

Minutes of RARA committee meeting held 28th July 2011

Present: Lynette Gilbert (Chair), Suzi Shimwell (Secretary), David Catto (Riverside Place), Harry Goode & Huguette Chatterton (Godesdone Road), Tony Eva (Waterview Apartments), Graham Garrett (Garlic Row), Tim and Chris Page (Abbey Road) and Sheila von Rimscha (Riverside – west).

Apologies/absent: Tim Ensor (Treasurer), Alison Davis (Priory Road), Gordon Davies (Riverside Place), Alan Denney (Stanley Road), Cathy Eaton (River Lane), Rosie Ensor (Saxon Road), Richard Fawcett (St Bartholomew's Court), Sarah Hundleby (Beche Court), Deirdre Hyde (Communications), Phil Pollington (Oyster Row & Regatta Court), Caroline Wardle (Beche Road), Jennifer Wilson (Riverside House).

Agenda:

1. Minutes from last meeting and matters arising
2. Eastern Gate – planning
3. Roads and traffic
4. Litter
5. Conservation Area consultation
6. Strawberry Fair
7. Security Gates
8. Boats
9. Communications
10. Street Car
11. Riverside Improvement
12. Riverside railings
13. Other Matters

1. Minutes from last meeting and matters arising

The minutes were accepted from last time. Matters arising:

- It was noted that our biggest expense is newsletters. Should we send them by email? Some reps do circulate by email already. Not straightforward, especially for houses. Reps would need to compile lists showing resident preferences and update them regularly. There might also be data protection issues around storing lists e.g. using an area of the website only reps can access.
- We need a new RARA website that can easily be updated with simple domain access.

ACTION

- ❖ Reps to compile lists of the people in their road/block – name/address/email/preference
- ❖ We will then send newsletter electronically to those who have requested it by email.
- ❖ Suzi Shimwell to make the new website and talk to Tom about the rar.org.uk domain name.

2. Eastern Gate – planning

- The Eastern Gate development area runs from the Crown Court on East Road and the Elizabeth Way Roundabout to the beginning of Cambridge Retail Park on Newmarket Road.
- The City Council’s Joint Urban Design Team is finalising guidelines for future development which will be a ‘material consideration’ for any planning applications. The Travelodge application broke the JUDT draft guidelines. We need to push for these to be enforced more rigorously in future.
- There are 2 big development applications in the pipeline: a residential development next to the Travelodge site, and a hotel on the Coldham’s Lane/Newmarket Rd junction (Intercell site)
- Our main concerns about these developments are traffic , building heights and visual sight lines through the developments – the last two are both mentioned in JUDT draft guidelines.
- New traffic modelling underway, applications cannot go to Planning Committee until complete. Each development did its own traffic analysis ignoring the effect of the other. County Highways have now asked them to model combined impact. Gerry Corrance is the officer in charge.
- Another issue: how Section 106 money (money given by the development to the area) is spent. Lynette attended a meeting with new City Council Head of Planning on this. The City’s S106 fund is about £9million, though a lot has already been earmarked for projects. The Berkeley Homes (Brunswick) contribution will be about £435,000 and has yet not been allocated yet.
- Change in the law means council will need to be very specific about what they intend to spend S106 money on. Developers can challenge council if they don’t demonstrate clear need.
- We want to see the roads cleaned and steps repaired around the Newmarket Road roundabout but the JUDT ‘vision’ is to transform the whole area – if funding can be found, they propose that County fills in subway, gets rid of roundabout and puts in a crossroads instead. Elizabeth Way up to River Lane should also be landscaped.

ACTION

- ❖ Follow up with JUDT – Harry
- ❖ Ask Simon Sedgwick-Jell (County Councillor) to follow up traffic issues with Gerry Corrance
- ❖ If Elizabeth Way roundabout plan doesn’t get going in next 12 months, ask for steps and pavement to be repaired and streets cleaned.
- ❖ Send RARA comments on JUDT proposals to City Council by 25th August

3. Roads and traffic

- Right turn filter from Newmarket Rd into River Lane has been sorted out.
- Traffic lights at Stanley Road and Newmarket road – still a problem. We have talked to Margaret about large lorries going out of Mercer Row, then Garlic Row, then left out of town.
- The Riverside road surface isn’t good – is it going to be replaced? Gordon Davies had correspondence with County about this last winter.

- Reflectors – new strips have been added to bollards near the cycle bridge, at lower level.
- County Highways plans for the extra lane on Newmarket Road (using land surrendered from Travelodge, residential and Intercell developments) haven't been confirmed. What do we want from the extra lane?
- PACT have asked for cycle lanes rather than another vehicle traffic lane (which would make Newmarket Road a 5 lane highway). RARA has not expressed an opinion. JUDT propose proper cycle lanes either side and buses down the middle, and are talking to county highways. If we decide what we want then the Campaign for Better Transport have offered to help us out.

