

WIDCOMBE ASSOCIATION
Minutes of the 2013 Annual General Meeting
held on April 11th 2012 at Widcombe Junior School

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chairman welcomed every one to the meeting. Apologies were received from Ken and Liz Hallam, Peter Metcalf, Brian Spibey and Sue Bricknell, , Lesley Stacey-Marks, Charles Curnock Roger Symonds.. The meeting was attended by 83 members of the Association.

2. Chairman's Remarks

Paddy had included a full report in the Newsletter, so his remarks expanded on this.

i) Newsletter:

Valerie Cooper has taken this over and has produced a fantastic Newsletter. Members will have noted the change of title to Widcombe Newsletter. This reflects the wish of the Association to become more inclusive. The print run was increased by 50% to enable copies to be more widely distributed as an advertisement for Widcombe. There were some 'gremlins' in the system but these will be exterminated before the next edition!

ii) Rossiter Road:

This is still top of the agenda. It was hoped there would be something concrete to report but the Steering Group Meeting scheduled for the beginning of the year did not take place. We are still confident the scheme will go ahead. Richard Wales has done a great job as Chair of the Rossiter Road Sub-committee.

Ian Gilchrist made a brief statement. Design work cannot proceed until speed testing has been done for the two-way section. At busy times there are large numbers of pedestrians in this area so the layout must be safe for both pedestrians and adequate for traffic. Roger Symonds, who was unable to attend this meeting, has promised that the issue will be decided by the end of next week. Alan Langton pointed out that this is actually about the fundamentals of the design at the crossover at the bottom of Lyncombe Hill. A question was asked as to whether the pedestrian problem could be resolved by installing a footbridge over the road. Paddy was sure this would not be possible on the grounds of expense. Currently we are still very much where we were a year ago. Paddy thanked Ian for his contribution.

iii) Beechen Cliff Stabilisation:

Following an initiative from David Beeton and the WA, the Beechen Cliff Stabilisation Steering Group was formed early last year and has met on a number of occasions. The WA representative on this group is Helen Peter. Already £20,000 of the Council's £500,000 pledged to the scheme, has been spent on tree maintenance to ensure the short-term safety of the cliff. More work will follow during this summer and autumn. It is expected that a National Trust appeal to raise funds to finance maintenance in perpetuity may be launched in the autumn. As part of the deal, it is hoped that the National Trust will take ownership, not of the cliff itself, but of the surrounding fields, thus preserving another part of the World Heritage setting.

iv) Two Tunnels:

The Opening of the Two Tunnels on April 6th showed the huge public support for and interest in this cycle route. WA will continue to press for access to the path at Lyncombe Vale although neither we, nor, it appears, Sustrans, feel that a ramp is possible. We will keep up negotiations, perhaps looking at steps and a gully.

v) EEW:

For family reasons, Ozzie ffield has had to take a sabbatical from both EEW and the WA Committee. His insightful contributions to committee meetings will be much missed. Tim Williamson continues at the helm of EEW together with co-ordinator Claire Powell. EEW's recent focus on offering free green deal assessments to local residents resulted in 71 Widcombe homes being assessed. The end of the month sees the placements for five Bath Spa University students come to an end. Two EEW events are being organised in April, a low-energy lighting workshop and a draught-proofing seminar with details available on the website.

vi) Halfpenny Bridge:

It was originally announced that the bridge would be closed for be 12 weeks or more, but thanks to pressure from Councillor Ian Gilchrist, it is now hoped that closure will last for no more than 9 weeks. Thanks to Alan Langton we have managed to arrange that the chain-link fencing on the station side of the bridge will be replaced with railings to match those already in place at the rear of the station. Finance for this is coming from the World Heritage Site Enhancement Fund, The Rail Heritage Trust, our local councillors' fund and WA itself. An order for the work has been placed with a contractor. We are actively pursuing lighting on the bridge and the replacement or repair of the builders' plates at each end of the bridge.

vii) Interface with other groups:

Paddy explained that, having looked at our image, a small group of four committee members had spoken to local groups and organisations. He introduced Keith Palmer who expanded on these ideas. WA is part of a network of local groups and organisations with whom we should strive to work. It was felt that more two-way conversation would enable WA to become more inclusive and help us to engage with the full range of local residents. Each local group has been assigned a committee member as a link to WA. Keith asked members to pass to him their ideas on how best we can engage with other groups and take this forward. Paddy pointed out the need for WA to change to embrace the community at large.

viii) PACT:

Paddy introduced Malcolm Webley, Neighbourhood Beat Manager. Malcolm explained that PACT stands for Partners and Communities Together. PACT has struggled to gain an audience in Widcombe and he encouraged members to attend the thrice-yearly meetings, which offer an opportunity for the community to meet local councillors and police and to share concerns and issues. The next meeting is at 7pm on Tuesday June 18th at Widcombe C of E Junior School.

ix) Communication, Choir and Social Club:

Chris Rogers asked members to 'like' WA on its Facebook page and reminded everyone to look at the website for information about events happening in the area. There is now just one listing on the website for all events, not just those run by WA. He asked for volunteers to help with WA events.

