

Derby Road Fund

AGM 30 March 2017 – 7.15 p.m.

Minutes

Present: Ed Hellings (Secretary – Acting Chair for the Meeting); Brian Farnham; Gill Vooght; Shirley Rennison

Apologies: Ralph Lambert (Treasurer); Lynwen Hardaker

Welcome and introductions

EH introduced the Committee members present and welcomed all those attending including Cllr Ed Hopper. He said that new Committee members were always welcome and that if anyone wanted to join the Committee, they should make themselves known to him or one of the other Committee members.

Chairman's Report

EH stated that at present, there was no Chairman as Paul Grant had resigned 12 months ago and that the post was currently vacant. He had received one very recent expression of interest, but the Committee had not yet had time to consider it fully and so was still open to anyone else who also might want to come forward.

On behalf of the Committee, EH thanked all who have contributed towards the upkeep of the road in the year: Committee members play their part, but there were others who contributed by organising or helping with sundry tasks, all of which was extremely helpful.

EH noted the proposed gas main along Derby Road. Work was currently being done along Grosvenor Road. There would need to be confirmation about how this affects the concrete base to the granite edges of the road put in last year. The planned sweep of the road on 21 March was cancelled as a result of the prospective work as it made no sense to sweep the road before it was dug up. A sweep

would be booked in for a date after the work, probably in the summer.

Treasurer's Report

EH reported that Ralph Lambert, the Treasurer, was not well enough to attend the AGM. However, the accounts had been produced. These showed that the Fund was beginning to build up again so that in a few years' time there would be enough in the Fund to resurface the road. In the meantime, maintenance work on items such as drains and lights would continue as required.

EH noted that Field View will no longer be contributing automatically through their management charge via Allsop – in future, it will be up to individual homeowners to contribute in the same way that other residents do. The Committee would therefore need to include Field View in its normal mailshots regarding contributions, but there was a risk that contributions overall would decrease as a result.

In response to a question, the AGM discussed the merits of replacing the current sodium based street lights with LED lights. It was felt that the light from LEDs would not be as good; and since Reading Borough Council were still paying for the electricity to run the lights, it was agreed not to use LEDs.

EH invited views from the floor and it was generally felt that a small increase now was better than a larger increase later. After discussion, EH proposed that subscriptions for 2017 should be increased from £52 per household to £55; this was agreed by the AGM.

Cllr Ed Hopper briefing

Cllr Hopper briefed the AGM on progress with the third Thames bridge.

The trigger for progress on this was the flooding in 2014 which closed Sonning Bridge and made obvious the extent to which Reading relied on Sonning Bridge to alleviate its traffic issues. Since then, several meetings have been held including both Oxfordshire Councils, the relevant

District Councils from Berkshire and the 2 relevant Local Enterprise Partnerships, all of whom were now broadly supportive of the scheme. Funding from central Government had been provided for a full study and an interim report had been produced, with the full report now overdue.

He expected the final scheme to include a bridge and also a northern bypass around Caversham, probably through the Caversham Park area. Without this bypass, the traffic issue would simply have been moved from Reading into Caversham. Overall, he was more optimistic than he had been before about the chances of the scheme getting approval.

Responding to a question about plans for a Park and Ride scheme from north of Reading into the town centre, he replied that it was an aspiration of RBC to provide such a service. However, it would require SODC to agree to donate some land for the scheme as there was no suitable land within the RBC boundary.

Cllr Hopper agreed to ask RBC again about painting a Keep Clear notice on Derby Road at the entrance to Peppard Road. He had requested this before, but it had not been done. He was happy to follow up on this.

EH thanked Cllr Hopper for his briefing, and expressed hope that the third bridge would indeed happen in the near future.

Any other business

A request was made for dog waste bins to be installed. There were particular problems near the Peppard Road end of Derby Road. After discussion, EH agreed that the Committee would look at installing some bins.

Parking on verges was raised as an issue, and it was generally felt that it was becoming worse. In discussion, it was noted that we do not have the legal right to prevent people parking on the road, even though in some circumstances it increased the risk of an accident. A suggestion was made that CCTV cameras could be installed to track traffic using the road, but it was not felt to be sufficiently effective to justify the cost.

A pinch point was suggested as a response to the Grosvenor Road pinch point, which encouraged traffic to use Derby Road instead when it was closed. In discussion, it was noted that any pinch point would have to have a foolproof way of admitting the emergency services, and that any measures which inconvenienced traffic from outside Derby Road would automatically inconvenience Derby Road residents just as much. Additionally, a pinch point might be challenged on the basis that there is no recognised due process for approving one. Although the Committee would keep this under review, the risks and downsides to this approach appeared to be greater than the benefits at present.

EH thanked all those who attended and the meeting ended at 8.05 p.m.