

Minutes of 70th APRA committee meeting at 8:00 pm on 22nd May 2024

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

1. Apologies received from Malcolm Hull(MH)
2. Minutes of previous meeting (18th April). Approved.
3. Matters arising .

RP had submitted objection to application for 16 Lower Dagnall St as agreed however the objection has appeared under Listed Building Consent rather than planning permission. RP to send note to Planning Officer.

ACTION: RP

4. Abbey Orchard Events.

Residents' meeting held on 22nd April in the Cathedral Welcome Centre. Residents were told the Cathedral 'was committed' to having the Graduation ceremonies in the Abbey Orchard and that that a planning application would be submitted 'in the next couple of weeks'.

However, a change of land use was applied for by the University within 4 days of the meeting. Although the Abbey Orchard is currently public green space, the University is applying for a certificate of lawful development for educational and religious use (Use Class F1), presumably to make it easier for any subsequent planning application related to graduation ceremonies.

MH, Moragh Ormiston, Katharine Fletcher and JH have held a meeting regarding the application. Katharine Fletcher will write a comment (objection) on behalf of APRA and JS will submit the objection to the Council by 24th May closing date

ACTION:JS

It is too late to gain planning permission for this year's graduation ceremony ancilliary events to be held on the Abbey Orchard, so graduates will be bussed in from Hatfield.

RP has a meeting with the Dean on behalf of The Civic Society.

5. School Buses and Safety

Meeting on 7th May with local councillors and Herts Highways officials to get the results of an informal safety audit by Herts Highways. The meeting had been delayed several weeks apparently because of local government election sensitivity. All very disappointing as the, APRA drafted, agreed terms of reference had been changed unilaterally by Sandy Walkington from road safety of bus operations in the Romeland area to a consideration only of pupil safety. Somewhat surprisingly even this did not raise any safety concerns. In summary: another stitch-up.

JH to consult with Fishpool St RA and push for further audit. Members to be asked to produce evidence of any problems encountered.

Meeting with School 12th June. APRA will not attend.

ACTION:JH

6. Planning

Application for smaller extension at 7A Welclose St submitted. Concern expressed about deliveries during the build.

7. City Centre Signage

BID/Civic Society proposing new signage in the City Centre for tourists. It was felt that the City Centre is already very cluttered with signage. Existing signage should be cleaned up. Committee urged to come up with examples or suggestions. ACTION:ALL

Several new signs have appeared in the Abbey Orchard giving directions to the Cathedral. RP to check these are allowed re. Scheduled Monument and KB to check planning approval.

ACTION:RP KB

8. Verulam Park Events

Licence hearing on 5th June. IW to attend on behalf of APRA. RP to resend information about the meeting and permitted objections.

ACTION: IW RP

9. Park and Lake update

MH has written to officials and local councillors to make improvements to stop the flooding or reduce the ill-effects on the flooded Bell Meadow. Although the public right of way to the St Michael's Gate is now closed the response for improvements to mitigate the problem has been limited to mention of the possibility of a temporary boardwalk to improve safety.

Since the flood contains raw sewage which may affect children playing in the river by the Causeway fish ladder/stepping stones JH has written to officials and councillors asking for public health warnings to be put in place.

10. CCRA updates

TAM

The travel and movement group have made good progress with officials and are working on communication to RAs and their members.

City Vision

A follow up meeting is planned to discuss progress

Solar Panels

Planning permission required only in Article 4 areas. **Looking at different dates**

11. George St/Welclose St

The traffic order to make permanent one-way George St went ahead. The APRA objection was overruled despite the dangers of an unsegregated contra-flow cycle lane in a one-way street and the creation of a cycle lane in a pedestrianised zone (at weekends).

A brief analysis of Welclose St traffic was issued, after the event. Committee to interpret data and make decision as to next steps.

12. Finance

Approx £1400 in bank.

13. Membership.

124 members , 115 paid up, 9 complimentary members. JS to issue warning after next bank statement for remainder of unpaid subs. ACTION:JS

14. Website

AY to contact Sam Stanford regarding payments to TSOHost - what service is needed and to cancel any surplus expenses. ACTION:AY

15. Social Event

Michael and Moragh Ormiston have agreed to host the annual Social at the beginning of July. Suggested date 5th or 6th July.

RP to contact Norman James re organisation. IW willing to help organise. ACTION:RP IW

16. Newsletter

It was agreed to publish a newsletter asap. RP agreed to put it together. Committee members to supply material for inclusion. ACTION:ALL

17. AOB

18. Date of next meeting

Monday 17th June at 8pm 3 Abbey Mill Lane

Meeting closed at 9.25 pm