

BEECHES COMMUNITY GROUP

Notes of Meeting held on 16 January 2014

Present:

Stuart Tarr (Chairman), David Grange (Secretary), Anne Rawlins (Treasurer), Mike Jupp (Social Secretary), Keith Handley (Neighbourhood Watch), Doug Emmott (Litter), Cllr Nigel Robbins (GCC and CTC), Cllr John Burgess (CDC), Cllr Patrick Coleman (CDC and CTC), James Trotter (Bromford Housing), Clare Bartlett (CCDT), plus members of the public - Malcolm Lewis (ex BGC Chairman), Jenny Smith, Jordan Barnett, Paul Killick, Rose Leicester and John Leicester,

1. Welcome and Apologies

Stuart Tarr welcomed everyone to the meeting, his first full meeting since his election as Chairman in November, and reported the following apologies:

PCSO Renee Broad (crime statistics report submitted), Vicki Paxford (Cottsway Housing report submitted), Liz Frost (Sovereign Housing), Kerry Heathcote (RA committee member), Paul Maidens (RA Chairman and BGC Vice Chairman), Caroline Braidwood (BGC), Cllr Mrs Shirley Alexander (CTC) and Jamie Walton CTC.

2. To Approve the Minutes from Meeting held on 14 November 2013

Proposed Keith Handley and seconded Cllr Patrick Coleman: unanimously approved and signed by the Chairman.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes that are not Included on the Agenda

- Dog waste bins - A waste bin at North Home Road and two further bins on the Corinium Via development had been requested. Expenditure of up to £500, from CTC's Community Fund to install three bins as previously discussed and agreed, was unanimously approved.
- Grit Bins - Requests for the provision of grit and salt bins in North Home Road to be investigated by Stuart Tarr and Cllr Nigel Robbins.
- Street Lighting - Solar/wind-powered street lighting along the public open space pathway to Kingshill School to be reviewed with Cirencester Town Council in spring 2014 (Stuart Tarr/CTC) following complaints that the pathway is not adequately lit.
- Pavements and Lighting - Issues concerning the condition of a pavement and the provision of street lighting at Queen Anne's Road and St Mary's Road have been raised with Gloucestershire Highways who had claimed it was not their responsibility to reinstate the pavement or provide street lighting. Bromford Housing has since established that the pavement is a Gloucestershire Highways responsibility and has returned to this issue with them (James Trotter to report progress at the next meeting).
- BGC Assets - Assets temporarily stored with Malcolm Lewis (pergolas and the candy floss machine) will in future be stored at the Golden Farm Inn (Mike Jupp is keeping under review, also the laminating machine which has been reported as not working).

4. Chairman's Report

Stuart drew attention to the Beeches Bulletin posted to the website on 10th January highlighting the Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators' meeting on 28th January, the Local Emergency Community Response leaflet issued by CTC, the Watermoor Quiz Night, the Town Centre Regeneration Project press release issued just before Christmas, the 'Toursim Matters' Cotswolds Visitor Guide, and CTC's draft Travel Plan leaflet.

Stuart also mentioned the proposed Cirencester Town Council budget and precept 2014/15, and the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) to 2018/19. The key facts were for overall budget growth of 1.3% and council tax growth of 1.4% equating to a Band D council tax increase to £107.64 compared with £106.15 currently – equivalent to a monthly increase for Band D residents of 12 pence. The MTFP would be held to annual increases of 2.5% in subsequent years including the delivery of the Town Centre Regeneration Scheme. Cllrs Robbins and Coleman confirmed these figures, remarking that town councillors had worked hard to achieve efficiency savings in the delivery of the town council's public services. **Secretariat Note:** the budget and MTFP were approved by Council on 21st January.

5. Finance Report (Attached)

- Bank balance is currently £221.88.
- New signatories on account to be organised as soon as possible (Anne Rawlings/Stuart Tarr).

6. Reports from the Group

i. Community Speed Watch & Neighbourhood Watch – Keith Handley

Neighbourhood Watch – An additional scheme has been set up in Pheasant Way and several more are in the pipeline. Leaflets have been produced for distribution. Window alarms are being investigated for sale via Neighbourhood Watch. Keith also recommended timed lighting in houses to deter burglars. Details to be sent to Caroline to include on the website

Community Speed Watch – Nothing to Report – see also item 7 related to funding.

ii. Litter Picking –Doug Emmott

Nothing to Report (street litter wardens continue their good work).

iii Website, Facebook and Twitter – Paige Lilley and Caroline Braidwood

The Website is updated on a monthly basis. Facebook and Twitter have been set up but not much used.

iv. Corinium Via Residents Association – Stuart Tarr

Maintenance of Public Open Spaces - The dispute with Redrow Homes, the lead developer for the estate, continues regarding the management charges for the maintenance of the public and shared open spaces (gardening and other general purpose facilities). The dispute, to investigate whether residents have been misled under the Property Misdescriptions Act over alternative proposals for CTC to carry out the grounds maintenance of the POS at no additional cost to residents, has been referred to Gloucestershire Trading Standards to resolve. Future updates to continue.

