

**Notes of the Inaugural Meeting of the
Lower Henlade and Stoke Road Residents Association
held on Thursday 28 February 2008 at The Mount Somerset Hotel**

Present: Gill Ellis (Chair)
Mike Westlake (Treasurer)
Paul Stroner (Vice Chair)
Jacqueline Cairns (Committee Member)
24 residents of Lower Henlade and Stoke Road representing 15 households
Richard House (Chairman, Ruishton, Thornfalcon & Henlade Parish Council)
Mary Growthage (Clerk to Ruishton, Thornfalcon & Henlade Parish Council)

ACTION

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Gill Ellis welcomed everybody to the inaugural meeting of the Lower Henlade and Stoke Road Residents Association (from here on referred to as the Association).

1.2 Gill thanked the Mount Somerset Hotel for allowing the Association to use the room and for providing refreshments.

2. CONSTITUTION

2.1 Gill Ellis gave a presentation of the proposed constitution of the Association, covering the following areas

- Name of the Association;
- Politics;
- Objectives;
- Membership and Subscription;
- Officers and Committee;
- Annual General Meeting;
- Committee / General Meetings;
- Finance;
- Constitution;
- Dissolution.

2.2 Following discussion the constitution was duly approved.

3. COMMITTEE

3.1 The following proposals were made for membership of the committee

- Chair Gill Ellis
- Vice Chair Paul Stroner
- Treasurer Mike Westlake
- Committee Member Jacqueline Cairns

3.2 All proposals were approved by those present and the named individuals are elected to the committee in accordance with the constitution of the Association.

3.3 Gill Ellis reported that it would be useful to have another committee member and enquired whether anybody present would be interested. There were no nominations.

4 FUNDING

- 4.1 Gill outlined the sources of funding for the Association, namely subscriptions from members and possible assistance from Taunton Deane Borough Council and the Parish Council.
- 4.2 A start up–grant may be available from the Parish Council who will want details of how the money is to be spent. At present it was difficult to be precise about what expenditure the Association will incur.
- 4.3 The main expenditure of the Association initially is likely to be in the printing costs. Summerfield Developments have offered to meet the costs of printing on the proviso that they are credited. This proposal was accepted.

5 RECRUITMENT

- 5.1 Gill reported that it was important that the Association maximise the membership numbers as a proportion of the households in order to increase the credibility of the Association in representing the interests of the residents. Despite alerting all households in the area (approximately 60) turnout for the meeting could have been better. Gill enquired as to the possible reasons for this.
- 5.2 A number of those present felt that transport/mobility may be an issue for some more elderly residents.
- 5.3 A number felt that there may be a potential confusion between the role of the Association and that of the Parish Council, and questioned the need for the Association.
- 5.4 Parish Councillors were present at the meeting and following discussion it was agreed that whilst the two groups may have differing agendas from time to time, generally the groups would be complementary in promoting the interests of the local community.
- 5.5 It was reported that a casual vacancy has arisen on the Parish Council and anyone interested should write to the Parish Council by 31 March 2008.
- 5.6 It was agreed that it may be beneficial to approach householders not present at the meeting to ask them to consider becoming members.
- 5.7 Jacqueline Cairns, Mike and Gloria Westlake, Gill Ellis and Dave Sweet undertook to knock on doors to encourage membership

J Cairns, M&G
Westlake, G
Ellis, D Sweet

6 PARISH COUNCIL

- 6.1 This item was discussed under agenda item 5

7 A 358

- 7.1 Gill Ellis provided the latest position with regards to the A 303; namely that the Government had decided not to build a tunnel for the route at Stonehenge and consequently further work on the scheme is currently on hold.
- 7.2 Gill reported that assistance is available for groups or individuals who cannot afford to hire their own planning or transport consultants. Further information is available at www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk
- 7.3 Whilst upgrading of the A358 has been a potential for many years and may not be a concern for the immediate future the Association will keep a watching brief.

8 PARK AND RIDE

- 8.1 The Park and Ride scheme for Cambria Farm has now been approved by Somerset County Council. The intention is to start work at the end of 2008 and for the scheme to be up and running by the end of 2009.
- 8.2 The Parish Council have initiated the process of calling for a Public Inquiry into the scheme.
- 8.3 Residents can lodge their objections to the proposed scheme at www.tauntonparkandride.com and were encouraged to do so.

