remove the "minimum" wording. MZ asked that PF substitute the word "maximum", but PF declined. GF said there was concern that the drawings were marked "indicative".

PF added that Peter Harris would have the final say over Aldi architecture and other buildings on the site because he wants them to reflect the "Pavillion" design of the BMW building, but he felt that Peter Harris (director of both Cotswold Motor Group and Hinton Properties) had raised the quality of Aldi's design. However, there was still the question of corporate branding which had to be maintained. PF felt that the quality of the design was better than seen at Kingsditch. What Aldi wanted was a commercial requirement. Both Lidl and Aldi followed aggressive policies and would put themselves in a positions where they would trade well.

PSw did query their presence in the green belt and that the inspector had given permission for office use only. PF acknowledged that he was personally responsible for initiating the removal

of the site from the green belt at the JCS enquiry. PF felt that retail presence would make the business park more vibrant, such as seen in the Gloucester Business Park. AVM queried this premise as the last time he went there he saw large adverts for vacant office space. GF felt that the presence of Aldi would only redistribute jobs rather than create them.

PF felt that with 1500 new houses being built across the A40 there would be a demand. PF said that building Aldi would provide cash to get the infrastructure for the building project started. PF felt that Aldi would bring in value for the offices and he wanted his Ridge offices to be there. The subject of Aldi raised a number of key questions from committee members.

AVM said while he understood the value of being associated with quality brands such as BMW and Bloor Homes, he could not understand why PF would want to be associated with a discount store like Aldi.

AVM – felt that the inclusion of Aldi was more about the company’s very ambitious expansion programme and that this was similar to Tesco’s expansion policy in recent years and Kwik Save in the 1990s. AVM felt that once the economy recovered and the uncertainty over Brexit was over, shoppers may return to the traditional supermarkets. Also Aldi was a private company and therefore was not accountable to public shareholders or investment management companies. PF felt Aldi was appropriate, although admitted he was not a retail analyst.

GF added that the new Honeybourne Office Development did not have any retail or nursery interest and yet there had been considerable interest in the site.

GF pointed out that Aldi would need a bigger car park, but PF said Peter Harris would not allow it.

PSm asked how Aldi delivery lorries would be able to turn around, as a BMW car transporter had been left on Grovefield Way recently for this very reason.

GF asked where delivery lorries would be able to park on site when waiting for a marshal to arrive. PF said that Aldi deliveries would start at 1 per day and then increase to 2 per day.

LF commented on the inadequate parking at Aldi Tewkesbury and the company’s recent application to increase car parking, which is a repeat behavior of almost every Aldi store, as evidenced by the planning histories. Once built, further applications for increased parking, delivery and opening times follow. In many cases, 24 hours per day opening is applied for.

SWi asked if there were any alternative ways of getting funding, rather than relying on Aldi’s finder’s fee.

PSw asked why the Aldi building had been situated near North Road West, as this would have the most detrimental effect on the residents here.

JR asked if the B1 office development would still proceed if there was no retail element. PF was non-committal.

GF raised the question of how the delivery lorry reversing sirens of up to 102db would not affect local residents.

GF felt that the Aldi would take trade from the existing Asda and Morrisons and even the existing Aldi. PF felt that the existing supermarkets would survive.

GF pointed out that traffic would be worse in the afternoon as shoppers and employees would be mixed with the afternoon school run.

GF said that the key difference between having some retail in a business park would be that residents would not be able to enjoy their gardens in the weekend, due to weekend traffic. Aldi's traffic would be spread throughout the day. Furthermore with insufficient parking, shoppers would end up parking on local roads. BMW had previously stated there would not be problems with traffic and now look at it. BMW had not been a good neighbour.

LF said that after listening to PF she was not convinced at all that phase 2 offices wouldn't in fact just end up as retail. PF sought to reassure that this would not be the case. He said that he himself would be an occupier on the site and didn't want such retail development to occur. As such that he would stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the community to oppose retail. LF was concerned that this indicated that PF had no control over what else was to be on the site.

PB pointed out that following any rain North Road West flooded; something that did not occur before the field had been developed. SWi said that this was being caused by run-off of water from the developer's spoil heap/blocked water course in the corner of the site next to North Road West.

PB said that the playgroup was an essential source of funding for the Reddings' Community Centre and without it the future of the Centre would be uncertain. GF pointed out that there would be a lot of traffic movement in the area and would be dangerous with parents dropping off children at the same time as delivery vehicles.

