

Leomansley Area Residents Association

Minutes of Annual General Meeting 19 November 2005

Venue: Martin Heath Hall, Christchurch Lane

Present: Committee Members – Mike Wall (Chair), Graham Edwards (Secretary), Patrick Martin (Treasurer), John Thompson, Roger Hartley, Jeff Fry, Ian Williams

Members of the Public – Approximately 35 people in attendance

Presentations:

Barbara Parker, Department Manager, Waitrose
Peter Young, Town Clerk, Lichfield City Council

Apologies – Cllr. Tony Thompson, Cllr. Derek Love, Cllr. ?

1. Minutes of Public Meeting 13 November 2004

1.1 Minutes were agreed as a true record of the meeting

2. Annual Report

2.1 Report was summarised by Mike Wall. Key points

- Held 7 committee meetings
- Met with variety of organisations including Taylor Woodrow, Waitrose
- Raised a series of issues with local councillors
- Met with other residents groups
- Active member of Lichfield City Forum
- Now have over 80 members
- Commented on planning applications e.g. Sandyway Farm, Blair House, Care Home adjacent Waitrose
- Made a formal response on the Local Development Framework
- Actively pursuing the provision of a play area on Darwin Park
- Objected to any change in designation of the areas of Darwin Park currently identified as 'Recreation Zone'
- S106 monies - continuing to push Lichfield District Council into consulting more with local residents on future use of these monies and into having a clear, transparent decision making process
- Southern by-pass – pushing for this to be completed, especially the tunnel under the Walsall railway line
- Provision of post boxes on the estate

2.2 a number of questions/points were raised by members of the public

- a sports field should be provided for a development of this size
- there is a need to ensure the ratio of open space to housing is as favourable as possible
- the developer should be made to complete the roads as soon as possible – many have been left unfinished for well over a year with many raised manholes
- proposed site of play area is too close to the balancing ponds and would not the Blair House site be a better proposition
- traffic volumes/noise on Sainte Foy have increased and therefore it is important that the southern by-pass is completed
- Cathedral Walk needs to be taken out onto The Friary and the existing public right of way needs to be improved in the mean time
- Has anyone managed to find out who owns Leomansley Woods?
- Leomansley Action Group funds have now presumably been passed to LARA
- Pedestrian crossings on Walsall Road welcomed

- 2.3 In response to these questions Cllr Terry Finn confirmed that the developer will not agree to handover the roads and complete the 'bond agreement' until all the roads are finished. On the southern by-pass there is some concern that this may be a private road to begin with
- 2.4 Cllr. Ian Jackson said he felt that the County Council was now close to a deal on the tunnel under the railway and agreed that Blair House was a better site for a play area.
- 2.5 John Thompson pointed out that although Darwin Park is a phased development it is unfortunate that conditions on elemental completion were not attached to the planning approval. John also confirmed that the development meets requirements on open space.

2.6 Patrick Martin confirmed the transfer of LAG funds to LARA

2.7 The Annual Report was agreed

3 Finance Report

- 3.1 Patrick Martin confirmed the financial position of LARA as £108.11 credit. This included the transfer of £39.65 from LAG. Patrick pointed out that the current Executive Committee had not drawn any expenses for the last year
- 3.2 Although LARA does not have a subscription Patrick advised that any donations to LARA would be welcome.
- 3.3 The accounts were accepted

4 Election of Officers

- 4.1 Graham Edwards advised that all members of the Executive Committee were required to resign at the AGM but that the following had agreed and had been nominated to stand again
- Mike Wall
 - Graham Edwards
 - Patrick Martin
 - John Thompson
 - Jeff Fry
 - Roger Hartley
 - Ian Williams
- 4.2 The following were resigning
- Tony Cadwallader
 - Jane Wale
 - Lyn Terry
- 4.3 The following additional nominations had been received
- Tim Shingley
- 4.4 All the nominations were accepted by the meeting and the resignations noted

5 Motions

- 5.1 No motions had been received and none proposed at the meeting

6 Presentation by Waitrose – Barbara Parker

- 6.1 Barbara firstly apologised for the difficulties over parking in the first few days of the store opening and she hoped that these problems had now been resolved.
- 6.2 Barbara emphasised that Waitrose are keen to work with the local community e.g. with local schools, arranging cheese and wine evenings and sponsoring local teams. Barbara also offered use of their store meeting room to LARA, free of charge, for future meetings.
- 6.3 On the issue of post boxes Barbara confirmed that a post box at Waitrose had been requested and they were now waiting for Royal Mail to complete their survey
- 6.4 Barbara's presentation was well received and she was thanked for taking the time to come and providing both the biscuits and prizes for the 'free draw'.

