



Elstree & Borehamwood Residents Association

Minutes of Meeting 24th September 2019

Date: 24th September 2019

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

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

Updates Since Our Last meeting:

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

Liberty Aldenham, Liberty Lake Leisure Ltd and Aldenham Reservoir Development Update*:

- ◆ Further to the consultation event in June 2019, Liberty Lake Leisure Ltd (LLLL) are proposing to create a 'Nature Retreat' along approximately a third of the length of the reservoir and initially proposed to have 50 accommodation pods along that area, stretching from the end of the dam wall to near 'The Fisheries' entrance of Aldenham Country Park. We then subsequently understood that LLLL may have reduced the number of accommodation pods from 50 to 40.
- ◆ *(Further update: At time of writing these minutes this information may no longer be correct and the number of pods appears to remain at 50. We hope to have some clarity on this item by our next meeting in November)*

Local Plan Update*:

◆ **Additional 20 development sites added to the Local Plan:**

- ◆ An extra 20 development sites have now been added to this phase of Hertsmere's Local Plan and five of these are in Elstree and Borehamwood.
- ◆ Another new site is land currently used by Radlett Golf Club
- ◆ No decision will be made until Spring 2020.

One of these additional sites is Woodcock Hill Village Green:

- ◆ An application has been made to add the Woodcock Hill Village Green site to the Local Plan under the 'call for sites' phase. There is a proposal for 105 homes to be built here. The WHVG (Woodcock Hill Village Green) Committee are taking legal advice as the Village Green status is protected by law. Some developers are taking court action to try and get that status removed.
- ◆ Cllr. Strack said that two landowners were involved, who were Onona and Taylor Wimpey and they were offering a land swap some time ago. They wanted to swap land at Carrington Avenue (owned by Onona) for land at the bottom in the green belt owned by Taylor Wimpey. They were refused and in any case the land beside Byron Avenue is village green and cannot be built on. Now both pieces of land are under threat and they could be working together.
- ◆ In December 2018, the WHVG Committee made representation that land north of Barnet Lane (BE6) should not have 320 homes built there. Taken with site HEL 197a, which had a proposal for 55 homes, site HEL 197b for 50 homes and site HEL 209b for 70 homes – that makes a TOTAL of 495 homes proposed for between Furzehill Road and Deacons Hill Road.

- ◆ There are hedgerows and dew-ponds in that area which are registered with Herts BIO records as they have significant historical and environmental significance. All the named sites are not only in the green belt but also in a wildlife conservation area registered in 2002. The impact on traffic and all infrastructures will be horrendous. The additional noise and air pollution will be harmful to health, particularly to the young, frail and elderly.
- ◆ There are WHVG working parties on October 13th, November 17th which is also Mitzvah Day and December 12th.
- ◆ So, if you object, then make your voice heard and contact your:
 - ◆ HBC Councillors: Victor Eni, Farida Turner, Meenal Sachdev, Harvey Cohen and Morris Bright.
 - ◆ HCC Councillors: Caroline Clapper and Alan Plancey.

Potters Lane/Cowley Hill Development Update:

Planning Applications for:

- i) **58 Dwellings – 17/2494/OUT – Current status: awaiting decision**
- ii) **a 2-form entry Primary School – 17/2493/OUT – Current Status: awaiting decision**

- ◆ Cllr. Vince updated us about the proposed new primary school and 58 home development, to be sited on the Wrotham Park estate, in Potters Lane. She said that to date there was no funding for the school and one of the conditions for the housing planning application, was that the building of this school must be underway first before they can build the proposed 58 homes. However, due to lack of funding for the school, it is possible neither may be built. There were also no assurances that the Maxwell Park Community Centre would be safe either (as that was at risk of being an alternative location for such a primary school). There are also still places available in our current primary schools.

Lawrence Stack's Campaigns Update - Plus Bus Procedure Information for Passengers, Buggy and Wheelchair Users:

- ◆ Lawrence, EBRA Committee Member, had submitted various questions to the Town Council's Transport Forum back in May but had not had a reply. These were regarding:
 - I. The bus shelter at Stirling Corner on Barnet Lane (opposite the side of Morrisons) which is still waiting to be replaced, after it was knocked down by a lorry two years ago,
 - II. Motorcycle parking and the locking of motorcycles is promoted on a sign outside the Iceland Store on Shenley Road, however there is not only a lack of marked parking places to park motorbikes but there is also nothing in place to actually attach a padlock and chain to e.g. there needs to be a metal hoop/bracket/rack secured to the ground.
 - III. Lorry/van/car drivers were frequently parking on the pavement between Greggs and the Halifax bank, causing a number of issues including damaging the pavement. Lawrence suggested that the pavement, which sticks out at that area, could be straightened, with the two parking bays and the disabled space outside the Halifax bank being changed to a loading bay. The disabled bay could be relocated to the next nearest parking bay. This would enable lorries to drive straight into the space and simply drive out. However, Cllr Vince wanted just to clamp down on these drivers. John Cartledge suggested bollards could be used to stop the parking on the pavement.

