

**RICHINGS PARK RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION  
MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING: TUESDAY 21<sup>st</sup> NOVEMBER 2017, RPSC, 7.30PM**

**PRESENT:** Graham Young (Chair), Naz Akbar, Muhktar Ali, Maureen Atkinson, Cllr Paul Griffin, Cllr Wendy Matthews, Matthew McEvoy, Tina Heath

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Cllr Jilly Jordan

**APOLOGIES:** Lisa Popa, Maureen Worrall, Gurjit Sandhu, Ged Weston, Jan Wiseman, Daphne Wood Cllr Chris Jordan, Cllr Luisa Sullivan

**MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: 31 OCTOBER 2017:** accepted as a true and accurate record

**THE MEETING STARTED AT 7.30, AS A PUBLIC SESSION, WITH MARTIN TETT (BUCKS CC LEADER) & John Chilver ATTENDING TO EXPLAIN BCC'S THORNEY COUNTRY PARK PROPOSAL.**

As Wendy has previously reported to the committee, BCC are considering a commercial proposal from an extraction company (Walsh) to fill the lake with (likely HS2) infrastructure spoil, re-landscape the park and designate it as a recognised 'open space'.

Martin Tett indicated that the proposal is tentative at this stage, with no formal application yet submitted to BCC. Although his initial line was that it is a necessary maintenance cost reduction/elimination exercise, under questioning, he quickly acknowledged that: a) current maintenance costs at £10-20K max. are relatively trivial, and b) the real financial driver would be a likely £6 million payment to BCC (by Walsh) which would be primarily used to pay for BCC social & care services countywide.

Any enhanced TCP facilities post-project, and/or long-term maintenance, would likely be funded via a Section 106 arrangement, acknowledged to be restrictive and cannot fund wider community projects. (Note: such projects do not attract 106 payments and therefore grant funding would have to be found.)

He outlined a plan to create a 'community forum' that would articulate what form/facilities the community would like TCP to offer following such work. Very limited, substantiated detail relating to transporting of the 'spoil', with proposal reliant on rail to minimise high HGV movements. It was acknowledged that HGVs would transport the spoil from the rail sidings along Thorney Mill Road to the site, past all the residents' houses.

Audience reaction & questioning of Martin could be described as courteously hostile & cynical. First response by attendees was to question any commercial exploitation, even with the carrot of ultimately improved facilities: "*we like it as it is, so why should anyone be allowed to change it?*". The view was also strongly expressed that BCC would (based upon prior '80s experience) exploit TCP to generate funds for its own operations & projects, with little regard to the project's impact on an already stressed local community/transport infrastructure – or any legacy benefit to the community. Concern also expressed that approval violations are never dealt with robustly – to local detriment.

Martin Tett acknowledged that the local area has maybe not been as well served by Aylesbury as it might have been, but didn't accept any specific personal responsibility. Aylesbury's apparent lack of support for us against national infrastructure projects, or adjacent authority (Slough, Hillingdon) actions, he also defended on grounds of limited powers, resource constraints or Slough BC being a difficult partner. He did offer that our new Councillor representative is proving more effective than previously.

Martin confirmed he didn't have all the answers before attending (rail slot availability, environmental impact, traffic implications, etc.) but would discuss further. Stressed his commitment to a community forum to establish local wishes in reshaping TCP, along with the financial implications of the expressed wishes. His view is that a formal application *will* be submitted by Walsh, to DCC, and stressed the independence of DCC from influence by the Executive – a concern raised given the significant financial benefit to BCC should approval be given.

Based upon final questions and observations from audience and committee members, there is considerable hostility & cynicism regarding: project justification, transparency surrounding choice of operator, planning approval process independence and historic lack of concern by BCC for the local community.

