

GOLDSWORTH PARK COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION CIO

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING, 7.30pm ON WEDNESDAY 22nd JULY 2020 ON ZOOM

PRESENT:

Irene Watson, Chair
Chris Martin, Vice Chair
Tina Hartley, Treasurer
Celia Young, Secretary
George Binyon, Editor Goldsworth News
Steve Willson, Webmaster
Christina Candey, GN Advertising Manager
Cllr Ann-Marie Barker, WBC
Cllr Chitra Rana, WBC
Cllr Colin Kemp, SCC
Cllr Saj Hussain, SCC
Gary Rimay-Muranyi, Dianthus Trading
Steve Davies, St Andrew's Church
Mike Griffiths, Goldsworth Care
Jim Mackay, Lakeside Fellowship
Sylvia Lambert, GP Guides

Andrew Halstead, GP Allotment Society
Peter Kirby, Radio Sailing

Residents

Hilary Addison
Mohammad Ali
Wanda Binyon
Gill Brookling
Bob Cowell
Liz Hales
Kathryn Hitchings
Margaret Hussey
Mike Hussey
Pamela Marshall
Liz Wilkinson

APOLOGIES

Cathy Salmon, Social Secretary
Gerald Smeesters, Natural Goldsworth Park
Roger Westcott, GPAC
Cllr James Sanderson, WBC
Hannah Rees, WBC
Sandie Bolger, SCC Youth Development Officer
Hilary Harris, 1st GP Scout Group

Residents: Bryan Cross, Jenny Ehlers, Sue Johnson, Sharon Kearney, Holger and Valerie Marsen, Jamie Sharpley, Katie Sherlock.

1. Welcome and Introduction

The Meeting was opened by the Chair, Irene Watson, who welcomed everyone to the first meeting by Zoom. She said that it was great to have so many people sign up to the on-line meeting, more than for a "normal" meeting, which gives food for thought.

She explained that everyone would be "muted", but that all were encouraged to join in by using the "raise your hand" button, by sending a note on "chat", or by waving a hand vigorously if they couldn't find either of those options.

The Chair thanked Cllr Ann-Marie Barker for acting as our Zoom "host" and managing the technical side of the meeting for us, as well as speaking on one item.

2. Minutes of the last Meeting, 22 January

The Minutes had been e-mailed out to all members of the GPCA CIO and mailing lists. They were also available on the website and in abbreviated form in the March 2020 edition of Goldsworth News, which had a wide distribution.

The Minutes were approved.

3. Matters arising/Outstanding

- a) **Rats:** have been less of a problem during “lockdown”, with fewer people about leaving food around, but, with the increase of visitors and the quantities of rubbish now being left around, the rat population is likely to explode.

Note from the Chair: The Pest Control Officer has been seen checking the bait boxes since the meeting.

- b) **Signs for “dogs behaving badly”:** The Chair shared on-screen the art-work for new signage which will be printed on A3 panels, mounted on a single post, 1.3m above the ground and sited where the adjoining footpaths meet the lake path. The design was welcomed and the Council will now proceed with installation.

Note: see appendix 1 for design and location

- c) **Boat Ramp:** Now complete apart except for two bollards to prevent unauthorised use.

- d) **Steep slope to shopping centre car park:** still to be addressed

- e) **Why Woking is not represented at the Farnborough Consultative Committee:** outstanding.

- f) **Review of locations of lifebelts:** outstanding.

- g) **The future of Lakers:** Cllr Colin Kemp provided the latest information:

Many local Youth buildings were not being well-used (pre Covid-19), so a questionnaire was sent out to other community groups, to see if any of them might want to make use of the buildings. The Lakers building was not included in this exercise as it had been surveyed after the fire and found to be unsafe. It will probably be demolished and re-built with community space on the ground floor and accommodation for care-leavers above. Cllr Kemp said that he would try to get this underway as soon as possible.

HA said that Lakers had once been well-used and that it is very sad that it is no longer available for young people.