The Choir is doing well with a free 'taster' session on April 15th. It meets on Monday evenings at 7.30pm in St Matthew's Church. Choir leader Sue Hart wrote the Two Tunnels song especially for the Two Tunnels Opening on April 6th and this will be sung again by the Choir at the Family Bike Ride on April 21st. Other summer events include a Magical Mystery Garden Tour on Sat June 16th. A midsummer night's pageant, The opera, Don Giovanni, outside the Royal Crescent on June 30th when picnics can be brought to eat beforehand and a concert of

Baroque music by Susan Shepherd with proceeds to go towards replacement of the lead on the roof of St Thomas's Church.

Chris hopes that the new social Club will be more inclusive and friendly. The President is Sir Peter Hendy. The contract with the developer was signed two months ago and the club is now financially secure. It remains for planning consent to be granted, the legal side has yet to be sorted out by the developers and planners.

Chris was asked about the change to the design of the fenestration on the end of the building. This has been reworked and the roofline lowered a little. Some members commented that they approved of the street art on the current building. A concern was raised about parking and Chris said that it was inevitable that the existing parking below the club would be lost but that, as we want local people to use the club, it would be hoped they would mostly walk. Perhaps, on occasion, arrangements could be made with the Garden Centre for additional parking. St Matthew's is hoping to maintain a space between the church and the club and there is an initiative to create more spaces here. The club is working with St Matthew's on this.

x) Graffiti:

Helen Peter outlined the work that she has been doing to counter graffiti. The problem with 'tagging' has got to huge proportions. Earlier in the year she had convened a meeting of interested parties out of which had grown a two month trial of five local 'Graffiti Wardens', who, supplied by the council with clean-up kits, are removing graffiti as it appears. They cannot remove graffiti from private property without owners consent or from stone. The council graffiti team have done a great deal of work cleaning up the area. Graffiti is being photographed as evidence against offenders.

3. Treasurer's Remarks

Jeremy is now working in London, which will constrain the time he has available for the treasurer's role. Ann Ashworth has agreed to assist him for the time being although we may need to consider finding someone to take over from Jeremy in the longer term. Paddy asked members to consider whether they knew of any possible candidates for the future.

Jeremy reported that the Association is financial sound. The accounts are for the year ending December 2012. The difference in the size of turnover for this last financial year is due to the £60,000 grant to EEW. What now remains of that grant is being put back into EEW projects. Donations are listed in the Newsletter, but Jeremy mentioned two in particular. The Titanic film event raised over £1,000 for Mentoring Plus and a similar amount was donated to St Matthew's from the proceeds of various events.

The accounts have been agreed by Marilyn Phillips.

There were no questions from the floor.

Jeremy thanked Marilyn for her work as independent assessor of the accounts.

4. Adoption of Accounts

Adoption of the accounts was proposed by Richard Wales and seconded by David Robertson. The Accounts were adopted nem con.

5. Election of Examiner for Accounts

Marilyn Phillips, proposed by Sarah Lewis and seconded by Alan Langton, was unanimously re-elected as Examiner for Accounts.

6. AOB

Ozzie ffield promoted the Bath Green Homes Open Doors Weekend which includes four homes in Widcombe. He had leaflets available for anyone interested.

Sarah Lewis explained that the Art Trail has been moved to May to link in with all the other Bath Art Trails so that there is a trail every weekend during the month. Sixty-four artists will be exhibiting in Widcombe. Details are available on the website www.widcombearttrail.com

Paddy closed the meeting with thanks to the following:

The Committee for their support

The Rossiter Road Sub-committee

Alex Nash for her work with the Garden Club

Sarah Lewis for the Art Trail

Deborah Clements, Widcombe Events Editor

Valerie Cooper for the Newsletter

Jan Robertson for arranging the distribution of the Newsletter

Following the meeting, Rhodri Samuel, Regeneration Manager for BANES, gave an informative and inspiring presentation about the City Identity Project and his vision of a Bath for the future.

The evening concluded with wine, nibbles and conversation.