**This part of meeting concluded at 8.55pm., with no specific follow-up action or timescale agreed.**

**OTHER ISSUES:**

**Heathrow matters.**

Not discussed

**Planters and residents garden.**

Garden maintenance & tree pruning activities are current cause for concern, along with claims for payment which have highlighted need for activity scope & time/cost budget to be clarified.

Meeting agreed that contract be reduced to grass cutting only (without clear authorisation by Maureen Atkinson), with following limits: £15 ph. rate, ½ hour per cut as time budget, May to October (inc.) 1 x ½ grass cut per 2 weeks (est. 13 cuts @ £7.50 per = £97.50), November to April (inc.) 1 x pcm (6 cuts @ £7.50 = £45.00). As the contractor is already maintaining the immediately adjacent grass area it is a marginal cost activity only for the contractor.

Estimated 12 month cost = £142.50.

Planters being taken over from Parish Council was briefly discussed, with conclusion that we cannot assume responsibility due to budget constraints.

**Broadband.** Still on track for 17<sup>th</sup> December 2017 'live' according to latest update.

**Kingfisher Garden / Thorney Brook.** 2-3 volunteers have offered to 'sort this out'.

**Defibrillator.** See Jan Wiseman's update in email dated 21 November for more detailed financial breakdown. In summary: we cannot proceed to finalise purchase yet as still some £750 short of £2,600 target, but fundraising continues and Ged & Gurjit have been asked if RPVAG can assist.

**Newsletter.** Costcutter report that they have issued some 200+ copies, with people displaying genuine interest and Newsletter well received. Need to ensure that next edition has further positive items to include.

**Fireworks Night.** A great success, with £10,000 taken at the gate. However; impressive attendance did cause health & safety concern and a formal policy will need to be established for the event next year, to agree gate closure beyond agreed maximum safe attendance level.

**Children's Xmas Party.** Remember 10<sup>th</sup> December date. Organisers are very optimistic that it will be well attended.

**TREASURER'S & MEMBERSHIP FIGURES REPORT**

Matthew confirmed that latest membership stands at 233 subscribers, which is comparable to last year but indicates a concerning downward trend historically. Some brief discussion took place related to 'packaging' membership with the admission charge for events, to boost the membership figures as well as harvesting residents' data for renewals activity.

**PLANNING/ENFORCEMENT: LOCAL APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED.**

- 1) See Graham's email list, 15 November, for summary - Sej Place application has been withdrawn.
- 2) Court Lane: application to change use from Off-Airport parking to Film/TV related vehicle parking.
- 3) Thorney Golf Course and Sutton Lane applications have been refused, but it is expected that they will be appealed.
- 4) CEMEX status: initial meeting took place c. 1 month ago, with another scheduled in a further month. Little going on generally other than some archaeological dig activity on-site.
- 5) Breedon application: still going forward to committee at County.
- 6) Thorney Country Park: discussed extensively at commencement of meeting, as noted earlier.

**REPORT FROM COUNTY/DISTRICT COUNCILS.**

Not discussed.

**REPORT FROM PARISH COUNCIL.**

Not discussed.

**CONSTITUTION SUB-COMMITTEE PROGRESS REPORT.**

Meeting in New Year.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS.**

December meeting to be advised after Wendy has checked with RPSC for available dates.

January meeting: Tuesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2018.

**DOMINIC GRIEVE VISIT, JANUARY 2018.**

Friday 12<sup>th</sup> January at Wendy's house.

**AOB**

- 1) Wendy reported progress with local street cleaning. Some work already performed and Local Area Technician visited area today.
- 2) Wendy has obtained details about the operation of Iver station and Graham has details upon on the web site. The project is being taken over by TFL and there is some urgency now to ensure completion by 2019 Crossrail opening.
- 3) Mukhtar Ali expressed his concern at the proposed apartment development in Bathurst Walk, particularly with reference to perceived inadequate parking provision on-site – leading to potentially dangerous congestion & blockage of immediately adjacent roads.

**MEETING ENDED AT: 9.50 PM**