

Minutes of 67th APRA committee meeting at 8:00 pm on 15th February 2024

Present: John Hedges (JH, Chair), Kate Buckley (KB)(via WhatsApp), Robert Pankhurst (RP)(via WhatsApp), Jacky Stephen (JS), Ian Woodroof (IW), Malcolm Hull (MH), Geoff Dyson (GD), Andrew Yaras (AY)(via WhatsApp)

1. Minutes of previous meeting (11th Jan). Approved.

2. Matters arising

Future format for remote participation had been discussed at previous meeting as Zoom subscription had ended. WhatsApp used for this meeting - Committee to decide on best way forward.

ACTION: Committee

Summer Social. RP to check whether Parkside House available

ACTION : RP

Any other matters will be covered under their headings in the following minutes

3. Abbey Orchard Event.

Construction of the large temporary buildings needed for the University graduation ceremony has started. The current 39 day temporary event exceeds the 28 days permitted temporary event limit. And with last summer's 32 day graduation event means that the Abbey Orchard will be a construction site for 10+ weeks out of the last 30 weeks.

Despite representations by APRA, to the Cathedral and University authorities, local councillors and SADC, the unlawful event has gone ahead.

The Committee is concerned about damage already caused to the Abbey Orchard grounds and wall, the Romeland Garden wall as well as the ongoing threat from heavily laden HGVs of damage to the Abbey Gateway. JH has made further representations to Historic England and St Albans School, which owns the Abbey Gateway.

It was agreed to set up a rota to monitor the dismantling of the temporary buildings and to capture evidence of any damage to Abbey surrounds. Members will also be asked to help.

ACTION :JH

APRA objections currently include:

Temporary events far in excess of 28 day permitted limit

Damage to the Abbey Orchard green space and historic fabric

Lack of Abbey Gateway protection

Obstruction of public rights of way

Health and safety breaches, including off-loading HGV on public highway

Excessive noise and light levels

Loss of resident parking space

It was agreed that APRA should investigate any breach of planning regulations for this event

ACTION : MH

The Abbey are expected to apply for a licence for events in the Abbey Orchard and APRA need to be prepared to protect members' interests. It was agreed to set up a working party to prepare for this. Suggested members - JH, MH, IW and Moragh Ormiston.

ACTION: JH

Abbot's Kitchen Pathway - It was reported that following an accident to an APRA member, and more representations by APRA to the Cathedral authorities, some repairs have been done.

4. School Buses

Committee members reported ongoing safety issues with School buses around the main entrance and Romeland Hill junction sight lines. IW was asked to raise the issues with Edgar Hill during the planned Zone B review to check for additional resident parking spaces.. ACTION: IW

5. Waste Collection

KB reported that the Council require evidence of damage by refuse vehicles. Members to be asked for evidence. ACTION: JS

6. Parking

IW reported the meeting with Edgar Hill has been postponed to 27th Feb. Issues with the new paperless parking system reported. Members to be asked for their experience ACTION: JS

6. Cross RA issues

APRA works with other RAs as part of the Central Combined Residents Association (CCRA). Discussion of the latest CCRA vision for St Albans travel and movement was curtailed because of doubts about the latest version. Latest version to be confirmed ACTION: KB

MH mentioned a proposed Bus Gate at the top of Victoria St - he will circulate a link to St Albans Times ACTION: MH

7. Park and Lake

St Michaels Manor have arranged to have the fallen tree blocking the Ver removed. The pathway alongside the river will be closed during the work Weds 21st Feb and Thurs 22nd Feb. Members to be informed. ACTION: JS

Bell Meadow flooding. SADC and Environment Agency in discussion about flooding. Clive Parish (Fishpool RA) to be approached about Fishpool St residents responsible for riverbank maintenance. ACTION: JH

Ongoing issues with Lakes and River - Sluices no longer work after being decommissioned 20 years ago. Revitalisation scheme unlikely to go ahead due to current budget restrictions.

Continued liaison with SADC and EA required to achieve improvement Action MH

8. Planning

7A Welclose St - original planning application refused on overdevelopment grounds. Resubmission for a timber structure in garden to house a gym and shower.

APRA will not object. Committee members can object on a personal basis.

9. Membership.

JS reported that 106 members had paid 23/24 subs. Potential for another 10 members to pay arrears.

JS to continue to chase members

ACTION: JS

10. Finance

Bank balance c £1860 with c£350 outstanding invoices for Website hosting in previous years.

ACTION: AY/JS

JH requested that the bank account be moved online

ACTION: AY/JS

11. Website

JH,RP and JS had had a meeting with Sam Stanford re Website. JS has forwarded meeting minutes (except no 62) to Sam. Updates awaited.

JS to brief Committee members on Working Groups copy.

ACTION: JH/JS

12. Vandalism

GD reported tyre slashings in Verulam Road. Committee members were also aware of similar incidents in Cottonmill and Beaumont Hill.

Police and Ward councillors should be informed of incidents.

JS to communicate with members

ACTION : JS

13. AOB

Communication to members. It was agreed that members needed to be informed of recent developments on the following issues/need to provide evidence/feedback

Abbey Orchard events

Damage to cars

Flooding update and closure of riverside pathway

Pedestrian trials update

New Residents parking system

School buses

JS to pull together information from relevant Committee member and to send email

ACTION : JS

14. Date of next meeting. Thursday 14th March at 8pm 3 Abbey Mill Lane

15. Meeting closed at 9.25pm

Post meeting: Reminder to include feedback on Solar Panel meetings at next meeting

