



## **MINUTES AND ACTIONS OF CAVERSHAM GLOBE MEETING 24 MARCH 2015**

### **Attendees.**

Judith Barratt (Chair) Margaret Skinner, Jean Newbery, Carol Langdon, Richard Denney, Dave Kenny, Phil Bagge, Peter Trout, Malcolm Moye, Bob Busby, Dean Ezra,

### **Apologies for absence:**

Jim McMaster, Will Alliston, Jenny Hicks, Chris Burden.

**1. Minutes of 24 February 2015** - Approved for publication with minor amends – matters arising discussed as follows

### **2. Parks and Open Spaces and Tree issues:**

**a) Planters on Church Street** – Compliments about the Spring floral displays have been received. Some repainting of the peeling Ronseal needs to be arranged in April/May as well as further planting as required.

**b) Hill's Meadow:** Some GLOBE volunteers attended another Thames21 event in March to help clear overgrown areas along the Danall. There are some major concerns about the poor flow and stagnation in the Danall due to silting (see C2 below) that we have raised with RBC but no action has been taken. Cutting of conservation grass areas and tree work also remains outstanding. **Pursue with RBC and raise with Councillors.**

### **c) Christchurch Meadows**

**c1, The construction of the new footbridge** We are monitoring progress to ensure that landscaping plans are fulfilled and subsequent re-instatement of the site. Jim reported that preparations are being made to widen path from Gosbrook Road and the footbridge over the Danall, though this has not been previously announced by RBC as part of new Thames bridge works. Also, that it had been noted that a big mature Ash tree had been removed next to the river, which didn't appear to be part of the planned tree fatalities. Also noted that there is a lot of litter along the embankment that we cannot reach due to the site fencing. **Review at each monthly meeting until construction site vacated and full reinstatement of the meadows is achieved.**

**c2.** No action from RBC, though we sent photos to RBC to report that the Danall is badly silted up beneath the Wolsey Road bridge. (see 2b above).

**d) New Trees on Newlands Avenue and nearby roads.** A total of 20 trees have now been planted by RBC contractors. Richard has organised local residents to water them and for GLOBE to help where necessary.

**e) Balmore Walk – Two issues discussed:** RBC has been pruning and cutting back various over growth but only in some areas, leaving other essential work yet to be done; prunings appear to have been left in random spaces and not removed as in past years. **No response from RBC on their prunings disposal policy.** Re the unsightly high metal fence erected by resident on the rear of 63 Hemdean Road adjoining the park boundary. **The metal fence is legal and compliant with RBC planning. GLOBE may need to plant some hedging if this year's growth doesn't obscure this fence.**

**f) Old Caversham Cemetery, Victoria Road** - Tree work has been done by RBC to tidy it.

### **3. Planning matters.**

**a) Developments proposed on St Martin's Precinct. Planning application 140997.** This was approved at the February 2015 RBC Planning Committee. We discussed concerns about trees, increased traffic and the difficulties of heavy traffic on Wolsey Road nearby. **No start date known - keep in view**

**b) Proposed Reading Sustainability Centre** and a small hydro-electric generation plant in the weir. See this link for details: <http://readingsustainabilitycentre.co.uk/2015/01>. Further details about a proposed natural "fish pass" on View Island are awaited. **Review April meeting**

**c) Swan Heights Planning Application 150120 - a proposed development on Kings Meadow Road next to railway line. This was discussed and it was agreed that GLOBE would submit objections, to be worded as below:**

1) **Excessive height.** Needs to be reduced by at least 50%.

Buildings of this height would cause overshadowing and wind tunnel effects on parts of the nearby Thames Parks green corridor, including the listed Kings Meadow baths. Visible from great distance they make an unwelcome intrusion far and wide in the surrounding area.

2) **Hideous design,** not suited to Reading or the UK - it looks more like buildings in North Korea.

3) **Gross over-development** of this small site.

4) The design and height of such **massive tower blocks would have a very negative impact** on the surrounding area including the listed King's Meadow baths and the nearby Thames Parks green corridor, especially King's Meadow.

5) **Inappropriate Landscaping.**

The proposal for all trees along the Kings Meadow Rd/Napier Rd frontage to be planted in containers would result in stunted trees which would need permanent irrigation to survive at all. They would never be able to grow sufficiently high to help screen and soften the buildings. Ground-planted trees should be mandatory on such a development in such a prominent location. If necessary underground services should be moved to enable ground planting.

6) **Parking and traffic.** Members are concerned that lack of sufficient parking for so many apartments and all residents and visitors could lead to overspill onto neighbouring roads including residential roads in Caversham. The additional traffic on Vastern Road and Reading Bridge junction would cause even more congestion.

**This application is due to be considered by RBC Planning Committee on 29 April – keep in view**

**4. Finance Matters – We await the RBC Grant cheque for £500 to cover our costs of meeting room hire and public liability insurance.** This helps towards the Group's continued existence.

#### **5. Environmental Issues**

a) **Environmental Visual Audits (EVAs).** Regular audits by RBC Neighbourhood Officers (formerly Streetcare) with GLOBE supporters and others attending. **Please ask if you want details of dates for your area as you are welcome to take part.**

b) **Please report to RBC all litter, fly tipping and similar problems** via smart phone app or web link at <http://loveclean.reading.gov.uk> Alternatively please phone RBC Contact Centre on 0118 937 3797 **HELP KEEP OUR STREETS CLEAN – please use these - encourage others to do it too.**

c) **Litter in alley between Star Road and Douglas Road – Is this on an RBC cleaning schedule? Richard still following up.**

d) **Broken chain link fence Lower Henley Road on RBC Housing Land? Awaiting reply from RBC.**

**6. RESCUE 2015 –** annual Rivers and Environmental Spaces Clean Up Event - GLOBE sessions will be **Friday 27 March 10 am & 2 pm. Sessions last about 2 hours.** Exact locations were decided as Thameside Prom towards Rivermead and Richfield Avenue borders, Balmore Walk and some local footpaths and green verges to be publicised. **Report at April meeting.**

**7. Threat to Bugs Bottom as one of the possible locations under consideration for the new Heights primary school.** See [save.bugs.bottom@gmail.com](mailto:save.bugs.bottom@gmail.com) or see [www.facebook.com/savebugsbottom](http://www.facebook.com/savebugsbottom) A wide ranging public consultation process is about to run to 1 May, whereby residents will be able to comment and vote on five possible sites for the school. see <http://beta.reading.gov.uk/schoolsite> **Update at April meeting.**

#### **8. Any Other Business.**

.Caversham Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAGs) are being merged into one.

Next meeting Tuesday 28 April 2015 at 7.15 pm in Church House, Caversham  
(tea/coffee from 7pm - meeting starts promptly at 7.15pm)