LH enquired if anyone had asked the local young people what facilities they would like, e.g. café, art centre, etc, that they could run themselves? Cllr Kemp said that he is keen to engage with the young people, and with other community organisations.

GR-M said that a Youth Centre is a good place to help develop young people to be more outward-looking.

JM: WBC is preparing to set in motion local projects involving youth, in co-operation with ROC (Redeeming Our Community).

4. Community Matters - Residents' Questions and Concerns

- a) **LH:** Can anything be done about e-scooters on footpaths and other pedestrian areas; they go too fast and users do not have to take any sort of test.

Cllr CK: there is proposed legislation covering their use on roads so whereby riders would have to be over 17 years old, have a licence and wear a crash-helmet.

IW: e-scooters are currently illegal on public roads and pavements. A trial of rented scooter use on roads (not footpaths) is starting soon and there will be a speed limit of 15mph - like e-bikes. Privately owned e-scooters may become legal on public roads in due course. She wondered why, if bikes and e-bikes and manual scooters are allowed on our shared footpaths, are e-scooters not? A speed limit of 4mph on footpaths and pavements for **all** vehicles would be sensible as this is the current speed limit for disability scooters on pavements (although some ignore this and go faster).

GR-M: Would it be possible to install offset barriers at strategic positions around the lake and paths, to slow down speeding wheeled devices? Mini-motorcycles are also a problem around the lake and footpaths.

Cllr CR suggested dividing footpath paths with a white line so that pedestrians and bicycles, etc., would go in opposite directions on either side of the line.

Cllr SH: Will take these problems to the Council. The new police inspector, David Bentley, may also be able to help.

- b) **SK** (not present) Can the Council put up signage, prohibiting campfires and BBQs around the lake and in the woods?

IW: There are already plenty of signs around the lake, and they still wouldn't be read or adhered to, even if there were more

Cllr A-M B: The police have been asked to step up patrols of the area in response to reports of fires on the recreation ground and in the woods.

- c) **GB:** On a few occasions recently, drones have been seen and heard flying above private properties. Is there any legislation regarding flying drones above private houses, gardens, and parking areas?

IW: Drones must be registered if they weigh over 250kg and the operator must have passed an on-line safety test. A drone should not be flown within 50m of a person, vehicle, vessel or building; should not be flown above 400ft/120m altitude, or more than 500m from the operator; it must be within sight of the operator at all times: if it's used for filming, the subjects must be told in advance. For full details, see the CAA website. There is a by-law that model aircraft are prohibited from flying over the recreation ground – is a drone classed as a model aircraft? Other problems include how to find out who is flying the drone, and what can be done to enforce the laws?

Cllr A-MB: Maybe the Council can look at this and consider reviewing the by-laws.

- d) **GB:** Looking to the future, and with the encouragement to use electric cars, those residents with an allocated parking space not adjacent to their homes will find it difficult to have a charging point for their cars. As both SCC and WBC are very good at "being green", might there be any help with this issue, initially in the possibility/practicality of installing charging points?

Cllr A-MB: SCC is working with WBC to see if any system can be set up for shared parking areas/people whose house is some distance from the parking area.

BC: All the electrical infrastructure would need to be upgraded.

Cllr CK: WBC is already looking at this, and recognises that there are logistical problems, especially in shared parking areas.

Cllr SH: New planning regulations require a percentage of parking places to have charging points. There is power, of course, to streetlights, but this would all need to be upgraded.

- e) **JE:** Are there bylaws about parking on grass verges? Details of some roads supplied.

Cllr CK: It is illegal in London but not elsewhere but locally, if there is a parking restrictions on the road, it can be enforced on the verges.

CY: Parking on pavements should be included as it causes damage to kerbstones, especially when it involves large trade vans.

Cllr SH: The Council can act if there is parking that obstructs the pavement. Call 101 if the culprit is a persistent overnight parker.

- f) **CM:** Concerned about calls by rogue traders offering roof repairs, drive repairs, etc.

IW: mentioned the telephone scam about Track and Trace.

Cllr A-MB suggested contacting Trading Standards.

