

WARREN & DISTRICT RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF 2021 AGM

Venue: Mapledurham Playing Field Pavilion

Date: Wednesday 20th October 2021

Time: 19.30hrs – 21.00hrs

Attendees: 19 members present and 8 committee members.

Apologies: received from Nick Haskins & Tricia Appleton, both unable to attend in person and could not access Zoom.

Introduction

Elisa Miles, Chairperson, welcomed all attendees to the meeting and outlined health and safety arrangements. She explained that we were unable to connect remote attendees via the Zoom webinar due to technical difficulties and apologized for this setback.

1.Message from the Chair

Elisa opened the meeting by confirming changes to the committee, which followed the sad loss of two key members, Robin Bentham who was chair, and Phil Darlow who was a very long-standing member of WADRA.

Elisa welcomed two new members who had been co-opted to the committee, John Heaps and Sally Hart, both of whom were standing for election during the AGM. 16 new members have joined WADRA during the past year. Elisa outlined the agenda which included topics such as funding for the refurbished pavilion, ward changes affecting Caversham Heights, media activity involving Caversham Bridge, Henley Standard and Radio Berkshire. The actions for re-instating a banking hub for Caversham with proposals to Matt Rodda, Caversham Traders, and CADRA along with the pledge of WADRA's support, the lack of positive engagement during the past year with the Heights school and ward councillor. Elisa launched a proposed new WADRA logo which includes the key mission "Protect, Preserve and Enhance" and the date the association was established in 1963.

2.Minutes of AGM 2019 – were unanimously voted as an accurate reflection of the 2020 virtual AGM and were duly signed off by the committee and attending members.

3.Matters Arising – there were no matters arising and no questions raised by any WADRA members.

4. Treasurer's Report – the treasurer, Hayley Brommell, gave a detailed and clear explanation of accounts for the year. These are currently in the final stages of sign off by WADRA's accredited auditor, Steve Brown FCCA. The accounts for 2019/20 were signed off as being accurate on 26/10/2020 by Steve Brown. As of year-end 2020/21, the status of WADRA's accounts was:

Savings Account

- Opening balance £25,608.63
- Withdrawals £5,000.00
- Deposits nil
- Interest £2.43
- Balance as at 31/08/19 £20,611.06

Current Account

- Opening balance £4,947.43
- Deposits/Fundraising £6,170.00
- Withdrawals £6,492.42
- Balance £4,626.01

Petty Cash

- Opening balance £57.00
- Deposits £45.00
- Withdrawals £0.00
- Balance £102.00 (it is anticipated that this will grow due to the Community Hub afternoons)

Grand Total £25,338.07

- Pavilion kitchen equipment was £5,559.12 for an oven, fridge freezer, glasses, shelving and cups etc
- Van hire £255.60 for Festival camping gear collection
- WADRA Zoom subscriptions £182.28 for committee and AGM calls
- Sundries stationary £169.17 for storage, stamps, labels and cards
- Webhosting for WADRA website £598.70
- Training £48.00 for hygiene certificates for kitchen volunteers

4. Elections of returning & new committee members – there were two new nominees, John Heaps and Sally Hart. Both gave a short summary of their reasons for suitability which included:

- Sally- Blagrove Lane resident since 1986. Retired MLTC member and still an active member of The Club at Mapledurham. From 1970s to 1999 worked in sport and recreation policy development at regional and national level. Voluntary work in the field 2000 to 2010. Family carer until 2017. 100% of all members unanimously voted for Sally
- John- moved from Liverpool to Caversham with his family in 1988 to pursue a career in management. Latterly he ran an interim management business specializing in business strategy, marketing, restructuring and contract management with the NHS and private sector. Retired since 2015, he is committed to maintaining the quality of life and strengthening the community in Caversham Heights. He contributed to the work of MPFAG and latterly WADRA. His main interests are politics, economics, science, travel, art and the environment. John also received 100% votes from members for his election to the committee.
- There were three returning members – Elisa Miles (chair) proposed by Ingela Sharma and Ceri Tanner. Pam Reynolds proposed by Kevin Miles and Martin Brommell, and Hayley Brommell (Treasurer) proposed by Susan Spires and Jane Bickerstaffe. All were 100% unanimously voted for re-election.