Information about buses and why the driver may not open the bus doors on certain occasions and information about wheelchair and buggy users:

- ◆ Lawrence, who is also a bus driver, was also asked what the procedure was with buses and wheelchairs either boarding or leaving the bus via the side doors and why a bus driver would not open the front passenger door to allow a passenger on, whilst a wheelchair user was accessing the bus at the central side door. He explained what actions bus drivers take when activating wheelchair ramps and that the bus driver needs to fully concentrate on lowering the ramp and ensuring the wheelchair user safely accesses the ramp and bus, as they could be at risk of falling off the ramp etc and it was only when they were safely on board or on the pavement, that other passengers could board.

- ◆ Lawrence also discussed what happens when there are buggies and wheel chairs requiring the same space on the bus. There is room for one wheelchair and one small buggy. It is up to a wheelchair user if they are happy for a buggy to also share the space.
- ◆ It was asked what happens if there are two buggies in position in the bus and a wheelchair wants to get on - the driver can ask for the buggy to be moved for the wheel chair user, however the buggy user can refuse to move and there is nothing that can be done and the wheelchair user will have to wait for a subsequent bus. The bus driver should then phone through to notify the following bus that a wheelchair user is waiting for them. Alternatively, the buggy users can be given a special ticket to get off the bus to transfer onto the next bus but it has to be used on the next bus on that route.
- ◆ Also once the bus has loaded with passengers and the passenger door is shut, and if a passenger outside the bus is trying to access the bus, this may not be possible as the driver will now be checking everything is clear around the outside of the bus and checking the blind-spots and trying to pull away into moving traffic and that is why for safety reasons they do not open the doors to let late arriving passengers on.

We thanked Lawrence for sharing this useful information.

Churchill House, Stirling Way – Update – Planning Application Ref: 19/0188/FUL:

- ◆ This Planning application has been withdrawn.

Crown Road Container Home Project Update:

- ◆ Cllr. Vince updated us about the Crown Road emergency container home project. It has been delayed yet again, as the cranes placing the containers in situ cannot adequately access the site due to cars parked along the other side of the road. This issue also highlights how emergency vehicles would be able to access the container homes if there was a problem. There will need to be a temporary road closure and clearance of these parked vehicles to be able to complete this project.
- ◆ There was also on-going concern about specific conditions which were verbally agreed at the Planning Meeting, but were taken away to be worked on rather than the wording being worked out at the time and subsequently those conditions were not met. Local residents alongside the site have complained e.g. about being overlooked by the containers, and having windows facing their homes etc. It appears that some Councillors do not seem to understand this breach of agreed conditions and have accused residents of doctoring the situation.

Leeming Road Shops Update:

- ◆ Leeming Road is still losing shops and the Post Office will probably go soon despite the petition, as Hertsmere will not adequately reduce the rent increase – albeit HBC offered them a £25 discount! The Post Office was paying £6.5k rent p.a. and this will be increased to £14k! This, along with the loss of other shops such as the butcher and newsagents, will be a great loss to the local community and especially to the elderly and vulnerable people who live in the area. Current users may in due course need to get buses and taxis to the main Shenley Road Post Office to go and pay their bills etc.
- ◆ The new shops that are replacing the closed down shops are now typically businesses that do not have a significant footfall e.g. a glass shop, electrical shop and a mortgage company.

Transport Update:

Steve Simmonds of Sullivan Buses, emailed EBRA the following updates:

- ◆ There are no known future bus changes.
- ◆ TFL's decision on the bus service 292 frequency reduction is still awaited.
- ◆ Sullivan Buses have made minor changes to their bus times to try and improve reliability, due to ever increasing traffic congestion, especially at school times and in the evening peak times.
- ◆ They have also introduced a direct service to Dame Alice Owens School (in Potters Bar) from Borehamwood, with an additional Monday to Friday afternoon journey added from Potters Bar to Borehamwood on route 398, but the Saturday service was reduced due to very low passenger numbers.

- ◆ No changes to Uno or Arriva services have been announced.

Police Update:

- ◆ With regard to the anti-social behaviour, crime and drug issues in the Leeming Road area; Section 35 and 60 Orders have been in place, resulting in five arrests on mostly drugs charges.
- ◆ 90% of Elstree Residents have now signed up to the On Line Neighbourhood Watch “OWL” scheme, mainly due to the concerted efforts of PSCO John Hainsworth.

Elstree and Borehamwood Train Station Redevelopment Programme Update:

Bob Redman kindly updated us with the following information:

- ◆ The station is now complete apart from the coffee shop, which Costa Coffee will now be operating, and it will be fitted out soon.
- ◆ The ‘Book Swap’ project arranged by the Rotary Cub, is being run by volunteers.
- ◆ The Defibrillator machine has now been re-found following the refurbishment, and is to be placed in a more prominent position where it can be better accessed.
- ◆ The GTR ‘Passenger Benefit Fund’, a compensatory fund following the rail service chaos last year, has offered as much as £80,000 to be spent on our station. 123 responses were submitted and are now being considered by GTR. Any works will be under Network Rails conditions and using their suppliers etc (e.g. a bench will cost £1000). It was noted that we were among the top few stations for submitting so many ideas. The fund is run by a small team.

