

Minutes of the DRARA Committee Meeting on 9 February 2009

Present: Ivon Asquith, Chris Brazier (minutes), Peter Coggins (chair), Barbara Crossley, Vicki Cullen, Alastair Gray, Susan Lisk, Amanda Root, Jo Steele, James Styring, Lynne Trenery.

Apologies: Elizabeth Mills, Cindy Carlson.

Matters arising from minutes of 24 November 2008

1. Franks did not pursue the planning appeal; our 75-pound deposit was, however, reimbursed.
2. We still need to arrange a joint meeting of local residents' associations in advance of the next Brookes meeting in May. The New Marston South RA seems particularly active and has much interesting detail on Brookes student accommodation on its website.
3. Peter has still to write to the Council about the repair of the road sign.

AGENDA

Accounts

The annual accounts were formally inspected by Jim Ferguson of 36 Minster Road; thanks to him. It was noted that expenditure has exceeded income in both of the last two years but we still have a reserve of 2,000 pounds.

Membership

The membership drive has now all but ended. We now have 259 members, compared with 270 last year. But we are gathering more email addresses – 213 this year compared with 202 last.

Traffic

Frustrated by being unable to get to anyone other than number crunchers in the wake of Richard Kingshott's stroke, James and Lynne took Ian Hudspeth to lunch (at a cost of 39.75) and this proved a useful forum in which to discuss the key issues. The most important piece of information elicited (see Lynne's email record of the meeting for more detail) was that carriageway width can be reduced at the County Council's discretion. Hudspeth said he would look into this but James and Lynne need to chase him to make sure he does. He also, perhaps surprisingly, seemed open to the idea of road closure in Southfield and Divinity. There remains no political appetite whatsoever for restricting student car parking.

James has taken photos of the road outside Sinnet Court in the holiday and now in termtime – they show a massive difference.

The Jericho CPZ only allows one permit per house, though it allowed existing residents with two cars at the debut of the scheme to have two permits. This was thought to be a potentially useful compromise.

In the event the CPZ allows two permits per household, should residents with a driveway/offroad parking also be able to have two permits? It was felt that these would be rarely used and thus would not really affect demand. A compromise might be for such a house to be allowed one permit.

The possibility of a petition opposing (or seeking to minimize) pavement parking was discussed at length. James and Lynne felt strongly that a petition would be a useful tool for influencing the Council, which has still not processed the responses to the last consultation (which elicited less than a 20% response). It was agreed that our key objective was actually to arrive at a CPZ that 'legalized' existing parking practice, with parking allowed on both sides (thus retaining sufficient spaces to meet local demand), pavement parking limited to the kerbstone and speeds kept low by a narrow carriageway. The only way to keep speeds low and to minimize the incursion on to pavements would seem to be to ensure that the marked bays leave a carriageway wide enough to allow emergency vehicles/dustcarts to pass but no wider. James agreed to redraft the petition to reflect this consensus and to seek approval for the wording by email in the next few days. It was subsequently agreed that we should try to seek signatures for the petition by using the email addresses we hold.

Environmental action

Amanda reported that this has now taken on a life of its own, with 8-10 people now meeting regularly. Amanda is still seeking a grant from the Community Fund – the deadline for applications is 2 March. She agreed to resuscitate with her committee the idea of a 10-point checklist for households. Notice of the environment group's meetings and activities should be posted on the website; Amanda to talk to Elizabeth about this. The next meeting will be on 31 March at 18 Southfield Road.

Car Club

This now has 50 members using 6 cars and is working well. New members still needed; the idea of allocating one car in the area that would allow dogs was discussed.

Planning

The Town Green inspector's report on Warneford Meadow will be discussed at the County Council meeting on 2 April. The expectation is that it will be approved but Julie Waldron, the Trust's chief executive will be allowed to speak against. It is thought she will emphasize the financial cost to the Trust with a view to making the Council less likely to oppose future proposals. These include their proposals for developing the Park Hospital site and the Playing Field, which are imminent. It is thought that they may be seeking to put a 300-unit student development on the Playing Field site, possibly with an access road from Hill Top Road.

The next East Oxford Parliament will be on 18 February at 6.30 at the St Clements Family Centre in Cross Street and will consider the Transform Oxford agenda.

Events

The wine tasting event was an excellent evening, attended by 27 people – thanks to Chantal Bryant who organized it. It all but broke even, showing a 27-pound deficit.

Forthcoming events:

Fundraising Ceilidh on 27 February. It was agreed that DRARA would cover the 190-pound cost of hiring the church hall and publicizing the event, so as to maximize the amount raised for charity. Volunteers are still wanted to help organize, set up and clear up afterwards. Those who can't attend can contact Cindy to donate.

Oxclean Saturday 7 March, 10-12. We need volunteers to pick up litter around the area. Contact Laura Elliott on 251251 or lauraelliottuk@aol.com

Freecycle Day will be in April – with another possibly in the autumn.

Picnic on Warneford Meadow – late April or early May, to celebrate the Town Green victory.

Open Gardens in June

Meal on the Street will this year be at the top of Southfield/Hill Top Road.

Brookes

Minutes of the last liaison meeting are still not available and tend not to arrive until just before the next meeting. Barbara has been given the following numbers of students living in our area: 310 who supplied a postcode; 40 who simply said the Divinity/Southfield area; and 47 in Sinnet Court, making for a total of around 400. The figure for Sinnet Court is, however, from last year and would indicate chronic under-capacity – Barbara will try to find out from Sinnet Court directly how many students are currently living there.

Any Other Business

1. Elizabeth attended the meeting at Cheney re HMOs and will report to the next committee meeting.
2. Once the joint meetings of residents' associations have been initiated, we will suggest that Gail Siddall is invited to talk.
3. Vicki and Susan explained about the Community Archaeology Project for the east side of the city. This is organized by the Oxford University Department for Continuing Education, has Lottery Funding, and is seeking to involve the whole community, including disadvantaged groups, in investigating the cultural heritage of the area.

Date and location of next meeting

Monday 30 March, 8pm, at Ivon's house, 21 Minster Road.