

# WIGSTON CIVIC SOCIETY

## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OPEN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HELD ON

### WEDNESDAY 5 FEBRUARY 2020 AT WIGSTON FIRE STATION COMMUNITY ROOM

**Present:** Committee: Peter Cousins (in the Chair), Maureen Waugh, Colin Towell, Val Beasley, Colin Hames, Roy Hughes, Joy Heskins, Peter Holmes, John and Yvonne Woodward (10)

Members: Malcolm and Pat Glasse, Ann Cousins, Helen Hay (4)

Visitor: Deborah Harris.

**1 Apologies:** Nicola Alexander.

**2 The Minutes** of the meeting held on 6 November 2019 were approved and signed.

### **3 Matters Arising**

**3.1 (3.1) Land Adjacent to the Swimming Pool:** There had been no further contact from or with any party regarding this matter and it was decided to take no further action and to delete the item from the agenda in future.

**3.2 (3.2) Eyesores of Wigston:** 29 Ravensthorpe Drive: There had been no response from Councillors and the problem continued to exist. Boots passageway continued to be in a mess with litter and broken glass. Canvey Close had been inspected by Council officers but is deteriorating again. A new issue is that of Canopies over shop fronts on Leicester Road (near Witherspoons) dripping rain water, Council to be advised although these are private properties.

New overhanging hedges were reported at West Avenue, Long Street and near B&Q (the Vice Chair had approached the store about this).

An article on problem areas had been submitted to Letterbox.

**3.3 (3.4) Listing of buildings:** It was reported that there continued to be no response to an appeal for a member to take on this role. *(see notes on Wigston Residents Forum on 6 February that the Council could assist with an application for listing)*

**3.4 (3.5) Blue Plaques:** Regrettably it had not been possible for the criteria and guidelines for Blue Plaques to be prepared for presentation to this meeting as agreed previously. However, there was further discussion as to whether or not plaques should be erected for people or places which did not relate to a national achievement. It was said that the original scheme had this as one of its criteria as was the agreement of the Council. In the case under discussion it was considered that such criteria would not be met. A concern was also expressed that the existing scheme of Blue Plaques could be degraded without due consideration of any additional plaques.

The discussion then turned to the condition of existing plaques which was deteriorating. Methods of refurbishment were discussed as was the position with regard to whose responsibility they were, the Society's or the property owner? Again, a set of rules was needed. A Community Grant may be available to cover the cost of refurbishment.

**3.5 (3.6) Street Art, County Council items:** It appears that there are no appropriate artists working locally. The question was asked about reviving the Society's street art project but it was decided to postpone this for an Awayday discussion.

**3.6(3.7) Bus time tables:** The response to the Arriva letter had not yet been written. However, it was said that Arriva should be asked to include the Civic Society in its consultation about the location of bus stops and not confine this discussion with developers.

It was reported that since Sainsburys on Gloucester Crescent closed and the 49A ceased using to route, residents were having difficulty in getting to shops in the central Wigston area. Agreed that the Vice Chair and Secretary draft the response to Arriva.

**3.7 (3.7) S106 Agreements:** It was agreed that the matter should be included on the Awayday agenda.

**3.8 (3.8) Historic shop fronts:** Members were advised that the Council is progressing well with an exhibition of historic shopfront photographs in South Wigston. It is likely to take place in March this year.

#### **4 Society Events**

**4.1 Awayday:** A date of Thursday 2 April was proposed but some members would not be able to attend on this date. *Subsequently it was fixed for **Thursday, 30 April, 10 to 12.30 at the Heritage Centre.***

**4.2 AGM:** A date of 6 May was proposed, the speaker will be Rosalind Willatts on 'Conservation in an Urban Area'. *Subsequently it became known that Age UK was not available on this date so the meeting was changed to **THURSDAY 7 May at Age UK.*** If the speaker could not change to this date, the Ranger at Brocks Hill was suggested. *Subsequently Rosalind confirmed she could attend.*

At the moment there were no suggestions for commendations but members were asked to try to identify possibilities.

There had been no suggestions as to who may take over from Peter Cousins as Chairman.

The three members of the PWG had indicated that they wished to stand down. It was suggested that the method of dealing with planning applications as established twelve months ago could continue if an administrator/ co-ordinator could be appointed with all members contributing to observations. The comment was made by a member that the Committee had become 'bedraggled' recently which raised a strong reaction from the Secretary who said that the PWG had been established to spread workload and to ensure that the key reason for the Society's existence, that is scrutinising relevant planning applications, was continued. It had worked well. He further stated that should the Society find itself returning to its previous method of working then he would not be able to continue in his role.