7 Presentation on the Community Hall – Peter Young, Lichfield City Council

- 7.1 By way of background Peter explained the role of the 3 local authorities and pointed out that the City Council was in effect the Parish Council for the City. It collects £537,000 per year in precept which is equivalent to about £18.60 per resident.
- 7.2 With regard to the Community Hall Peter made reference to the hand out which would be the basis of his presentation and pointed out that the objective is to provide a venue that will benefit both the estate and the wider area since there is a gap in the provision of a large meeting facility. The facilities will complement the Garrick but not duplicate it. There is no proposal to provide sporting facilities at the Hall.
- 7.3 The proposed location is at the end of Cathedral Walk, adjacent Waitrose, and they are seeking a high quality, modern design.
- 7.4 The current design will accommodate 400 people seated in rows or 250 banqueting style. It is recognised that there won't be that many events of this size and therefore the design splits the provision into a balcony area and ground floor. The balcony, however, is not tiered and there will be an external first floor balcony in addition to the internal space.
- 7.5 Current costs are estimated at £1.38 million. Proposals on funding are £393,000 from S106 monies (these are agreed), a further £524,500 from S106 contributions (to be agreed), £400,000 from the sale of land on Shortbutts Lane and £62,500 in external grants.
- 7.6 The aim is to have a 'local management committee'. The City Council has been involved in providing 2 other community facilities and having local management arrangements has worked well. In addition, by letting the Hall to a local management committee at £1 plus VAT per year will allow the City to reclaim VAT on the build costs. If registered as a charity, the committee would also be eligible for 80% rate relief and they would be able to apply for grants that local authorities can't.
- 7.7 The City Council will remain responsible for the fabric of the building with the management committee taking on the running costs
- 7.8 The main downsides to local management committees are in relation to skills – need to ensure have available the necessary management skills – and there is a need to ensure that it is not dominated by any particular section of the community.

- 7.9 Official consultation has ended but has agreed to take responses until Monday 21 November. So far there have been 69 responses which show the following
- Design 45% OK, 35% dislike, 20% no strong opinion
 - Capacity 76% about right, 24% too big
 - Local Mgt 56% agree, 11% disagree, 33% no strong opinion
 - Overall View 60% OK, 24% dislike, 16% no strong opinion
- 7.10 Mike thanked Peter for the presentation and asked for questions. The following points were raised
- There doesn't appear to be sufficient storage space and the main event space needs to be more flexible – Peter agreed
 - Business plan assumes letting out the space at double the rent of other centres – Peter advised that actual charges would depend on market forces but that the space would be high quality
 - There should be more consultation on the use of S106 monies and what happens if all the funding isn't secured – Peter felt that a contribution equivalent to £700 out of the £2000 per dwelling was reasonable. If there was a gap in funding then additional grants would have to be sort or a smaller facility built
 - Will the Community Hall impact on the Guildhall – Peter felt this was unlikely
 - Car parking provision is grossly inadequate – Peter agreed
 - Too few ladies toilets – Peter agreed
 - Are costs likely to increase – Peter advised that the costings are based on a start date of October 2006 i.e. some inflation already built in
 - Does the 'new location' encroach on the western recreation zone – Peter agreed that it does but in fact there is no net loss of recreation zone in that the space they would have occupied will be part of that Zone
 - Letter received from a local resident raising concerns of noise, lighting and parking – this was passed to Peter
 - Location would be better in the centre of the estate – Peter agreed that in theory it would but that this would likely increase the chance of nuisance and that with the design of the estate this wasn't really an option
- 7.11 Mike thanked Peter for the presentation

8. Closing Remarks

- 8.1 Mike thanked everyone for coming along to the meeting and asked that as many people as possible complete the Community Hall questionnaire before leaving. He also reminded people to complete the LARA feedback form and hand them in – there would be a draw for the prizes donated by Waitrose