



Elstree & Borehamwood Residents Association

Minutes of Meeting 12th November 2019

Date: 12th November 2019

Held at: St Teresa's Church Hall, 291 Shenley Road, Borehamwood, WD6 1TG

Committee Members Present: Andy Lewis (Chair), Suzanne Alford (Treasurer) and John Fort (Hon Secretary)

Updates Since Our Last meeting:

The following updates* are via email from Cllr Pat Strack:

China Sister Town Twinning Project Update*:

- ◆ It was agreed at the General Management Committee meeting on 17th October, that the Town Clerk will draft terms of reference for an International Affairs sub-committee. This will be for consideration initially by the Committee at its meeting on 7th November 2019, then referred to the full Town Council meeting of the Town Council. This sub-committee will meet 4 times a year, with existing China Sister Town sub-committee (including co-opted members) and 2 x additional BETTA members (subject to their agreement), and will be serviced by the Entertainments/Communications Officer.

Aldenham Country Park Footpath Update *:

- ◆ There has been no progress on the Aldenham Footpath due to a six-month backlog within Hertfordshire County Council (HCC). Thirty-nine cases have been sent through to HCC. HCC have six months to sort out these before they are taken to court.

Aldenham Reservoir Development Update - Planning Ref: 19/1488/ful:

Dan Ozarow, EBRA member, kindly updated those present about the Aldenham Reservoir Planning Application.

After careful consideration, EBRA is going to be objecting to this Planning Application on numerous grounds, including:

- ◆ the overall scale of the project's fifty accommodation pods and three ancillary hub buildings taking up around a third of the reservoir's perimeter,
- ◆ environmental Impact on wildlife and loss of 81 trees, especially in this age of climate change,
- ◆ noise and disturbance to the tranquillity of the countryside and litter issues.
- ◆ there are also health and safety issues e.g. no barrier at water's edge to protect children, mosquitos all around the reservoir and annual algae issues in the reservoir etc.
- ◆ views for walkers walking around the reservoir will be partially obscured by a 2 or 3 metre security fence.
- ◆ the sailing club, a long-time used community asset, will be forced to close.
- ◆ no environmental impact or noise and vibrational reports have been undertaken.
- ◆ the justification for this development is that the money raised will pay for maintenance and repair of the dam. However, the last survey in 2015 suggested that there was no need for any major works and at the time of our meeting we had not had access to or seen the new 2019 Dam Report.

- ◆ Please send in your objections, ideally before 21/11/19 (or as soon as possible or even up to nearer the date of the actual Planning Committee - date tbc) to consult.planning@hertsmere.gov.uk or write to the Planning department at Hertsmere civic offices in Borehamwood.

Relevant, valid reasons for objecting are shown on the Hertsmere website e.g.

- ◆ conflict with planning policies
- ◆ design, appearance and materials
- ◆ effect on a listed building or conservation area
- ◆ highway safety
- ◆ loss of light/overshadowing
- ◆ loss of trees
- ◆ nature conservation
- ◆ noise and disturbance resulting from use
- ◆ previous planning decisions (including appeal decisions)
- ◆ road access
- ◆ visual amenity (but not loss of private view)
- ◆ Note that Climate change and pollution are also now valid reasons.

Reviva:

- ◆ Cllr. Jeremy Newmark updated us about the land adjacent to the Reviva Site in Elstree, which has had an Enforcement Notice issued. The company has lodged an appeal against this notice. This could take many months.

Container Homes Project – Crown Road - Update:

- ◆ Cllr. Michelle Vince updated us and said the budget for the container home project had gone up by a further £250k. In addition to this, the Council were also now looking at buying a neighbouring property, which was being impacted on by this project, at market price at a further cost of a likely £500k.

Save Mature Oak Trees in Ely Gardens - Update:

- ◆ Hertsmere propose to cut down the two remaining healthy 100-year-old Oak trees in Ely Gardens, due to alleged damage to a neighbouring property. This action is being done on the strength of a confidential report from Clarion Housing. However, such an action conflicts with Hertsmere's recent motion declaring a Climate Emergency. The residents of Ely Gardens are determined to keep their trees, which are also our Community's trees.

