

### Committee members

#### **VENUE: 27 Derby Road**

**PRESENT:** Chair: Lyn Anthony-Higgins (LA)

Treasurer: Helen Savidge (HS)

Committee: Sue Feather (SF), Jamie Harcourt (JH), Carole Kingston (CK),  
Jon Lloyd (JL), Tanya Pynn (TP) – SF and TP attended via Zoom.

DRFA residents: three households observing via Zoom

(When referencing the above, first and second name abbreviations will be used throughout)

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#### **Welcome and introductions**

LA welcomed new and returning members. She noted that the meeting was quorate and reminded members of meeting procedures.

Trustees' and Directors' Indemnity: Indemnifying members of the Committee against liability incurred by them acting in good faith and in the name of the Association if acting lawfully and within their authority. In addition, the indemnity covers the decisions made by the voting members of the Association's AGM.

Committee members' names and how they voted would be recorded against each agenda item – only members who comply with Clause 3.3 of the DRFA Constitution could vote (full members who have paid their contribution).

There would be general discussion before voting took place. It was decided that as there was a long agenda, the meeting would last no longer than an hour and a half. Any outstanding agenda items at that point would be carried forward to the next meeting.

2

#### **Apologies for absence**

None.

3

#### **Minutes of meeting of 8 April 2022 and AGM of 16 June 2022**

LA asked if the Committee agreed that the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 8 April and the AGM of 16 June could be confirmed and agreed as an accurate record of the proceedings. All members voted and agreed.

4

#### **The anonymous and unlawful locking of the Derby Road gates on 29 August 2022**

LA sought the Committee's views on this action. JH thought the way it was done was unfortunate and the use of anonymous notes by those responsible was strange. He said he had informed those responsible for locking the gates at least twice that it should not be done. CK said this should be prevented from happening again. HS said we should look forward because it had happened and had created an awkward and difficult situation, as the Committee then had to send out letters to residents to counteract the misconception that the action was by or on behalf of the Committee.

CK suggested the Committee should buy new padlocks which should be labelled to make clear that they are the property of the DRFA. Whoever the locks on the gate belonged to would be given 2 weeks from the date of the notice to remove them, after which time they would be removed by the Committee.

TP asked if there was anywhere in the AGM minutes that stated that the DRFA was going to cease and desist closing and locking the gates. HS said the issue at hand was not about the

closing, but who closes them and that it must happen in a controlled and lawful way. TP referred to minutes from 2018 regarding the closing of the gates. JL said that the solicitor's advice received in 2020 rendered the 2018 action redundant because it prohibited the locking of the gates as had been proposed in 2018.

Brian Cairns (a resident) asked why there hadn't been a residents' vote on the legal advice. HS said the Committee had said several times that they would revisit the issue if new legal advice was received, but the legal advice as it stood would be followed. BC mentioned that Grosvenor Road was still closing their road. JL said we did not know what the legal situation was re Grosvenor Road.

HS offered to send the legal advice to TP again and re-iterated that the issue had been discussed numerous times and that the previous Committee had commissioned the legal advice. TP asked if the gate and pinchpoint could be closed in order to limit access to unwanted traffic on the road. JL said the Committee hadn't yet reached the point of discussing next steps, partly because of the continued challenges from a small number of residents who had rejected the legal advice without presenting any alternative legal advice to support their own claims.

HS suggested that the Committee come up with ideas on what could be done lawfully that could be put forward at the next meeting.

All members voted and agreed to the replacement of the locks on the gates. JH asked whether he should speak to the people responsible for shutting the gates about this. JL pointed out that the Committee had sent two letters to residents asking those responsible to get in contact and the response to the first letter had been the posting of further anonymous posters in the road with misinformation about Reading Borough Council. HS did not believe there was anything to discuss as private residents should not be shutting the gates.

**ACTION POINT:** HS to buy new padlocks on behalf of the committee. It was agreed by the whole committee that the old padlock would be removed if necessary.

#### 4.2 Review of 16 June AGM and 4.3 Residents' Correspondence Section

LA said that this is a huge topic so it was agreed by all members that both these items would take too much time for this meeting, so would be deferred to a later meeting.

**ACTION POINT:** Items 4.2 and 4.3 to be included in the next meeting's agenda.

HS to circulate her issues re the items before the next meeting so all members could be prepared. LA to look into the logistics regarding the Residents' Correspondence Section and report back to a later committee meeting.

## 5

### Trees

JH reported that there was a tree removed by Queen Anne's School opposite 31 DR and not replaced. He felt that their Leylandii would smother any new tree. The tree also did not have a TPO. He would contact QAS regarding the height of their Leylandii. He had also written to the Council asking that they inspect the tree outside 1 Moss Close as it was their responsibility. He also pointed out that the Council TPO Map had put that tree in the wrong position. There were two trees outside No 6 which JH thought need pollarding or bringing down. Chaney's had been looking after the base but not the top. JL mentioned that the suckers at the bottom of a few trees on Derby Road were beginning to block the pavement. JH was concerned about the boughs on the tree outside 23 DR and would contact the owner in due course.

JH also said the Committee hadn't resolved the responsibility for the trees that front Field View. HS made a suggestion on pragmatic grounds that FV take responsibility for the verge with the two trees between 8a to 16 DR and the DRFA take responsibility for the verge and tree beside the pinchpoint. This included the path and bollards that had been installed by the previous Committee without consultation with anyone, and therefore that the Committee had effectively assumed responsibility for that verge. HS also stated that any responsibility

for verges was with the whole of FV and not individual FV owners. She said this had not been discussed with the FV management company as yet. JL said that it would have to be put to the next FV AGM. HS said she was trying to find a pragmatic solution to a problem that had remained unsolvable.

