

Message from the former Chair of the Derby Road Fund Committee, Simon Scaddan

Unfortunately, due to poor health I have had to resign my position as Chair of the DRF Committee and my Acting Chair has recently also felt unable to continue. This has created a very depleted committee who will carry on for the time being in an informal capacity. Consequently, this has now brought about the need for fresh faces to form a new committee and I appeal to you to consider putting your name forward so that the DRF isn't forced to employ a management company, with the consequential increase in road fees. The Treasurer is certainly willing to continue to receive your contributions towards maintaining the road, lighting, etc without which the quality of our road will fall into disrepair.

Immediately before the 2019 AGM the previous Chair, Ian Lawson, stood down and for the majority of the year Sean Mitchell was Acting Chair. We thank him for his stewardship during that time. At the 2019 AGM Jamie Harcourt, Julie Mills and myself joined the Committee. Julie has since stepped down. Gillian Vooght also stepped down her place on the Committee but has agreed to stay on in a co-opted, non-voting capacity. We thank them both for their contributions to the Committee's work.

The pinch point has remained a continuing concern throughout the year. A snapshot survey of traffic using Derby Road was carried out in June 2019 and a questionnaire was circulated to all members in the July seeking their views. 41% of households responded and 60% voted in its favour. Later that summer questions were raised again about the legality of covenants and their enforceability. In the autumn the regular cleaning of drains and the sweeping of Derby Road was carried out as part of the Fund's responsibilities to maintain the road surface in good condition.

In December I was elected by the Committee as its new Chair. My first task was to seek legal advice on the enforceability of covenants which the Committee had used in recent years when asking for annual contributions from residents. As in any legal matters there are different interpretations of the law but the Committee accepted the advice of our independent solicitor that covenants were not legally enforceable by DRFA at this time. This has had a knock-on effect on other practices the Committee had relied upon before when collecting annual contributions and these have now ceased.

Towards the end of February 2020 the Committee began preparing for the AGM at Queen Anne's School. The date of 4 April was set. And then the Covid 19 pandemic struck with lock down in March. And the meeting was then postponed.

I had hoped to make a few observations in person about the Derby Road Fund Association. You will have noted that in the 2018 AGM Minutes there was a reference to the Constitution. To date we do not have one that has been agreed by the members. Therefore, with the help of some residents and the Committee, we have drafted a new Constitution which we will share with you via our website and, for those without internet access, by letter seeking your comments. It is the intention to post this at the same time as the Minutes of the AGM. I hope you will find it clearly sets out the aims of the DRF Association and the responsibilities of the Committee. I believe it will help the Committee manage more efficiently and be more accountable to members of the Association.

The Derby Road Fund, as its name suggests is that that. **A Fund.** It relies entirely on the annual contributions from members of the Association and residents of the Road and its tributaries. To continue to attract contributions it needs to regain the trust and the respect of residents whose money has been entrusted to the Committee. This will be the challenge for the new committee over the next year.