Transport Update:

Steve Simmons, of Sullivan buses, kindly attended our meeting and updated us as follows:

- ◆ The proposed changes to the 292 and 107 are not being made by TFL for the time being. This is because an agreement has not been reached on the associated proposals, which include a faster, different service from Barnet to Edgware than currently provided by the 107. The proposal was not popular with some residents in Barnet, who did not want it going down their road. So TFL decided not to upset anyone and so this proposal is not going ahead for the time being! These proposals could have possibly cut Borehamwood off from the route. Also, he surmised that the 12th December elections and the Mayoral elections could be influencing decision making.
- ◆ Interlink, the Herts County Council (HCC) system for marketing public transport in the County, aims to grow the bus use market in Hertfordshire and get people to move from using cars to public transport. However, this initiative seems to cover nearly everywhere BUT not Borehamwood. The question is the funding needed to support this initiative. Steve will talk to the Councils.
- ◆ Sullivan's are considering changes to both the 306 and 398 in the light of staff shortages (something that is affecting all bus operators in London and the South East) and low passenger numbers on specific journeys. They have also raised with HCC the difficulties in running the B3 to time. Most of this is caused by traffic affecting the reliability of the services at certain times of the day. The only option is to reduce the number of

journeys, unless they can persuade Hertsmere and HCC to give buses a significant boost by using contributions (CIL) from many developments that are proposed across the Borough.

Police Update:

- ◆ Anti-Social Behaviour - Three key areas experiencing anti-social behaviours have been identified in Borehamwood and Elstree and are now priority areas for the local police who will investigate and assess them. The police have carried out increased patrol activities, community engagement and had meetings etc, amongst other measures to try and resolve these issues:
 1. Aberford Park – increased complaints about young people loitering in the area and the use of drugs.
 2. Parkfields, off Red Road – people have complained about teenagers hanging around this area and intimidating families. However, some of those present at our meeting, disputed this as being a problem area. Indeed, one EBRA member said that he was in that park frequently and had not seen any such behaviour. Another member said he was more aware of people dropping dog poo bags and there being no action taken against them.
 3. Paxton Court – drug related issues.

Those at our meeting wanted to know why Leeming Road was not one of the priority areas, in view of the recent events.

- ◆ Community Pay Back - Community payback can be part of a 'Community sentence' and is the term used to describe unpaid work done by offenders, that benefits the Community. The public can nominate projects to 'Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service'. Projects can include e.g. removing graffiti, clearing litter and rubbish from public areas, repairing and redecorating public buildings such as community centres, clearing undergrowth from paths and other areas and working on projects that would benefit the environment. Employed offenders work 1 day a week at the weekend or a minimum of 28 hours a week if unemployed for 4 days a week (leaving one day a week for doing their job search). This community payback initiative can help offenders develop skills and the pattern of the work they do is intended to be like a normal working week. This is not suitable for high risk offenders and all offenders are assessed before being sent on any work placements. Community Payback sentences are strictly enforced and offenders are sent back to court if they are absent without good reason on more than one occasion. If you know of a suitable work project please email cp@justice.gov.uk.
- ◆ Burglaries in area - There were 17 burglaries in Hertsmere recently and three stolen cars. In Borehamwood there were three burglaries in Hillside, two in Brook Meadow and two in Elstree. Police have increased their patrols and are asking the public to hide valuable items including jewellery and gadgets and keep car keys safe in a 'Beat the Burglar' message. They also recommended people to consider investing in an alarm, doorbell camera, timer lights and outside sensor lights and/or CCTV.
- ◆ EBRA are looking to invite the Police and Crime Commissioner to an EBRA meeting in 2020, although to date he has not been able to attend any past meetings.

Elstree and Borehamwood Train Station Redevelopment Programme Update:

Bob Redman kindly updated us as follows:

- ◆ Bob drew our attention to the latest copy of Town Crier, which had an article on the redeveloped station. There is also now a plaque for the late Don O'Brien, Station Master from 1994 to 2016, which is on the wall next to the new ticket office window.
- ◆ Bob reported back that he had received 123 replies to GTR Passenger Benefit Fund and we had one of the highest number of replies. GTR Thameslink had now reviewed the funding bid and the results were that our £80,000 fund would be spent on landscaping, automatic doors, seating and a canopy between the building and main canopy on Platform 1, and a bench (albeit they were one bench down anyway). However, apart from the seating, these items were not what we had asked for, so Bob will discuss these further with the train company, to see if we can get what we asked for.
- ◆ Since the tragic incident with Rose Barry's dog getting fatally trapped in the train door, the drivers now have better CCTV on the carriages themselves and do not have to rely on the fixed cameras on the platforms. The findings of the review of what went wrong at the time of this tragic incident was that the main issues were not the CCTV cameras, but the amount of time spent by drivers actually looking at their CCTV screens and carrying out final checks before departure. The departure times between the doors shutting and the train

setting off are now being monitored. Any driver setting off in too short a period of time will be re-trained. GTR and Network Rail also need to work together and improve care for disabled people, and a number of improvements will be taking place in the near future, including moving redundant screens from under the bridges and providing seating etc.

