

BEECHES COMMUNITY GROUP

Notes of Meeting held on Thursday 10th July 2014

Present:

Stuart Tarr (Chairman), Paul Maidens (Vice Chairman), Anne Rawlins (Treasurer), Mike Jupp (Social Secretary), Inspector Karen Ellis (Gloucestershire Police), Jackie Brown (School Business Manager at Watermoor C of E School), Brendan McFadden (Wilts/Glos Standard), Roger Sweeting, David Prewett (Stratton Community Group), Roy Leyfield, Malcolm Lewis, Linda Carter, Michael Carter, John Thorn, David Smith, Mary Smith, Derek Freeman, Glynnis Freeman, Caroline Braidwood. (Alan Barrett, GCC Urban Transport Manager, joined the meeting at 7.15pm and Cllr Shirley Alexander, Cirencester Town Council, at 7pm)

1. Welcome and Apologies

Stuart Tarr welcomed everyone to the meeting and reported the following apologies: PCSO Renee Broad (crime and statistics report submitted), Keith Handley (Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator), Hannah Sturman and Martin Conyers (CTC).

2. To Approve the Minutes from Meeting held on 8 May 2014

Proposed by Paul Maidens and seconded by Anne Rawlins: approved and signed by the Chairman.

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

None, everything from previous meeting on this agenda

4. Chairman's Report

Stuart Tarr reported that he had been selected as a Conservative candidate for the Stratton ward in the forthcoming District Council elections. He had asked to be moved from the Beeches ward to that of Stratton as he thought it might conflict with his role as Chairman of the Beeches Community Group.

Due to the low turnout in recent months, Stuart reported that he had mooted the idea of a Beeches merger with the Watermoor Community Group. They have replied that they welcome joint working on shared issues but do not wish for a merger at this point in time. Shortly the 5 wards will become 8 wards so there will inevitably be changes in the future to local community groups. November at the AGM will be a good time to review the matter as several committee positions will again become vacant.

Due to local opposition to the proposed parking restriction orders in Cirencester town centre the changes have been dropped and parking restrictions will remain unchanged as they are now.

5. Treasurer's Report

Bank balance £251.88

A £30 donation has been received from the Friends of Watermoor School for the hire of the candyfloss machine. The cheque made out for £20 to Wiltshire Air Ambulance in memory of Janet Broomfield has had to be re-sent due to Lloyds Bank not processing the change of signatories paperwork.

6. Police, Town, District and County Councillor's Reports

Police Report

Inspector Karen Ellis introduced herself as the new Neighbourhood Officer for the Cotswolds and expressed her pleasure in getting to know our community group but unfortunately it was impossible for her to attend every meeting. She has had 25 years policing experience and moved from the Metropolitan police to the Gloucestershire Constabulary 12 years ago. Her general aim for the Cotswolds is for a strengthening of the relationships that we have with her officers. Stuart and Paul stated that they got on very well with PCSOs Renee Broad and Beverley Williams; also Sergeant Garrett Gloyn.

Insp. Ellis was asked to enquire if the Gloucestershire Police Traffic Management Unit had been involved in GCC's November 2013 road safety audit concerning the proposed bus route through North Home Road; Karen agreed to make enquiries and update Stuart. She was also asked about the possibility of reducing speed limits from 30mph to 20mph in the same area but explained that these had to be initiated by Gloucestershire Highways consulting with local communities and other road users with the police enforcing speed restrictions if they were introduced.

Secretariat Note: Insp. Ellis has since written to Gloucestershire Constabulary's Road Safety and Traffic Management Unit to add weight to residents' concerns that the proposed bus route through North Home Road and the 'shared surface' bus gate is potentially unsafe. The chairman has also written to lend his support and to ask for earlier decisions to be reviewed and if possible revised. **See also Item 7 Other Reports.**

Crime figures reported by Stuart, from Renee Broad, were very similar to May's figures.

Town Councillor's Report

Shirley Alexander (Beeches Ward and Lead Member for Community Matters) explained to the meeting that the new Community Hall being built on the campus of the new primary school at Kingshill had been funded by a £500,000 community infrastructure levy from the developers of the two new housing developments – Kingshill Meadow and Corinium Via. Cllr Alexander had already met with Jackie Brown, Watermoor School Business Manager, to discuss the administration of these arrangements. The new pre-school and community hall will be a link to the school. There will be a need for fundraising/donations to furnish the community hall and it will need to be used by local voluntary and community groups.

Stuart asked if the hall was available, free of charge, for BCG to use. Jackie Brown replied that yes, BCG has the benefit of an understanding that they could have 12 meetings a year free of charge at the community hall.

Jackie Brown reported that the school will move in by Easter 2015 and that the developer was due to hand the school building over to them in February 2015. The community hall is for the people of the Beeches and not for the school. It is hoped that the hall will be a way of promoting community cohesion. Jackie will be taking care of hall bookings.

County and District Councillors' Reports

No update and no apology.

7. Other Reports/Presentations

Alan Barrett (Urban Transport Manager for Gloucestershire County Council and Passenger Transport Expert) came to the meeting to give an update on the proposed extension of the No. 77 bus route through North Home Road to Kingshill Meadow. He explained that due to funding constraints it had to be an extension of the existing 77 service rather than a new stand-alone bus route: the Section 106 money received from the developers for the bus service into Kingshill Meadow was not sufficient to pay for an additional bus service.

The existing 74 and 77 bus routes would be segregated, with the larger Farmors School bus no longer planned to go through the development. A smaller bus coming from Lechlade/Fairford would instead serve the route through North Home Road into Kingshill Meadow at Mulberry Court.