ACTION

- ❖ Sheila to liaise with Simon Sedgwick Jell on Campaign for Better Transport
- ❖ Follow up with County to find out if Riverside road surface is on list of projects to be funded
- ❖ Stay in touch with JUDT and County Highways discussions/planning

4. Litter

- Two main problems are the Tesco site and fly tipping on Riverside.
- David Catto had a meeting about litter with city council, mainly concerning the Tesco path. Suggestions: Continue asking them to pick the litter up; hold a public litter pick.
- Flytipping – Tony is chasing StreetScene. Sending a lot of messages and sometimes gets the stuff cleared away. Caroline Hart has promised to sort the fly tipping problem out. Particular problem under the new cycle bridge. On one occasion Street Scene wouldn't remove it because boater claimed it was his. Then said County's responsibility because it was on a public highway.
- Adam Pogonowski suggests building facilities to house boater's stuff but this seems premature while boats remain unregulated. Ownership and mooring issues need to be resolved first.
- Other concerns – the council should be clearing stuff every day under the litter abatement order for public land. The Engineers House is still messy.
- The Burger van did have a licence and entitled to be on Riverside but hasn't been seen recently.

ACTION

- ❖ David and Tony to continue to chase Tesco on litter and Street Scene/Caroline on flytipping.
- ❖ Tony has agreed to write overview letter to new Executive Councillor for environment

5. Strawberry Fair

- Will get debrief from organisers at a later date.

6. Security gates

- City Council still has funds available for local security improvement measures
- Alison and Lynette have checked out back alleyways and identified 5 places where gates could be erected to prevent unwanted access.
- Alison has leafleted residents to see if they want gates installed.

ACTION

- ❖ Get quote from Dent for installing security gates with combination padlocks (numbers not keys)
- ❖ Once we have this, put in a bid to council for gates.

7. Boats

- Newly-discovered archive documents show that the Corporation of Cambridge owned freehold of river bank and subsoil in 1904. The question is who inherited freehold when Corporation assets were divided between City and County councils in 1970s?
- Once the current freehold owner is confirmed, they will need to take responsibility for current situation and do risk assessment regarding the boats – access is only over a fence, so not a suitable place for mooring. In 2007, County estimated the cost of strengthening fence and constructing pontoons at £250,000.

ACTION

- ❖ Continue to liaise with City, County and Conservators through Riverside Action Group – Lynette, Rowland, David, Tony, Gordon

8. Communications

- No newsletter done – hope to do one before 6th August.

ACTION

- ❖ People to submit articles/paragraphs to Lynette and she will put newsletter together. Harry to do para on residential application, David Catto to do one on litter.

9. Conservation Area consultation

- City Council is consulting on changes to the Riverside Conservation Area. Communication poor – sent Lynette an email and put notice in Cambridge News. Have now leafleted the properties in the areas affected by proposed extension/exclusion. Public meeting poorly attended.
- Riverside Place, Waterview and St Bartholomew's Court were all built in the existing Conservation Area so it doesn't seem a very stringent policy.
- Deadline extension? Problem is that this pushes timetable back. We generally think that the proposals are good but residents affected should have chance to comment.

ACTION

- ❖ Lynette to ask the council to put up copies of the reports.
- ❖ Chris and Tim offered to help.

10. Street Car

- Street car have been granted a space on the corner of Saxon Road and Riverside.
- Should deal with Abbey Road car park issues as a separate matter – Streetcar’s objections to this location have highlighted the safety problems with the car park

ACTION

- ❖ Find out if Gordon has talked to Streetcar about advertising or sponsoring RARA newsletter.
- ❖ Lynette to ask for the hedge around Abbey car park to be cut lower while workmen around.

11. Riverside Improvement

- Environmental improvement scheme supposed to reduce conflicts at Abbey Rd/Riverside junction between pedestrians, cyclists and car drivers.
- Concern that the dead-end sign is almost invisible between the trees, drivers do not see it.
- Also there don’t seem to be any signs or road markings to explain where cyclists should go
- In consultation they said road and pavement would be the same colour but it isn’t.

ACTION

- ❖ Sheila to draft letter about this to council.

12. Railings

- Riverside railings installed in 1953 need to be repainted or replaced as looking very shabby.
- Improvement zone railings will be repainted as part of the work. Margaret has secured £25 000 to remove and repaint the railings for a further 100m. Cost is high because council has to remove railings for sandblasting and install temporary ones while doing this. They can’t repaint in situ for environmental reasons, ie paint going into river. It’s possible that they might need to redo the concrete footings when they remove railings.
- Council will consult on whether to repaint white or a darker colour eg black or green
- Concern that even once painted, boats and bikes will damage them quickly.
- Cost of removing and repainting raises questions – would new railings be more cost-effective? Some people would prefer stainless steel, which will never need repainting.

ACTION

- ❖ David Catto to follow up with Andrew Preston about cost of replacing rather than repainting.
- ❖ David Catto to go to East Area Committee meeting on 20th August to ask further about railings.

13. Any other matters

- Conservation deadline is drawing close. Decided not to ask for a deadline extension.
- It was suggested that we sometimes invite councillors to RARA meetings.