- ◆ Bob added that Costa Coffee would be open by mid-December and that the book swap initiative was going well. The defibrillator would be re-installed over the next couple of months and would be in the Booking Hall.
- ◆ Cllr. Michelle Vince thanked Bob for all the hard work he puts in to dealing with GTR etc.

Any Other Business:

Hertswood Academy:

Martin Doe, Chair of Governors of Hertswood Academy, gave an interesting talk about Hertswood Academy.

- ◆ **New School:** He discussed the new school, its new facilities and the history behind the new building and how and why it has gone from a split site to a single site – and how this change now saved money on the maintenance of the old building and time spent travelling between the two sites (8 minutes each way). Benefits and changes now included that the older students could be seen as role models for the younger students, calming music is played in the Reception area, there's a sensory courtyard, larger teaching areas and modern TV screens that could be attached to laptops etc.
- ◆ **Ofsted Reports:** Martin went through the 2017 Ofsted report, which described the school as 'inadequate', despite the Sixth Form being scored as outstanding and teaching being good. However, this overall score has now improved to 'requiring improvement'. It appears the previous key scorings were skewed due to persistent absence figures, which weigh heavily in the scoring method used. However, for the 2019 report, Ofsted had changed the categories and now behaviours and attitudes and personal development were scored as good. Martin agreed there were challenges that lay ahead for the Academy but the new buildings would help.
- ◆ **Theatre:** The theatre is now operational and available for bookings in the community.
- ◆ During the question and answer section, Martin was asked about the number of pupils who were on reduced timetables or excluded, because it was felt that these children may be causing a lot of the anti-social behaviour being experienced in the town. It was also queried that these children would be marked down as being present at school (thereby satisfying attendance rates for Ofsted) when in fact they were on a reduced timetable and also what was being done to accommodate those on reduced timetables to keep them off the streets etc. He was also asked about large classes. He said these were master classes were for around 60 students, with two staff (who had specialist knowledge of the subject) running them and were not frequent occurrences. James Hewitt (student) however, disputed this and said he had them three times a week and they only had one member of staff running them. Martin added the average normal class size was 22. It was also asked as to why the technical type lessons e.g. car mechanic workshop etc had been stopped. Martin explained this was down to funding and limited resources etc but there were other practical skill subjects that could be studied. Martin advised people to contact the school directly if they had any specific problems in these areas, although he would take some of these issues back to the school.
- ◆ Martin was thanked for coming to our meeting.

Grosvenor Road Flats – Planning Application: 19/1531/FUL:

- ◆ Andy Lewis discussed this Planning Application, which had been submitted. It proposed to convert this former day centre into 15 x 2 bed flats with 15 parking spaces. EBRA highlighted concerns that this development may lead to traffic congestion in Grosvenor Road, as it is a tiny road, which already experiences parking issues.
- ◆ So far there are 37 objections.
- ◆ The current status for this planning application is 'awaiting decision'.

Town Events:

Council Meetings:

- ◆ Full Hertsmere Borough Council Meeting 27th November @ 7.30pm – Civic Offices
- ◆ Community Safety Partnership Meeting 4th December @ 7pm – Fairway Hall

Other Events:

- ◆ Aldenham Christmas Frost Fair 2019 – Thu 14th to 16th November – entry £8 adults and children – free
- ◆ Borehamwood Comedy Club Sat, 23rd November and 14th November @ 8pm – 96 Shenley Road
- ◆ BBC Elstree Concert Band Christmas Concert 2019 – Mon 9th December @ 8pm – Allum Hall, Manor House - £8

EBRA Matters:

EBRA – Committee – we need your help:

EBRA have a very tiny committee of currently about four people and we desperately need more people to help us. Do you have any spare hours each bi-monthly period to help us? If you are able to help in anyway this would be very much appreciated. We need researchers, letter writers, people to help out on the night of our meetings to put out chairs etc, ideally someone who can either help do the teas and coffees and/or run the membership desk at our meetings and welcome in attendees and sign up new members and take subscription payments etc – training will be provided. Andy does the agenda and power point presentation and Sue does the membership admin and minutes. Going forward, if anyone else is interested in doing the minutes please let us know, so Sue can be freed up to do more campaigning etc. We have one internal meeting for about two hours during the week before the next public meeting, so there is not a big demand on your time. We really need more of you on board to achieve our aims and goals! Although we are a small committee, we have plenty of fun too.

Next Meeting:

Our next meeting is on 21st January 2020 at 7.50pm at St Teresa's Church Hall, 291 Shenley Road, WD6 1TG.
The following meetings for **2020** are on Tuesday:

- ◆ 17th March
- ◆ 12th May
- ◆ 7th July
- ◆ 15th Sept
- ◆ 17th Nov

The End