9 TRAFFIC

- 9.1 All were in agreement that the volume of traffic and the speed of many motorists are problematic. Many suggestions were discussed for potential ways to address the traffic problems.
- 9.2 It was agreed that a deterrent was required and the Association would continue to lobby the relevant bodies, Police, Highways Agency, Somerset County Council, on this issue.
- 9.3 Mary Growthage agreed to progress chase a previous request to Somerset County Council for a safety audit for Stoke Road and Lower Henlade
- 9.4 A suggestion was discussed to park cars on the road in Lower Henlade to make it difficult for motorists during the rush hour. It was agreed that whilst this may have a limited effect, it was probably better than taking no action at all. It was decided that all who wished to take part would park vehicles in the road on the morning of Monday 10 March, the effects to be monitored in order to gauge whether this exercise would be worth repeating.

M Westlake
P Stroner
G Ellis
Others

10 AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- 10.1 Outline plans for development of a scheme for 48 "affordable homes" were available for members of the Association to view. The scheme is proposed by the local developers Summerfield Developments. Gill Ellis declared a potential conflict of interest in regard to this as she is an employee of Summerfield.
- 10.2 This potential conflict of interest was noted but it was felt this was not of sufficient importance to compromise the position of Chair to act in the interests of the Association on this matter.
- 10.3 The criteria for qualification for these houses were outlined.
- 10.4 It was agreed that the number of houses proposed seemed to be at odds with the number of residents in the Parish who were on the current housing list.
- 10.5 Mary Growthage agreed to ascertain the number of people currently on the housing list and raise this at the next meeting of the Parish Council.
- 10.6 Whilst there was general agreement that affordable housing was needed and may meet a genuine need the siting of the proposed scheme should be resisted on the following grounds;
- **Drainage:** The Drainage Statement recommends surface water should be drained via a sewer down Stoke Road to the watercourse at Greenway Lane, Lower Henlade. Residents of Lower Henlade feel that this watercourse and the pumping station near Arundels Cottages are already at full capacity and would not be able to cope with such a large area of extra surface drainage in times of heavy or prolonged rainfall.

M Growthage

- **Traffic:** Both Stoke Road and Greenway Lane are already used as “rat runs” and this development would be bound to increase traffic still further, to the detriment of residents. The Traffic and Highways review makes no mention of Greenway Lane other than to say that Stoke Road forms a link between it and the A358, but residents of the development and their visitors could certainly be expected to use this route as well as the A358.
- **Parking:** The provision of 1 space per 2-bed and 2 spaces per 3-bed house, with only 3 visitor parking spaces, is seen as inadequate. This could be expected to lead to overflow parking (residents as well as visitors) along Stoke Road.

10.7 It was agreed that objections to the scheme should be made individually and by the Association.

10.8 Objections should be made by 19 March 2008 to

Mr M Roberts
 Planning Officer
 Taunton Deane Borough Council
 The Deane House
 Belvedere Road
 Taunton
 TA1 1HE

quoting Planning Application no. 31/2007/033

Copies of standard letters will be made available to those who wish to use them.

M Westlake
 P Stroner
 J Cairns

10.9 Gill Ellis undertook to write to the Parish Council outlining the objections of the Association and requesting that they make representation to Taunton Deane Borough Council on behalf of the Association.

G Ellis

11 WEBSITE

11.1 Gill Ellis reported that she had secured the domain name www.lowerhenlade.co.uk to host a website for the Association.

11.2 The site will be used to post issues of interest to members of the Association including;

- Details of meetings, agendas, notes of meetings;
- Copies of correspondence
- Current issues;
- Useful links;
- Information Sharing – news from Neighbourhood Watch;
- Social events

11.3 Gill Ellis undertook to build and populate the site.

G Ellis

12 Social Events

12.1 Following discussion it was agreed that the Association should have a social aspect.

12.2 It was further agreed that the first social event will be a Barbecue and picnic to be held on **Saturday 28 June 2008** in the field opposite Moonrakers. The event will be open to residents and their families, members and non members of the Association. Each household to bring garden/picnic furniture, portable barbecues etc, as well as food and drink to share.

All

- 12.3 A skittles night will be held at The Nags Head during the autumn, date to be agreed.
- 12.4 It was also agreed that a communal Rubbish Pick Up day will held on **Saturday 15 March 2008**, weather permitting, but that the exercise could continue over the following days if necessary so that all litter would be cleared by Easter. Willing Volunteers
- 12.5 Gill Ellis reported that a Parish Council notice board will in due course be sited by the garage at the front of Musgrave House Farm. G Ellis
- 13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING
- 13.1 The next meeting of the Association will be held on Thursday 9 October 2008 at 7.30 pm at the Mount Somerset Hotel.

With thanks to Paul Stroner for these Notes