

Minutes of 69th APRA committee meeting at 8:00 pm on 18th April 2024

Present: John Hedges (JH, Chair), Kate Buckley (KB)(via Zoom)), Robert Pankhurst (RP)), Jacky Stephen (JS), Ian Woodroof (IW), Malcolm Hull (MH)

1. No apologies received. Absent: Andrew Yaras (AY) Geoff Dyson (GD)

2. Minutes of previous meeting (14th March). Approved.

3. Matters arising . None

4. Abbey Orchard Events.

Residents' meeting to be held on 22nd April at 7pm in the Cathedral Welcome Centre.

Committee members planning to attend : JH, MH, IW, JS

ACTION: JH MH IW JS

Concerns raised about the last event

- Breach of planning rules

- Blocking of Right of Way for over 4 weeks

- Damage to the Abbey Gateway(ancient monument) and other fabric in the area

- Damage to the Abbey Orchard grass

- Severe inconvenience to local residents due to illegal parking, blocking of access, noise, damage to local area.

APRA needs to know what the plans are for future events, if planning permission is being sought, what is being done to repair the damage from the last event and to voice our opinion that the event is totally unsuitable for the Abbey Orchard.

5. School Buses

Continuing concern with safety of bus operations. There is a meeting on 7th May to discuss. JH to attend on behalf of APRA and RP on behalf of the Civic Society.

ACTION: JH RP

6. Planning

16 Lower Dagnall Street Grade II listed - erection of garden room in small courtyard. RP to object on behalf of APRA on overdevelopment grounds

ACTION: RP

SADC Planning Department in Special Measures - information is available on the SADC website. Unsure about whether planning proposals will be posted on lampposts. RP to ask about the process ACTION: RP

7. Verulam Park Events

The planning application to increase the number of temporary event days from 28 to 56 in 2025 was approved at the planning meeting on Monday 18th March.

The planning approval was subject to a significant number of conditions. It is expected that these conditions will be applied for 2024 events in order to gauge any issues.

MH to speak to Moragh Ormiston about Comedy Festival regarding Licensing and swearing - for the protection of children particularly during the afternoon events.

IW stated that sound systems can be inclusive and not be heard outside the event arena.

ACTION: MH

8. Park and Lake update

The flooding is worse due to further heavy rainfall. The river is high and the current strong.

The path in the flooded area is extremely slippery.

Sewers are emptying into the Batchwood drain and Markyate sewerage is discharging into the Ver.

SADC, HCC and Environment Agency are meeting to discuss the situation but no information is available. No progress on the long term river and lake project.

MH to write to Sandy Walkington and Edgar Hill re concerns about public health and safety.

ACTION: MH

Green Space Action Plan - was due 1st April but no news

Splash Park opening to be reduced from 22 weeks pa to 8 weeks in 2024. This to be raised at the next CNC meeting.

ACTION: KB JH

Toilet Block at the athletics track is to be demolished . MH asking for an update. Portaloos are being provided by SADC for the athletics track.

Westminster Lodge toilets are available for public use but there was concern about the distance of both usable toilet blocks from the centre of the park and signage to them.

Committee expressed the view that the inadequate toilet provision in the park was unacceptable. JH to take up the issue with local councillors.

ACTION:JH

9. CCRA updates

TAM

HCC and SADC representatives from the planning team met with TAM group on 2 occasions.

The first meeting shared the current status of Local Transport Plan 2018-2031 SW Herts Growth and Transport Plan. Also current St Albans projects - the LCWIP, Victoria St transport and public realm works. All agreed on urgent need for a new plan for St Albans. Early consultation with stakeholders imperative.

The second meeting was with Chris Briggs , SADC Planning lead. It was agreed that a St Albans City Centre Transport Vision and Strategy could sit as a strategic plan under development to be referenced in the Local Plan. It will be a further 18 months before the Local Plan is complete.

City Vision

City Vision Group will ask again for an update from SADC on whether they will be able to input further into the Local Plan process

Solar Panels

RP has circulated APRA area survey on solar panels to the committee. This survey was also shared with SADC planning and conservation officers but was considered too detailed. Meeting 9th/10th May to discuss with SADC

APRA to survey members on solar panels

ACTION:RP JH

CNC

Meeting 25/4 - no one free to attend.

10. George St

APRA not withdrawing objection to PRT0

Subsequent to the meeting our objection was overruled. We have not yet had a response to our FOI request as to the reasons for the decision.

11. Finance

No report on finance as AY not present. No update on online banking.

12. Emails and Communications

JS to set up a new 'secretarial' gmail address

ACTION: JS

13. AOB

Social Event - venue required. Suggestions - Bishop Alan, Ormistons, Brickie

ACTION:JH RP

Website - JS to send further minutes to Sam Stanford. RP to follow up from meeting held with Sam in January.

ACTION:RP JS

19. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 22nd May at 8pm 3 Abbey Mill Lane

Meeting closed at 9.40 pm