Alan stated that due to traffic-related waiting times at the A429 Kingshill Meadow (Tesco) roundabout the bus service could not easily turn right out of the development at that point. Instead it would enter Kingshill Meadow at the roundabout and out through North Home Road, in one direction only, serving both directions.

Stuart Tarr asked if the bus could go into the Beeches estate, back out along the Beeches Road and then via the A429 dual carriageway into Kingshill Meadow and Mulberry Court at the Tesco roundabout, before returning along the A429 into Cirencester town centre. Alan Barrett said the bus schedule was tight and did not allow for this; there were also safety concerns allowing sufficient time for buses to turn on to a very busy roundabout against the flow of fast-moving traffic from the right.

A number of points were raised by North Home Road residents regarding the bus route. Roger Sweeting raised safety concerns about buses turning left from the bus gate on to a tight restricted-line-of-sight 90° corner in North Home Road; parking and contraflow issues with traffic parked on both sides of a narrow road vis a vis the width of buses allowing the passage of only one vehicle in one direction at a time; and the fact that pedestrians were using the 'shared surface' of the bus gate as a walkway. Mike Jupp asked why GCC were not in this instance observing their own 'Manual for Gloucestershire Streets' which specifically prohibits the use of buses on 'shared surfaces'. His concern was of buses sharing

the surface of the bus gate with pedestrians, including mothers with young children, the elderly and the disabled. Mike Jupp also asked Alan Barratt about the November 2013 traffic consultation: how it was conducted and how it was concluded in the light of residents' road safety concerns expressed in a survey which had obtained the signature of over 500 residents against the proposed route conducted in January 2013. In summary there was strong representation from local residents due to a general concern about the safety of routing the bus service through North Home Road; a service which they welcomed but for which an alternative route via the A429 Kingshill Meadow roundabout should be proposed (if necessary with traffic lights or other design measures that would allow buses to safely enter the roundabout against the flow of traffic from the right).

Alan Barrett concluded by saying that he would go away with the issues raised by local residents and reply to members on the points they had raised.

Secretariat note: the chairman has since written to Alan Barrett to reinforce these concerns. **See also Item 6 Police Report.**

Jackie Brown, School Business Manager, Watermoor C of E School. See item 6 Town Councillor's report about the new Community hall.

8. Reports

Community Speed Watch & Neighbourhood Watch

Stuart reported Keith Handley's update. No updates from CTC or the police with regard to Community Speed Watch training. If anyone is interested in becoming involved with CSW then please send their details to Keith.

A resident on Kingshill Meadow has indicated that they are interested in becoming involved with Neighbourhood Watch; Keith is following this up. Whitelands Road need a representative.

From 1st August alerts from police will be sent via email, the present mobile phone cascade system will cease and if the present Neighbourhood Watch representatives have not supplied an email address they will be deleted from the police contact list.

It was asked if BCG and the Corinium Via Residents' Association could be added to the police Neighbourhood Watch email list so that alerts could go directly on to their website and Facebook pages; this was agreed.

Litter Picking

Doug sent a report via Malcolm to advise that litter picking was going well. Mike reported that two more dog bins have yet to be installed in North Home Road (eventually there will be 4 in total, with 2 at present installed).

Bromford Living

No update and no apologies

Housing Associations

Sovereign – no update and no apology.

Cottsway – Apologies were received from Peter Gartshore. A representative had agreed to attend in Peter’s place but had arrived at 6pm and had left before the meeting at 7pm (it is hoped to attend the September meeting). A number of issues relating to waste disposal at an apartment block had been previously dealt with satisfactorily.

Corinium Via Residents’ Association

The abandoned car has gone and the skateboarding problem has stopped now that the new Kingshill skateboard park is open. There is still an issue with some of the housing association gardens that need weeding and generally tidying up and wheelie bins left outside residents’ houses after collection has also been a problem - issues which have been raised with Sovereign Housing for which a response is awaited. The proposed 5,000sq m of office space and 100 new homes development next to the Corinium Via development is progressing.

Kingshill School Community Facility

Dealt with under Item 6.

Kingshill Meadow/North Home Road Bus Service

Dealt with under item 7.

9. Social Events

It was reported that there had been no uptake for the trip to Weston-Super-Mare that Mike Jupp was trying to organize; it is likely that the trip would be pulled. Malcolm Lewis asked if a Christmas dinner event would again be arranged at the Wheatsheaf Inn; this would be looked into by Mike.

10. Any Other Business

It was stated that there were a lot of stinging nettles and overhanging branches on the pathway between North Home Road and the new Kingshill Meadow housing development as nobody looks after it. Whose responsibility is it? Stuart Tarr said he would look into it.

Mike Jupp asked for it to be noted in the minutes that he had contacted two ward councillors in November 2013 concerning the routing of the bus service through North Home Road but that neither had replied to him. He had since contacted Cllr Paul Hodgkinson, Liberal Democrat prospective Parliamentary Candidate for the Cotswolds, who had said that Cllrs Robbins and Coleman would get in touch with him, but they had not done so to date (nor had apologies been received for this meeting).

Malcolm Lewis asked that Stuart Tarr should reconsider standing for Beeches Ward, and not Stratton, as he lives in the ward. He thought it was better that councillors lived within the ward they stood for and wished to represent. Mike Jupp also commented that he didn’t see it mattered being a district ward councillor and a committee member and chairman of the BCG provided a proper separation of interests was observed and the community group was not used to advance party political interests. Stuart said he would give it further consideration.

Paul Maidens expressed disappointment that Cllr Nigel Robbins (Town and County Councillor) and Cllr Patrick Coleman (Town and District Councillor) were not present at the meeting, nor had sent their apologies. It was felt that this should be recorded in the minutes.

**Date and Time of Next Meeting: 7pm Thurs 18th September 2014
at Ingleside House**

The meeting closed at 8.45pm