The question of pollution near a nursery was raised and PF had suggested an emissions test be carried out for the area, but the planning officers told him that it was unnecessary. GF raised SD14 in the Joint Core Strategy which mentioned the impact on health by any development. It was queried why the nursery had been placed in such a spot on site, where it could have been tucked away more with more screening against pollution. PF said "it happens elsewhere".

GF said people would be happy with B1 offices, which is the purpose for which the green belt was sacrificed for high quality jobs, but the community does not need and does not want any further retail and will continue to resist it.

AVM raised the question of whether the BMW lighting at night was more about advertising their cars than security. Having worked in a bank he said he was aware of more high tech unobtrusive security devices.

GF asked about the section 106 money but PF was not aware to what use it was to be put for.

GF asked how the hedge in North Road West could be preserved when an embankment would be built and the hedge flailed down to 2m. PF was to review this.

PF listened carefully to these points and also agreed to act as a mediator for BMW to raise the key issues of parking, lighting at night and flooding in North Road West, where they have caused so many problems for the local community.

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Joanne Yates (JY)  
Peter Swales (PSw)

**1. Previous minutes.** Agreed.

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

**a) Speed sign update SWh** – no update.

**b) Park and Ride - barriers/warden update SWh** – no update.

**c) Pollution tubes update SWi and possible further funding JR/SWi** – SWi said no results were available yet, but there was a meeting booked with Ultra regarding funding. The grant money application was ratified. Sadly the most important pollution tube near Asda was taken down/stolen.

**d) North Road West - road repairs update SWh** – no update.

**e) Other residents' organisations liaison update JR** – no update.

**f) Email arrangements/WhatsApp CO** – AVM not on whatsapp yet. CO will look at email system.

**g) Hayloft update PSw.** PSw reported new screening had been put up outside the development, but it was not known what, if any, work had been carried out.

**h) Parish Magazine update JR** - no update.

**i) Chestnut Farm update** - anyone– no update.

**j) Media exposure- Echo article on speeding MC/PSm,** MC said he had a mixed response from residents; some supportive, some thinking people had nothing better to do.

**k) Complaint to Chair of Planning Committee re Blenheim Villas**– no update.

**l) Blenheim Villas – appeal-** nothing seen yet.

**m) New offices near Pure revised plans** - any update? On CBC website it says decision awaiting issue. (Since the meeting CBC have granted permission).

### **3. Update on Grovefield and speakers for 18th October – GF**

**a) Paul Fong presentation** – discussion.

It was felt to be an amicable meeting with PF and positive that PF was willing to act as mediator with BMW regarding the ongoing issues – parking, lighting and flooding on North Road West.

It was thought that the most important fact to come out of the discussion was the importance of the “finder’s fee” paid by Aldi as a way of getting the building started on the site. This, however, completely invalidated any retail argument.

PB felt whether anything had changed enough to make us change our minds. MC said that taking out Costa was significant. GF said that the traffic would be a lot worse with retail, especially with the 3-6pm traffic. Supermarket traffic would be continuous throughout the day but would be worst at weekends. GF said Aldi could make an application for 24 hour opening.

AVM said that in April 2017 Greenpeace had suggested that around 1,000 nurseries were exposed to illegal levels of pollution. MC suggested looking at the Early Years foundation where it was stated safe areas must be provided for children.

Parking was discussed and again BMW inconsiderate parking was mentioned, especially in the gateways of Grovefield Way. MC said his pet hate was people parking on grass verges. He said

that this was the responsibility of Gloucestershire County Council who could, in theory, levy a £500 fine although this was never enforced.

**b) Minutes of meeting & memo to CBC re any amendments to TRRA thoughts following the discussions with PF.** GF and LF said that they would be willing to take out another day to prepare a formal complaint to CBC.

**c) Committee date 18/10/18** – no time for further consultation with residents.

**d) Speaker at planning meeting** MZ and NB to speak.

**e) Points to be covered in speeches between TRRA & NB** – to be decided at a meeting early next week with NB.

**f) Grovefield 1** – appeal starts 8/1/19 at CBC offices (6 day duration).

**4. AOB** – none.

**5. Next meetings:**

12 December 2018

13 February 2019

**6. Planning Committee meetings:**

18 October 2018, 22 November 2018, 20 December 2018, 17 Jan 2019, 21 Feb 2019, 21 March 2019