Street Furniture - Action to address street lighting issues on the development (a number of lighting columns have remained unlit) plus action to install new pavement signs for Trotman Walk with Forstall Way are in hand for completion. A wooden planter for the Moss Way traffic island, to replace the tree shown on site development plans, has also been placed on order. **Secretariat note:** The planter was installed early in February, to be maintained by residents and the management company, Meadfleet. Action to resolve the illumination of one street lighting column and the correct wording of pavement signs continues.

Housing Association - Issues concerning parking in breach of the estate covenants, fly-tipping, and damage to housing association property have all been satisfactorily addressed by Cottsway Housing who have introduced a number of local initiatives. These include introducing CCTV coverage in known black spots; working more closely with Cotswold District Council environmental wardens to guard against fly-tipping; employing car parking personnel to encourage responsible parking; and introducing a new Local Lettings Plan to be agreed with CDC to facilitate sensitive lettings to address local issues. This very positive response followed a meeting with the Residents' Association, followed by a Multi-agency meeting, last November. This is an exemplar housing association model for managing community relations more effectively (including working with the RA to deliver a number of community development activities in 2014) that other housing associations might choose to adopt (Bromford and Sovereign HAs). **Secretariat note:** a copy of the Cottsway Housing Association report is available to committee members if requested.

AGM - The RA Annual General Meeting for the election of officers, which will also consider the relationship of the RA with the Beeches Community Group, is still to be arranged.

7. Reports from Police, Town, District and County Councils

Cllr Nigel Robbins - Nigel explained that he is reviewing the provision of pedestrian and cycle routes. Speedwatch has gone very quiet but funding may become available during March. Nigel also reported that he may be allocated a transport-related fund of £50k to spend on 'encouraging a healthy lifestyle'. This has yet to be confirmed but will be included as an agenda item for the March meeting. The A417 missing link options are currently being evaluated but no decisions have been taken yet.

Cirencester Community Development Trust (CCDT) – Clare Bartlett: This is a new CTC-funded organisation with several projects underway to market the image of Cirencester, through increased tourism, retail footfall etc, and promote community development and cohesion. A new project under development is the Cirencester Innovation Hub which aims to assist start-up businesses in Cirencester. Other initiatives include the Cirencester Hares in Spring sponsorship project which is modelled on the successful Gromit exhibition in Bristol last year. Clare also mentioned the very successful Phoenix Festival, modelled on the same event last year, which will again be held in Cirencester this summer. Clare concluded by saying that the CCDT wanted to develop closer links with the five Community Groups to listen to and share ideas to make these projects and planned new initiatives a success. The meeting agreed to develop closer links between BCG and CCDT to which end Stuart had already made a start by attending a meeting of the CCDT Town Team earlier in the month.

8. Any Other Business

- Community facilities at Kingshill School – A meeting has been arranged with the head teacher and school governors for 14th February to look at options for how the BCG might work more closely with the school.
- Police crime figures (for December) were reported – copies available if required.
- Community packs – It was suggested that the 100 remaining packs could be made available to the Berkeley Homes Kingshill Meadow development for distribution. **Secretariat note:** subsequent enquiries have established that this was no longer a practical option and it was decided to recycle the unused packs (the initial distribution of packs to the Kingshill North and Kingshill South developments having met their original objective).
- Public Open Spaces - Mr and Mrs Leicester reported concerns relating to the use of a public open green space in Archery Road (car parking on the green, ball games, a tree which had been cut down). **Secretariat Note:** a site visit was subsequently carried out by Stuart Tarr and Jamie Walton (Jamie to investigate further with Bromford Homes and report back to the March meeting).
- Social events – Mike Jupp reported that the Christmas function at the Wheatsheaf Inn was well received with 26 attending – half from the BCG, the others friends and neighbours. He reminded the meeting of the Watermoor Community Group quiz night organised for 24/1 (subsequently cancelled due to lack of support).
- Vote of thanks – Mike also proposed a vote of thanks for the sterling work that Janet Broomfield, the outgoing Social Secretary of the BCG, had done to raise funds for the Air Ambulance and other good causes including the children's cancer charity CLIC. This was unanimously approved with a strong vote of thanks to Janet.
- Kingshill Meadow/North Home Road Bus Service – Mike provided a brief update to the meeting on the issues that remained to be resolved. These included issues of road safety, access and of disputed rights of way via the bus gate – all of which were in various stages of correspondence with Gloucestershire County Council (GCC), Berkeley Homes and others including councillors. Geoffrey Clifton-Brown, the constituency MP for the Cotswolds, had also taken an active interest in seeing the situation satisfactorily resolved.
- **Secretariat Note:** Since the meeting, following an enquiry received from the care home at Mulberry Court on behalf of the elderly residents living there, it is understood from correspondence reaching the Chairman from Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP that progress has been made by GCC to satisfactorily address road safety and access issues, that steps are in hand by GCC to introduce such a service within the next two to three

months “as soon as small technical issues regarding bus access have been resolved”. Meanwhile, officials at GCC are investigating with the Cotswold Centre for Voluntary Services the provision of a demand-responsive service for Mulberry Court residents in advance of a “mainstream” public transport service being introduced. A further update will be provided when the new transport services are to be announced.

9. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday, 13th March 2014 at 7pm at Ingleside House.

The meeting was closed at 8.30 pm