

WARREN AND DISTRICT RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the AGM 13th November 2024 held in Mapledurham Pavilion
These notes support the information in the AGM presentation slides lodged on the WADRA website. The AGM was followed by a presentation from Richard Brasheres on Keeping Safe on Line

Present 26 including the Committee.

Apologies The date of the meeting had been changed from October 9th due to illness among the committee. The new date clashed with an open meeting of CADRA. Specific apologies were received from Mr and Mrs Appleton and Ceri Tanner.

The minutes of the 2023 AGM were agreed. Proposer Martin Brommell, Seconder Alun Reynolds

Introduction and matters arising (slide 3,4)

Elisa Miles welcomed members. She thanked the committee and the small band of volunteers who supported WADRA activities. She invited more volunteers. Referring to previous meetings she said that despite several fruitless attempts to get support from Matt Rodda MP and the local Councillors, the Deed of Dedication had still not been resolved. It was important to protect the capital assets of the Trust which owned the Mapledurham Playing Fields. The Council had indicated that minimal interest had accrued to the capital in the Trust in recent years despite the high interest rates available. (e.g. 2022-2023 interest of £7244 from £283,944). As trustee the Council seemed negligent of its fiduciary duties. Questions from the floor asked Mrs Miles to bring this to the attention of the Charity Commission.

North Reading Safer Neighbourhood Forum (slides 5, 6)

Martin Brommell explained the purpose of the Forum He outlined the changes in support from Thames Valley police and Reading Borough Council due to lack of resources. Local police areas were cut from 11 to 5. Together with a reduced number of forum meetings, this could result in initiatives suffering a loss of momentum. Two open-air Have Your Say meetings between residents and the police were held at the Playing Fields in April and August. Water safety was a concern with 8 drownings in the first 6 months of 2024. Volunteers had attended a line throwing course and more volunteers to train would be welcomed.

Crime was an ongoing concern – goods had been stolen to order and sold on to licensed premises in Reading. Residents were urged to adopt car and home security. Those with keyless cars were especially at risk. Slide 6 summarised the procedures for reporting emergencies.

Mapledurham Playing Field Management Committee. (slides 7 – 11)

RBC Councillors had been withdrawn from the Committee. Generally, Mrs Miles had tried to make the running of the management committee more effective, but attendance by officers came at a cost which the Council was reluctant to support. She was pursuing a number of matters through one-to-one liaison. These included merging the two small rooms into a

larger one and a store by relocating an internal wall. RBC had received a quote of £5000. Members suggested that it might be possible for the Trust to get lower quotes from contractors without a service agreement. Generally, it was felt that more pressure should be applied to get the Trust managed more effectively. The Trust should benefit when businesses were paying to book the school but using Trust facilities such as the car park and pitches. Small hedging had been planted alongside the pavilion windows to deter ball games against the walls. More shrubs would be put in and it was hoped some evergreens could be found for the Hewett Avenue side of the fields. An acoustic screen was still needed between the school and adjacent properties which also needed extra protection from lighting. The members of the Management Committee were still concerned about the domination of the Trust Car Park by parents often arriving to pick up children well before the end of the school day. This affected people trying to attend sessions in the pavilion, several of which are aimed at the less mobile.

Mrs Miles was due to meet the new Head of School to discuss the walk to school policy and other issues. Members highlighted the congestion caused by parents parking and turning inconsiderately in nearby roads such as Knowle Close. They also highlighted the problems caused in nearby roads by visiting football teams.

A planning application to increase the pupil numbers at The Heights School had been under consideration for over a year. WADRA had entered an objection.

Mapledurham Field, Hall and Pavilion events (slides 12 – 13)

Elisa Miles summarised events supported. The lack of storage was a limiting factor in planning and holding events. Festival salvage had been confined to items which could be passed directly to charities.

The Community Café on Thursday afternoons had received welcome sponsorship and more would be sought for the coming year. More helpers would also be welcome.

Reading Festival (slide 14)

The preparation for Reading Festival had run smoothly but residents had been disturbed by noise from the adjoining fair which extended beyond the agreed hours for the Festival. Events at the Atrium in Scours Lane on May Bank holiday had far exceeded acceptable limits and Reading Borough Council were monitoring the club's activities closely.

Treasurer's Report (slide 15)

Hayley Brommell presented the financial report 1 Sept 2023 to 31 August 2024. It had been subject to independent scrutiny,

Planning Report (slide 16)

Alistair McLean explained WADRA's objective with regard to Planning: to preserve and enhance the character of the area as prescribed in our constitution. He monitors the RBC Planning website on a weekly basis to identify any new planning applications and all new permissions granted by RBC for the WADRA area.

He reported that over the past 12 months, there had been a total of 23 new applications and 28 determinations. All of the determinations were permitted except 2, one of which was refused and one which was withdrawn by the applicant. The refused application was in

respect of a proposed Extension to 11, St Peters Hill and the withdrawal was in respect of proposed new house on a plot of land on the Warren. This application was discussed at last years AGM and WADRA submitted an objection to RBC.

There were currently 7 applications awaiting a decision and of these, most noteworthy are:

Application No: 230726: 147 Upper Woodcote Road for a front, side rear extension and 1st Floor Extension. The proposals are to increase the size of the property from 2 to 5 bedrooms and objections have been submitted by neighbours on the basis of the size of the extension in relation to the existing properties.

A scaled down version was submitted in May and is still under consideration by RBC Planners.

Application No 231023: The Heights School, Upper Woodcote Road. This application is to permit the school to increase the class sizes from 25 to 30 pupils; with a total increase of 70 pupils across the whole of the year groups. WADRA have considered this application in detail and have established that there are many surplus places in other local schools in Caversham, so any increase in the class sizes at the Heights would have a detrimental impact on these other schools. Furthermore noise, lighting and parking complaints relating to the school, have been raised by residents living adjacent to the school and these have remained unresolved for some time.

For these reasons, WADRA has submitted an objection to this planning application.

Application No: 240766: This application is for a large extension to an existing bungalow in Upper Warren Avenue. The bungalow was known as Tonilla, but the proposal is to rename it Magnolia House. Although the proposals are extensive, they are in keeping with the other properties in this location

Application No: 240824: The application relates to a property in the Warren known as The Shanty. A previous application was rejected on appeal and this latest application takes into the recommendations made by the planning inspectorate.

Application Nos: 241108 and 240705: A previous application ref: 231270 was made for Full planning in September 2023 but was refused by RBC. A revised application submitted under Permitted Development, was also refused earlier this year as it did not meet the requirements of Permitted Development.

A further application ref: 241108, has recently been submitted and is expected to be decided in later this year.

Mr McLean urged members concerned about a Planning Application and wanting the support of WADRA to contact info @ WADRA .org or any committee member, details of which can be found on the WADRA Website. RBC have advised they will no longer be informing residents by letter of Planning Applications near to their property and so WADRA have included a section on new planning applications in the WADRA area, on their website., to keep members informed.

Election of Committee (slide 17)

The following were re-elected by show of hands without dissent: Hayley Brommell, Sally Hart, John Heaps, Elisa Miles, and Pam Reynolds. Stephen Bale was also elected without dissent. The committee were thanked for their work.

Questions and close (Slides 18,19). The three questions submitted (slide 19) had been answered in the course of the meeting, In closing the meeting Mrs Miles asked for support for a WhatsApp group for conveying information to members. She also requested support in writing letters in support of issues raised.

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm and was followed after a tea break by a presentation on keeping safe on line By Richard Brasheres.