5. Proposed New WADRA Logo – Elisa presented an impression of the proposed new WADRA Logo which will be professionally rendered in the coming weeks. Comments received so far have been favourable but some would like to see greater diversity to include a variety in age such as children, teenagers, older people and disabled people.

6. Ward Changes – Elisa outlined ward changes and specifically those impacting Caversham Heights. As of May 2022, there will be 16 wards with 3 councillors per ward, making a total of 48 councillors which includes three new posts. Mapledurham ward will be part of Caversham Heights Ward which will have three councillors. Current ward councillor for Mapledurham ward is Isobel Ballsdon, with Paul Carnell, Jeanette Skeats and David Stevens councillors responsible for Thames ward.. Elisa also showed a map of the WADRA boundaries. These cover an area bounded by the Warren, St Peters Avenue, south side of A4074 Upper Woodcote Road, Blagrove Farm and Blagrove Lane. She described how these tie into the boundary changes.

7. Planning (Alistair) – WADRA’s planning representative, Alistair McLean, explained the role of WADRA in monitoring planning applications in the local area. He described how he receives an email every Monday from RBC showing planning applications across the borough. Alistair sifts through these and picks out the 2 or 3 which relate to WADRA’s area of interest. This amounts to around 150 per annum for this area. WADRA reviews and then either comments, supports or objects to each application. We objected to around 20 last year. Alistair gave a small number of examples of recent applications where the committee have raised comments or objections to the local authority.

This was primarily because it was considered that the applications would negatively impact on the characteristics of the local environment. Alistair reiterated that if any member is concerned about a Planning Application within the WADRA boundary, and would like support from the WADRA committee, details should be sent to info@wadra.org.uk

8.Environment – Elisa outlined current concerns impacting our environment. These include light and noise pollution specifically at MPF, traffic safety on A4074 and roads surrounding the Heights school, parking congestion especially during the school build, the loss of around 170 trees at MPF, residents right to peace and privacy, and dominance of the school on MPF. WADRA has written to Environmental Health regarding the light and noise pollution and has proposed sound walls, more trees and monitoring of incidents such as motorcycles being ridden across the central avenue at 10.00pm. Traffic safety concerns include mouth of the access road to MPF pavilion/school, street furniture causing confusion and the fact that WADRA has written obsessively to the local authority raising concerns about speed and pedestrian safety issues. Parking is not as bad as anticipated although during the school build, many residents were badly affected, especially those in Gurney and Knowle Close, Woodcote Way, Hewett Avenue, River and Chazey Roads. Dominance and overuse of certain football pitches by The Heights on MPF is causing concern and issues have arisen with dog walkers and space being taken consistently taken by one group at the expense of other users. In terms of trees, WADRA is looking for volunteers to work with the Queens Jubilee initiative to replace the 170 trees lost to development.

9.North Reading Safer Neighbourhood Forum – Martin Brommell, who represents WADRA at these forums, explained the role of the NRSNF which is a voluntary community group of residents working with relevant partner agencies, notably Thames Valley Police and RBC along with resident's associations, neighbourhood watch groups and interested parties, to help resolve any community safety and crime related issues in North Reading. Martin detailed some of the topics covered during these meetings, with a specific focus on dealing with the issue of fireworks as we approach 5th November. He emphasised the importance of reporting incidents through the proper channels. Reporting for non-emergency calls should be made to 101 or to the website www.thamesvalley.police.uk. Emergency calls to 999. Anonymous calls to Crimestoppers 0800 555 111. Anti-social behaviour (ASB's) should be reported to the local authority's ASB team via asb.team@reading.gov.uk

10. Mapledurham Playing Field Management Committee - Martin Brommell outlined his role as WADRA representative on the restructured MPF Management Committee, whose purpose is general supervision over activities at MPF, determining hire charges, conformance with the charitable trust & RBC's statutory & financial requirements. Members of the restructured committee are Councillors Isobel Ballsdon (chair), Paul Carnell & Jeanette Skeats, Jane Bowen Mapledurham Parish Council, Steve Brown Secretary of CTFC, Philip deSausmarez Chairman of MLTC, Daniel Mander major user groups, Esme Tiplady Heights School Board of Governor, and Martin representing WADRA. A meeting was held 13th Oct'21 and key topics discussed included a Deed of Dedication to offer an added layer of protection to the Trust Deed. Lack of storage at the pavilion and in the MPF compound, the MUGA steps protruding onto trust land which, in WADRA's opinion, have been built there unlawfully, car parking limitations, overuse of some pitches, lack of promotion of the site, an opening event for the pavilion, plaque in honour of the late Robin Bentham, safety and emergency contact issues, and queries over the accounts presented by a RBC parks and leisure officer. The next meeting, which members of the public can attend as observers, is scheduled for 9th March 2022.