TP asked if this would need to be voted on at the DRFA AGM. HS said no as it is a Committee decision. TP asked who would take care of the frontage. HS said herself and JH as they have already been doing. CK felt it would be good to keep an inventory of ownership of all the trees. JH said the TPO map was his bible in this respect.

**ACTION POINTS:** JH to contact QAS regarding their Leylandii.

HS to supply the contact details of Chaney's to JH in relation to the No 6 tree.

JH to strip the suckers on the tree outside his property.

The committee agreed they would contact FV management company to put forward the pragmatic solutions agreed by the committee regarding frontage responsibilities.

## 6

### Treasurer's Report

HS had circulated her report and asked if anyone had any questions.

JL asked what the difference was between the business account and the community account. HS replied one has money going out – the community account which is for paying bills and the other gets interest.

HS said that so far 156 contributions had been received since the letter went out at the end of July (the total contributions received last year was 186). TP asked if any reasons had been given for non-payment. HS said not so far. She said it was a concern that several ex-Committee members were no longer contributing. A reminder letter would be sent out and HS would circulate a draft of this to Committee members to agree.

TP asked if the number of contributors was different before the payment was described as voluntary. HS said this had not made a significant difference and she had talked about this point at the AGM. She did not think it was the voluntary aspect that was the issue. JL remarked that historically there had always been late payments. He felt that one issue could be that there were a number of tenants on the road and so not all landlords would necessarily get the request and there was no way of getting the request to them other than via the property. TP asked if it had ever been made clear to residents that if the road is not maintained, RBC could intervene and charge all residents for doing so. HS and CK said residents were aware of this. JL didn't think this was an immediate threat but that there might be a way of conveying this point in the wording.

**ACTION POINT:** HS to circulate contribution reminder letter for approval/comments.

## 7

### Road assets, annual maintenance and investment programme

LA had circulated notes with the agenda and also supplied a draft specification at the meeting which she had emailed to SF and TP before the meeting as they were attending via Zoom. It was decided to focus on three main issues: the resurfacing, the leaf fall and maintenance.

**Resurfacing:** LA said that she was still trying to find out information on previous road surfacings that had taken place over a period of time as there was little in the records on this. JL said people seemed to be unhappy with the last resurfacing in 2015.

CK suggested employing an independent surveying company to issue a report on what was necessary and the timeframes involved. This could also include safety aspects on the road such as chicanes. JH felt the quote needed to come from professionals as no one on the Committee was an expert. HS said she thought there had been three quotes previously and that the surface used last time was a cheaper option than tarmacking. JL had heard that the same contractor had worked on both Derby Road and Grosvenor Road last time. JH suggested that David Moro would know as a previous Committee member.

JH had concerns over the road surface outside 33 DR and the junction between Derby Road and Grosvenor Road. He suggested it might be worthwhile having a pilot over that short stretch before committing to getting quotes for the whole road. CK said advice should be sought on this. JH also said it would be necessary to contact all the relevant utilities to make sure they were not intending to dig up the road after the resurfacing. It was noted that City Fibre would be installing in the road shortly and so nothing should be done until this was complete. CK agreed to research quotes for a report on the road. JH noted that road markings on the humps etc. would need redoing too. He felt it was worth keeping in mind that it may not be necessary to resurface the complete road.

**Leaf Fall:** JL suggested repeating the community leaf sweep of the road by the Committee and volunteers as had happened in November 2021. JH suggested splitting the work into two sessions as it was a big job. It was suggested that 29 October be pencilled in as a provisional date for the first sweep, but would be confirmed nearer the time in case not enough leaves had fallen by then.

TP suggested having a 'trick or treat' celebration alongside the leaf collecting to improve community spirit. It was felt that not all residents might want to celebrate Halloween. JL said it could be something that could happen alongside the leaf sweep but wouldn't need a lot of organising or for any blockage to the road. He felt it would also depend on the weather and on the date. HS suggested that people could bring along a pumpkin and they could be carved at the same time as the leaf collecting. CK suggested cakes would help.

**Main gates/walls/entrance pillars maintenance:** LA said the final issue was the walls at the entrance. She suggested that as with the resurfacing, it would be a good idea to get a survey to check them from the safety point of view. JH felt they needed repointing which realistically would be better left until spring 2023. TP said she had recently used someone for repointing her wall and she would give JH the details. He would also get 2 other quotes. LA suggested taking photographs beforehand.

**ACTION POINT:** CK to look into possible surveyors to contact and to let LA know what the timescale will be.

Traffic calming: CK to get a list together of items that would be proposed to be in the survey. LA and JH to get quotes for the repointing of the pillars and walls at the entrance.

## 8

### Date and time of the next meeting

There was some discussion regarding the sequencing of key issues for the next meeting: the AGM review or looking at ideas for traffic calming. The committee decided that the next meeting would be a one issue to discuss traffic calming.

JL advised that members would need to outline what the legal advice is in terms of what it says can and cannot be done and then base ideas on that. SF said that as John Mullaney's full report from 2021 was quite long, the summary version and the report in the April 2022 minutes would be useful starting points.

JH felt that there would be no resolution to the road closure issue until such time as there was agreement between Derby Road and Grosvenor Road on a way forward. HS suggested that the initial focus should be on Derby Road and then the relationship with Grosvenor Road could be explored.

TP asked when the items discussed in the meeting would be actioned. JL said he assumed members would start work on their action points and would report back on their progress, which could be done via email.

The date for the next meeting is **21 October to begin at 6.30pm** at 27 DR.

**Meeting ended at 8:30pm**