

WESTMINSTER PARK RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 1ST MAY 2024

MINUTES

1. **Present:** 26 persons listed separately

Apologies: Pauline Brown, Anne Ord and John Sykes, Sandra and Tom Magilton, Mike and Pat Pollard, Olwen Bellis, Dick Pole, Christine Westcott, David Guyton.

2. **Minutes of meeting held on 19th April 2023:** agreed as a true record by those who attended.

Proposed: Brian Westcott

Seconded: Sue Speed

3. **Matters arising:**

Funding has been made available for the BMX track, awaiting contractors, will go ahead this Spring.

Chairman's Report:

I find that it is sometimes useful to remind myself of the objectives of the Residents Association as laid down in the constitution back in 1998:

Constitution, Item 3. Objects

The objects of the Residents Association are to promote the interests of all those persons residing and/or employed in the area, by associating together in a common effort to advance their interests as a community and to improve the physical and social environment.

With that in mind, I am pleased to present my report on our activities over the past 12 months.

Considering first our **physical environment**, we have held three more events to tidy up the area around our parade of shops – picking up litter, removing weeds and giving the place a good brush up. At our most recent tidy we were helped by the Incredible Edible team who have also done a lot to enhance this part of our neighbourhood and made it feel more valued. I am grateful to Brian Westcott for his leadership of these events and to all the volunteers who came along with tools and community spirit to help improve our environment.

This area has also been improved by the addition of our two planters a few years ago. We continue to pay for new planting twice a year from subscriptions. I would like to say a huge thank you to the Wundke family and the staff of Sandstone for helping us with watering during the past year. I am sure that you will all agree that the planters provide welcome colour all year round.

After lengthy research and negotiation, we finally saw the installation in January of a defibrillator for community use outside the fishmongers. This has been purchased with a donation from a resident and will be maintained by a donation from another. We are very grateful for their generosity in providing this life saving equipment.

Off the back of this installation, we have also been able to provide a series of training courses in First Aid and the use of a defibrillator. We are extremely grateful to Graham Roberts of the Red Cross for providing these sessions free of charge and over 60 of our residents will have received training by the time they finish.

While on the subject of training, you may remember that last spring we organised for the Council to provide a very popular Drivers' Workshop aimed at keeping people driving for longer. As we were so over-subscribed for that workshop, we organised another one in November of last year.

I have perhaps already strayed into the area of **social environment** with the mention of workshops and training courses, and of course we continue to run a series of social events throughout the year. Our ever popular autumn and spring quizzes are a great way to get members of our community together and we always have a lot of fun, as well as a good supper and a great quiz – thank you Colin!

Last summer we organised a Coronation Picnic and Fun Day in July with live music, activities for the children and plenty of stalls. The highlight of the day for the children (and a lot of the adults!) was the arrival of a fire engine. Over 500 local residents came along to make it a great day.

In December we were pleased to welcome the Belgrave School choir over at the shops to entertain the crowd gathered to help switch on the Christmas Lights. The Lord Mayor lead the count down and our local shops provided catering for this magical occasion.

In order to advance the interests of our community, it is often necessary for us to put forward our points of view to our Council and others intending to make changes to our physical and social environment.

As your representatives, we endeavour to find out your opinions on various topics affecting our area and ensure that your views are presented and taken into account. To that end, we attend the street surgeries held at the shops on the first Saturday of the month and held a public meeting in October.

This year has been busy with a number of building applications relating to the Wrexham Road development and an application to install a 5G mast by the shops – thankfully rejected. The members of the Wrexham Road sub-committee of the residents' association have attended several meetings to try to improve the Taylor Wimpey Phase 3 application, with some success. There are also regular catch up meetings with all of the construction companies.

Less successful was our attempt yet again to get a pedestrian crossing installed by the Jigsaw nursery and bus stop at Ash Grove.

Promoting the interests of our community is also the reason for our membership of the Chester Residents' Association Group, known as CRAG. Pauline Brown of our committee was instrumental in getting the first Chester conference off the ground and I am pleased to say that a second is now planned for the autumn.

Bringing people together in a common effort requires good communication and the residents' association has continued to provide a number of channels for local people to exchange information. Our newsletter under the editorship of Andrea Hopkinson has received much praise and I thank her wholeheartedly for her sterling efforts. Our Facebook page now has over 5000 members, providing a platform for communication across a large part of south Chester. Huge credit goes to Annemarie

MacFadyen, Sue Britton and Dave Craggs for helping to moderate the content – no easy job – and my thanks go to all of them. Our website jogs along and is in need of an overhaul which I am hopeful it will get in the coming year.

Your subscriptions to the residents' association have enabled us to provide much of what has been described – colourful planters, a quarterly newsletter, training courses and events. However, we could not have afforded some of the major events that we have organised without the assistance of our local Councillors, Razia Daniels and Matt Carter, and their generous donations from their Members' Budgets. We thank them most sincerely for enabling us to improve our Christmas Lights and provide a great stage for our musicians at our summer event.

Our councillors work hard to find out what matters to people in the Handbridge Park ward and to question Council staff on issues of concern – thank you both.

Our activities would not have been possible without the hard work and commitment of the WPRA Committee. Putting on events, researching planning applications, monitoring social media and so on all take an enormous amount of time and effort and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the committee members for their support and dedication. Two of our committee members are standing down at this meeting Karen Liddle and Susan Eva and my thanks go to both of them. Susan has been a particularly long-standing committee member and I would like to express my own and the committee's gratitude for all that she has done over the years.

Lastly, there would be no residents' association without the participation of the members of our community – you. So thank you for supporting us, informing us of your views, coming to our events and I look forward to seeing you this Saturday morning if you are down at the shops or at our Summer Picnic and Fun Day which is being held on Saturday 20th July.

4. Treasurer's Report: Audited accounts presented and accepted.

Proposed: Peter Cocker

Seconded: Steve McMahon

5. Appointment of Committee Honorary Officers:

Chair: Jennifer Crew

Proposed: Mary Pole

Seconded: Brian Westcott

Vice Chair: Colin Dollimore

Proposed: Neil Sullivan

Seconded: Annemarie Macfadyen

Treasurer: Sue Britton

Proposed: Annemarie Macfadyen

Seconded: Gill Guyton

Secretary: Penny White

Proposed: Sue Speed

Seconded: Annemarie Macfadyen

Committee members: Dave Craggs, Brian Westcott, Olwen Bellis, Sandra Magilton, Annemarie Macfadyen, Pauline Brown, Tracey Casey, Anne Ord Sykes.

There were no offers to join the committee.

Proposed: Peter Cocker

Seconded: Sue Britton

6. AOB:

A number of residents commented about increased volume of traffic on Lache Lane including HGVs affecting the road surface. Neil Sullivan suggested this could be to avoid traffic congestion. There could be a requirement for improved signage regarding weight limits etc. Matt Carter will set up a traffic survey to measure the problem. There is increased traffic to Airbus. There are also instances of speeding, our PCSO will be asked to use the speedgun.

It was pointed out that the speed limit sign at the junction of Merton/Rowcliffe has been rotated. Brian Westcott will have a look and report on the CWAC website.