

MINUTES

Barden Residents Association Meeting

Tuesday 25th July 2017

In Attendance

Mark Hood (Chair), Lucy Athey (secretary), Fran Long (treasurer), Gill Sargent, Matt Sargent, Maureen Coulstock, Martin Coulstock, Dawn Boughton, Averil Langridge, Megan LeGoubin, J Young, Molly Zimmerman, Harry Elliott, Julie Bowie, Nigel Durman, Warren Nel, Glynn Rees, Trina Winfield, Nick P, Lisa Copley

Approval of Minutes & Apologies

Mark Hood (chair) called the meeting to order and the previously circulated minutes from the meeting on 23rd May were approved. Apologies from Sarah & Karl Hardcastle, Debbie Burkin, Greg Fox, Cathy Chadwick & Joff Brown

Flood Protection

Flood Warden Martin Coulstock defined the role of a flood warden; they are responsible for reporting & communicating between the community, TMBC and the Environmental Agency. They can pass on queries from residents and make sure they get to the right person. There are currently not enough Flood Wardens to cover the area. The EA generally don't recommend that those living in a flood area are also a warden, however it is still possible and those interested should get in touch. One of their main responsibilities is working on a community plan for the area (and other in Tonbridge); i.e. where to go, where to move cars etc in the event of a flood. He strongly recommended that more people sign up for flood alerts. Information about this and volunteering as a warden to be posted on our website and Facebook group. At the end of the meeting wardens Martin and Dawn also screened a simulation flow of the effects of the flood on the area and handed out leaflets.

Summer Social – Picnic in the Park

Last summer we held a Party in the Park which was very successful; Mark proposed that we repeat this but on a smaller scale than 2016. Barden residents are invited to meet on Saturday 16th September in the park from 12pm, we will be based adjacent to the playground so that parents with small children can supervise them while chatting with neighbours. It was agreed at the meeting that money donated at the recent Barden Residents pop-up tearoom (at the River Lawn events) be used to purchase a 15ft event shelter; this can be used at events like the forthcoming picnic and loaned out to residents in exchange for a donation.

Conservation Area Proposal

A discussion was had following our research into the pros and cons of living in a Conservation area. Mark explained that one of our main reasons of looking into this was to protect the Victorian areas in Barden but our recent experiences of the River Lawn campaign have shown that being in a conservation area (as the old CAB building and River Lawn are) doesn't seem to actually offer much protection from development. Further discussion giving examples from the Slade area led to a vote where all present voted to let the idea go.

The Nelson Arms

The sale has gone through, renovations are underway and it should be opening in October. The new owners plan to have a 'meet the landlord' event for local residents to put any concerns to rest. They very much want the pub to be for the community and local families. They will be offering Sunday lunches and food on one other day to begin with.



River Lawn & River Walk #KeepRiverLawnGreen

55 supporters of the campaign attended the full council meeting in Kings Hill where Mark and Lucy made a joint statement. Peter Bolt and David Cure tried to extend the period of debate to longer than 15 minutes but unfortunately this was voted against by most present, only 4 councillors could then make a statement in the restricted time and supporters were disappointed that this could not lead to a fuller debate on the future of the land. Councillors voted that the petition should be accepted by cabinet but only regarding River Lawn and not the former CAB building on River Walk (as this had been discussed at a previous meeting in February). Cllr Trudy Dean recommended there should be a consultation on the land so one of our next steps is publishing an online survey to poll the public (in the absence of a TMBC consultation). There is a public meeting on the 2nd August to plan further. We will also be attending the cabinet meeting in October where the final decision will be made; all councillors can attend but only the 6 cabinet members will be able to have the final vote.

We were disappointed to learn that plans for the new medical centre on the site of the former Teen & Twenty showed that the large Horse Chestnut tree adjacent to the building is to be removed; we will be protesting this in the planning stages. One of the ways we are highlighting this is have a Woodland Trust "Invite a Tree to Tea" family event/picnic (date TBC) and hopefully get local media involved and raise awareness.

Parking

Barden resident Nigel Durman reported back on the recent meeting & discussions regarding the local parking scheme which is causing many problems for residents. Nigel and Andrew Thistlewood (who have kindly taken on the ownership of this for BRA) believe the original consultation was flawed, as the scheme ultimately put in place was not the one proposed to residents as an option. Following the pressure they have put on the council there will now be another consultation; letters should be sent out in the first week of August and residents will have 3-4 weeks to respond. One of the options will be the original proposal that D1 residents be allowed to park in D2. Nigel pointed out that currently D1 has far more permits issued than actual spaces, the area originally proposed as D2 has an even number of permits to spaces and the area beyond the bridge (originally D3) has far more spaces than permits, plus off-road parking for many. There is currently no restriction on the amount of commercial licences being issued in the Barden area and thanks to N & A challenging the council this is now being reviewed. They are also pushing for the council to suspend penalty notices in the interim period of consultation but the council are not in agreement with this at present. They have further asked to review the restriction times; one concern is that although the new flats on Avebury Avenue have one allocated space each they would still be able to park in surrounding streets in the evenings. The council will review findings at the end of August in time for the Joint Transport Board meeting at the end of September.

It was agreed that as a residents association we need to encourage as many people as possible to submit the consultation form, as the previous one had a very low response. There was a lengthy discussion regarding concerns over the zones and Nigel and Andrew were thanked for all they have done for this so far.

Litter Blitz & Station Flower Beds

A Litter Blitz & tidy up of our area was held on the evening of **Tuesday 13th June**, concentrating on the bottom end of Barden and the wildlife garden beyond the railway bridge. This trial of an evening session was poorly attended so the next will return to a weekend morning on the **Sunday 20th August**. Those interested in either litter picking or gardening should meet by the flower beds at the rear of the station. If there are enough volunteers we hope to cover a larger area. Litter pickers provided but please bring own gloves and garden tools if possible.



AOB

- It was suggested at the last meeting that we do a mail drop to get more Barden locals involved in the group, who may not see the noticeboards, website or be on social media. Lucy to produce an A5 leaflet with basic information about the group and details of the next three meetings. We will then print approximately 600 of these and ask association members & local volunteers to deliver to their street.
- It was previously agreed that the Facebook group should be restricted to those who have paid the £2 annual household fee. A prolonged debate was had concerning the pros and cons; although our constitution does say members of the association must be resident in Barden area there are concerns that non-residents could join the Facebook group. A compromise was proposed and agreed by a vote whereby the Facebook group will remain open to all locals (even if they are not paid up members of the association) but Facebook group members will be asked to prove they are resident (by privately emailing/messaging a photo of a bill with their name and address to admin). Julie Bowie kindly offered to assist with admin duties.

Next Meeting

Meetings usually alternate on Tuesdays and Wednesdays to enable as many people as possible to attend.

The next meetings are;

AGM - Wednesday 27th September 2017

Meeting – Tuesday 28th November 2017

Meeting – Wednesday 24th January 2018