11. MPF Pavilion – Elisa described how WADRA funded the initial structural refurbishment with nearly £50k. She gave thanks to Shaun Tanner, The Bartletts and Trish Goble for their invaluable help with certain aspects of the pavilion refurb. RBC/EFSA funding fell short of kitchen provision, resulting in WADRA and CTFC jointly funding the kitchen equipment totally, with approximately £7,000 of donations, the bulk of which was provided by WADRA. The kitchen is now fully functioning and passed its Health & Safety checks recently. Landscaping has begun, but more trees are required to replace what has been lost and to help screen noise and light, and to enhance the view

to the west, as well as levelling of the area behind. WADRA would also like to see a greater variety of activities booked for the pavilion by groups such as pilates, yoga, Scrabble club and others to improve the mix and age group of users. Larger storage is also necessary to enable WADRA to run events such as the successful Xmas Fayre, summer fete and other initiatives.

12. Events, Community Initiatives and Fundraising – Elisa presented events participated in during 2020/21 which included

- Reading Festival – Salvaging and Charitable fundraising collections
- Reading Museum – an exhibition celebrating 50 years of Reading Festival

Forthcoming Events:

- Caversham Halloween Hunt – which takes place during October 2021. This is in its second year, having been created by Caroline Foulkes in 2020. WADRA are taking the lead this year and will be providing a map of participants which will be available on the WADRA Website www.wadra.org. Homes register on the website and decorate their homes with a Halloween theme for families to visit.
- WADRA Halloween Costume Parade & Competition – this will be held at MPF on 31st October 2021. It is a fancy-dress competition with categories for Under 5's, 10's, 16's and 16 plus along with pet and human categories. Current sponsors include Art Jam Studio, Kim's Cupcakes and Terry's. There will also be a Sensory Garden. WADRA will be serving drinks and snacks on the day. Volunteers are needed to help and to sponsor prizes.
- Community Hub Café - every Thursday between 1.00-4.00pm. Managed by volunteers selling cakes, snacks, hot and cold drinks. It is attended by local vendors, artists, craftspeople and interested groups. Attendance to date has been very encouraging.

Proposed Future Events:

- Community Book Swap
- Pavilion Grand opening and dedication
- Summer Fete 2022
- Dog Show
- Metal Recycling

13. Reading Festival – Elisa explained how WADRA supports this annual event and what we actually do. This includes site visits with RBC licensing and Live Nation, information and leafletting to residents, provision of car passes for closed roads such as The Warren, promenade lighting adjustment in conjunction with Festival Republic representatives, working closely with Live Nation to ensure residents are safe and not disturbed, debrief sessions with RBC Licensing and debrief sessions with Live Nation.

In addition, WADRA organises salvaging, recycling, reclaiming and donation of some camping equipment, food, toiletries and towels to charities such as Afghanistan Refugees via the Weller Centre, CIRDIC Centre, Sadaka and the Vegan Society. Remaining camping equipment is sold off by WADRA for fundraising.

14. AOB – There were no questions from members. One member, Nigel Stanbrook, asked to speak and gave a much appreciated and well received vote of thanks to the WADRA committee for their efforts with everything they have been doing on behalf of the community across such a wide range of activities. The chair thanked Nigel on behalf of the committee for this valued recognition.

15. Closing Comments – Elisa Miles, Chair, closed the meeting by thanking all attendees for making the effort to attend and confirmed she would be writing to those unable to watch the meeting by Zoom to apologise and to explain the technical issues we encountered. Access to the slides and minutes was promised via the website shortly after the meeting. She wished everyone a safe journey and a safe and healthy Covid free time in the months ahead. The meeting concluded by 09.00pm.