

Committee members

PRESENT: Chair: Lyn Anthony-Higgins (LA)
Committee: Sue Feather (SF: Secretary – attended via Zoom),
Carole Kingston (CK: Treasurer), Jon Lloyd (JL)

(When referencing the above, first and second name abbreviations will be used throughout)
The meeting was quorate.

1

Apologies for absence

Jennifer Hooper had sent her apologies and had given her proxy vote to JL.

2

Approval of minutes of meeting held on 24 September 2024

The minutes were approved by all.

Follow-up on action points:

Insurers: CK had not yet approached the insurers as she felt that it would be better to look at more general traffic calming measures. It was decided that in light of several works already in process, this would possibly be revisited later on. CK felt the adding of the road hatchings at the Derby Road/Grosvenor Road junction had been a great success in terms of slowing down cars at that end and there had been a number of positive comments from residents and Queen Anne's School. It was felt that a highway engineer might be able to suggest further unobtrusive markings/measures that could assist in improving road safety.

Highway Engineer: LA noted that three quotes had been received, but one had been rejected at the last meeting due to it not fulfilling the brief. This left two quotes: one from a company and the other from an individual. Both companies recommended that the road should be measured. LA suggested an update on the road condition survey, but CK said this had essentially already been covered in 2023 when contractors quoted on the road resurfacing, and this could be shared with whoever was appointed. LA was trying to get a breakdown of costs rather than a total cost this time before the committee voted on it. Once this was done, a decision would be made on which quote to recommend and a letter would then be sent to residents on this.

Actions: SF to upload minutes to the website.

LA to send the quotes re highway engineer to the committee.

LA to circulate a draft letter to the committee once a decision is made on the quotes.

3

Treasurer's Financial Report 2024–25

CK had circulated the report on expenditure and income since the last meeting. The residents' vote on reinstating the road markings in September 2024 following the last meeting had been 81 in favour and 1 against, so the work had been actioned by WJ South on behalf of RBC and the invoice of £1,756.68 had been paid. The invoice for RBC removing the two unsafe and severely damaged planters (£517.36 inc VAT) had also been paid.

It was decided that a final contribution reminder letter would be sent out by the end of February which would also remind residents of the requirement to have paid the full requested contribution before the end of the DRFA financial year in order to have a vote at the AGM.

Action: CK to send final contribution reminder letter by end of February.

Planned annual inspections, maintenance and replacement of Derby Road infrastructure assets: investment

4.1 Lampstands

LA had written to RBC seeking their advice for the DRFA re the lampstands (two of which they are responsible for) and said their response was positive in terms of support. The date for meeting with them and their street lighting contractor in the road to make an initial assessment would be confirmed shortly. As the DRFA and residents are not experts in this field, it was hoped that RBC and the contractor would be able to provide recommendations of how best to proceed. It was agreed that three key points would be covered at the meeting:

1. What work they think is necessary and what the options would be.
2. What has to be done to ensure the safety of the lamps, whether they can be repaired and how the work can be done.
3. What options there would be for retaining the Reading industrial heritage element if this were feasible.

It was agreed that a letter would be sent to residents on this in due course following the meeting once options and potential costs had been received.

4.2 Stone and brickwork, piers, wrought iron gates and railings at Peppard Road end

LA said that because there was a lot of weather damage to the stone and brickwork, this would need to be dealt with promptly. However, she said it had not been possible to find one company that will do all the work required. At the moment there are two companies. One of these is able to do sandblasting, painting and doff cleaning. There is another company who can do the brickwork and stonework repairs. A separate budget would be allotted for this work. She said the works would take around two weeks, but this could probably be carried out without needing to close the gates. The timeframe would depend on the weather and also ensuring the two companies work together so there is no gap with one starting and the other finishing. Ideally this would be actioned in the next couple of months. She reminded the committee that there were other elements to the repairs: the road signs and bollards.

4.3 Annual leaf sweep

JL confirmed he had largely completed sweeping all the leaves from the road surface and was thanked for his efforts. This marked the fourth year in which committee members had undertaken this work to avoid using the fund to pay for it (expenditure for this work in 2020 had been £489). LA said it would be worth highlighting this saving to residents in the financial report at the AGM.

4.4 Annual cleaning of Drains, gullies, soakaway and catchpits

LA noted that the gully clean would be actioned before the end of February (date TBC). She said the condition of infrastructure would also be checked when this was done to make sure any necessary repairs are undertaken.

Actions: Letter to residents regarding lamppost works following meeting with RBC once options/costings have been finalised.

LA to circulate quotes for stonework and brickwork repairs.

Letter to be sent to residents regarding the timeframe of the stonework and brickwork repairs seeking approval for work to go ahead (assuming cost is above the spending limit given in the DRFA Constitution).

Website

GDPR

JL felt it would be worth putting something on the website re GDPR and residents' data. LA said she had drafted a document on this when she first joined the committee, but it hadn't been actioned. She said she would circulate it to the committee, as it is important to be clear on how the DRFA hold data, what purposes it is used for and the deletion of information when the DRFA is notified that someone has moved away.

More information on recent works had been posted on the website recently and LA said it would be good to continue this. SF suggested that photographs of the upcoming works taking place this year could be added. LA said she would supply SF with these. Letters to residents would continue to mention the resources on the website and to ask for residents' email addresses to reduce the number of hard copies sent out.

Action: LA to circulate the GDPR and privacy document as a basis for a new version for the website.

Photos to be taken of upcoming works on the road to appear on the website.

Meeting ended at 6.30pm