Any Other Business:

Climate Emergency Declared:

- ◆ A motion declaring a climate emergency, and pledging to ensure we achieve net-zero carbon emissions no later than 2050, has been endorsed by all 39 members at the HBC Full Council Meeting. A fund of £150,000 has been set aside for climate change initiatives. In addition, a cross party member and officer working group will be set up to explore ways we can reduce our carbon footprint and mitigate climate change. Further details including an action plan are expected to be discussed at the Council Executive meeting on 16th October.

Herts Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group News:

- ◆ Herts Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group update included:
 - ◆ The NHS Cancer Programme has a ‘Patient and Public Voices Forum’ who are looking for volunteers to help transform cancer services - closing date 30/9/19.
 - ◆ NHS 111 now operate a video call back service on ‘WhatsApp’.
 - ◆ Age UK Dacorum are contracted to, and operate, clubs for dementia sufferers and carers and they have two new clubs starting in Berkhamsted and Dacorum. However, the service is provided by another group in Hertsmere, see Herts Help: <https://www.hertshelp.net/hertshelp.aspx>

Youth Behaviour Issues:

- ◆ Cllr. Vince gave an update on the threats of violence in the Leeming Road/Cowley Hill area. There have been problems with youths and knives, so Police have been operating a Stop and Search programme, under the relevant legislation. No knives were found but a number of drug related arrests were made. Parents have been frightened for their children’s safety and it is good to see strong action taken by the Police. There is also a need to organise appropriate activities to try and keep these children off the streets. These children typically have a background of being expelled/suspended from school or are on reduced timetables.
- ◆ We thank the Police for their intervention on this matter.

Save Mature Oak Trees in Ely Gardens:

- ◆ Cllr. Vince highlighted her concern over the threat to the two remaining of six original, mature, 100-year-old, Oak trees in Ely Gardens, which are allegedly damaging one property and could cause £100,000 of damage. However, it is not clear if the tree roots are wholly to blame for the damage to property, as there are other possible factors to consider. This is a potentially complex matter, which needs a thorough investigation to ascertain the true cause of what is damaging the property. The above concern is combined with climate change and the need to preserve trees etc and that there are also bats connected with these trees. There is now a petition on Facebook to save the trees, as Hertsmere Borough Council want to cut them down.

Hertsmere Academy:

- ◆ Cllr. Vince had visited Hertsmere Academy and was very impressed with all the new state-of-the-art facilities, including the new theatre which is also for the use of the local community.

Bowling Green in Aberford Park:

- ◆ Cllr. Vince reported that the new bowling green in Aberford Park, which cost residents £120,000 of public money, has had very little use. It now turns out that Hertsmere no longer need the old Bowls Green and Club House, from which they evicted the long running Bowls Club, so these are being put up for tender.

Vehicle Parking Issues at the Centennial Roundabout in Elstree:

- ◆ Tamara Oazrow – EBRA Member – raised the issue about the Centennial Roundabout in Elstree giving cause for concern, with the left lane being regularly blocked by parked school buses and lorries, causing her to have to change lanes. It was suggested that this matter be taken to the Town Council’s Transport Forum. She added that she had raised this issue previously and was advised then to report it to the Highways Department. Cllr. Vince agreed it was a problem and that that area had turned into a ‘coach park’.

Local Council Issues:

- ◆ Hertsmere are implementing a more cost-effective management structure, which includes the deletion of the Chief Executive’s post. A revised structure and implementation plan are being developed, along with a timetable for further consultation and change management.
- ◆ Following concerns over the auditor’s report of the Elstree film studios and the inappropriate use of facilities for political purposes, there was a public demonstration by the public and some local councillors, regarding the lack of faith in the Council.

Town Events:

Town Council Meetings in Fairway Hall:

- Community Safety Meeting - 2nd October @ 7pm
- Transport Forum - 23rd October @ 7pm
- Full Council Meeting - 20th November @ 7:30pm

Other Events:

- ◆ Friday 27 September - Foodbank Friday Collection at Kings Cross Station 8am until 7pm Volunteers needed. Contact: info@borehamwood.foodbank.org.uk
- ◆ Tuesday 15 October - U3A Talk “An Introduction to Gem Stones” by Andrew Wait St Teresa’s Church Hall, 291 Shenley Road, Borehamwood, WD6 1TG 10.30am Arrive from 10am for a coffee and chat - £2
- ◆ Wednesday 30 October - Foodbank - October half term family lunch - 11.30am - 1.30pm
- ◆ Drop-In Tuesdays - 9.30am - 12noon - Fairway Hall, Brook Close, Borehamwood WD6 5BT.
- ◆ Woodcock Hill Village Green - AGM - Sunday 8th October at 10:30am

- ◆ Fireworks Display - 5th November starts @ 7pm finishes @7:30pm - Meadow Park

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 Tuesday 12th November 2019 at 7.50pm at St Teresa's Church Hall, 291 Shenley Road, WD6 1TG.

The following meeting for **2020** is on:

- ◆ Tuesday, 21st January 2020

The End