No final solution was agreed and it was concluded that this matter would need to be fully discussed at the proposed Away Day.

**4.3 Annual Lecture:** A date of Thursday 17 September was suggested with the speaker to be Peter Cousins on his latest research on a member of his own family. *The date was subsequently changed to **THURSDAY 1 October at 7.30 at Age UK in the dining room.*** Ticket prices to be fixed later

## **5. Website/Facebook**

Both up to date. A Facebook administrator has not yet come forward.

## **6. Correspondence**

These are as stated on the agenda backing sheet together with Sunday 16 February from 2-4 for Snowdrop day at the FWK.

## **7. Planning Matters:**

The PWG had continued to comment on relevant applications. The meeting with planning experts at Oadby CS had taken place and was successful, notes had been circulated.

**a) Newton Lane Estate 482 units and Kilby Bridge 36 units:** It was reported that the proposed East Wigston Meadows booklet was with the developer for approval. It appears that work relating to the new roundabout on the A5199 near Kilby Bridge has commenced.

**b) West of A5199 approaching Kilby Bridge:** It was noted that the construction of the first houses is well advanced.

**c) Horse and Trumpet footpath:** It was reported that a meeting of parties interested in the railing to mark the line of the footpath had taken place. Various designs of bollards had been discussed but Cllr Boulter (in his capacity as a Borough Councillor), preferred black iron bollards although this may cause a vision problem in the dark. Wording for the proposed information board had been suggested and this was presently with Duncan Lucas.

**d) Horse and Trumpet new signs and lighting:** The proposals were reasonable but some comments will be submitted.

**e) 32 Bell Street, conversion of upper storey to flats and new block to rear:** This appears to be a formally registered pre application advice, not seen before. The application was considered extremely poor and strong objections had been made.

## **8 Council Committee reports**

The following matters were noted from recent meetings of the full council: Anne Court had been appointed as permanent Chief Executive for 4 days per week instead of full time from 1 April 2020. There is to be a Selective Licensing Scheme for a large part of South Wigston relating to privately rented housing. Service Delivery Committee: A Housing Strategy and a Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy both for 2019-2024 had been approved. Service Delivery Committee: a report concerning provision of Public Toilets was to be considered (*subsequently announced that the toilets in Junction Road car park and on Willow Park would close leaving only those on Peace Memorial Park*). The position with the Tendring Drive footpath was currently stalled. PDF: S106 report issued and Volunteering Vision Aims and Policy issued for discussion. Licensing Sub Committee: Kingston Avenue garage, no minutes published.

## **9 Society Projects:**

**9.1 Wigston Walks DVD:** This is ongoing.

**9.2 Lancaster Bomber Crash information Board:** This is ongoing. It was noted that 2021 will be the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the crash. *This project was raised at the AGM of the GWHS two weeks later saying how important this anniversary will be.*

**9.3 Asset of Community Value, central Wigston shop:** The Council's refusal to register this property as an asset of community value was confirmed and disappointment was expressed. Various comments were made and reference was made to the many posts of support that appeared on the Wigston Remembered website following an original inaccurate report on that site about the refusal. A view was put forward that not all is lost and other avenues should be explored.

## **10 Town Centre Survey**

The Vice Chair, Secretary and a member had attended a meeting, as proposed, with the Town Centre Manager regarding the survey and shop closures. The meeting had been a success and useful information was exchanged both ways. Notes of the meeting were tabled.

The closure of Thornton's Card shop, *and after the meeting Shoefayre* was noted.

## **11 Residents' Forum**

This was not discussed although questions to be raised at the meeting of the Forum the following evening had been prepared and will be circulated after the meeting with responses.

## **12 Wigstons' Voice and Letterbox**

There was insufficient time for any discussion but articles had been submitted for Letterbox and a schedule of articles for the Voice had been prepared. It was agreed that the GWHS article submitted to Letterbox also be used in the Voice and the submission of the Bird Survey article by a member was noted.

## **13 Any Other Business**

**13.1 Wings of Peace Memorial:** See 9.2 above, it was also reported that the event was well attended in general and that several members of the Society were present.

**13.2 Public Toilets in Wigston:** see 8 above.

## **14 Next Meeting:**

AGM: **THURSDAY** 7 May 2020 at 7.30pm at Age UK (Maple Room)