- g) **LH:** Serco do a good job cutting the grass around the estate but could they coordinate with the guys who sweep the street and litter pick. Because the litter is not picked up before the mower arrives, litter is shredded and glass is broken and left lying around.

Cllr A-MB: will contact SERCO.

Cllr SH said that the programme of grass cutting and street sweeping is on the Council's website.

There were various comments about the increase in litter now that we are coming out of "lockdown", particularly the number of disposable face-coverings left in the shopping centre car park.

IW shared a picture of a poster used by York City Council, which has been enthusiastically "shared" on-line – see Appendix 2.

When asked if there would be another GPCA litter pick soon, **IW** said hopefully, "yes". Residents could all do some individual litter-picking now and the GPCA could supply litter pickers and bin sacks; residents would have to take the litter they collect home and put it their owns bins.

KH asked if the schools could be involved in litter-picking and **IW** replied that Beaufort School have the equipment, and pre-Covid, the children did go out to do some picking regularly. Hopefully, they will do the same when things get back to normal.

h) MG: expressed his appreciation of the wildflowers on the roundabouts and the "natural corridor" areas. His comments will be passed on the right people at the Council.

i) The Chair introduced the topic of **CIL, the Community Infrastructure Levy**, a levy that local authorities can charge on new developments in their area and use the money to support development by funding infrastructure that the council and the local community want. The government guidance refers to funding transport, flood defences, schools and hospitals but also mentions play areas, open spaces, parks and green spaces, as well as maintenance of existing infrastructure.

About £7,500 in CIL funds have been allocated to Goldsworth Park and the community can suggest what physical improvements it would like to see. If the Ward Councillors support the community's ideas, the request will go to the Local Joint Committee for approval.

The invitation to this meeting asked for suggestions for using the CIL money and those received, together with some comments, are listed below.

i) Additions to the playground equipment - but not what equipment.

Note: The Council may start on a new review of playgrounds next year and Goldsworth Park should be near the top of the list as it was last refurbished 14 years ago. The community will be consulted during the review and maybe the CIL funds could be added to what is proposed by the Council.

ii) Levelling and resurfacing in the playground - as it floods in heavy rain.

Note : this is a maintenance issue, and as such, should be raised now and not wait for the review or CIL funding.

iii) Benches around North Meadow – but not suggested locations.

Note: there is no space around the lake where most benches have been bought by residents as memorials.

iv) Matting round the equipment in the outdoor gym as it gets muddy when it rains and the grass is getting damaged.

and some form of roof - as shelter in the rain.

Note: This would require investigation since, if it counts as a structure, there could be green belt issues.

v) Planting more trees individually or in small groups in green areas across the Park.

Note: Advice from the Council's Arboriculturist on what type of trees to plant would be sought and grants might also be available from the Woodland Trust, and Surrey CC.

Cllr SH said that SCC and WBC had tree planting programmes; **IW** will forward the list of locations.

vi) Information / educational / interpretation signs for North Meadow, the woodland, the wildlife area and lake

Note: There is an information board in the lake, and one for the wildlife area has been an objective of the Lake Bank Project for some time. With the Natural Goldsworth Park Project, with North Meadow and the woodland, it would be good to have a co-ordinated set of signs. It is possible that additional funding could be had from Thames Water for the Woodland sign.

vii) Laying some sort of hard surface like tarmac on the unofficial footpath from Armadale Road behind Lakers to the footpath from the lake to the shops.

Note: This would be a major project which requiring input from Council engineers and arboricultural officers to determine the construction method and the impact on trees.

For all of these suggestions, and any others submitted, the relative support from need to be gauged, the cost implications, and issues for the future such as maintenance and likelihood of vandalism assessed. Further suggestions and comments were sought:

SD suggested Crazy Golf.

Cllr SH advised that some of the proposals are for statutory functions, e.g. playground maintenance due to flooding should be done by the Council now, not dependent on CIL money. He added that there was “big money” coming from Surrey County Council for community activities and added that the £7,500 won’t disappear if it is not used this year.

PM suggested more benches around the lake and **IW** responded that there is virtually no scope for more benches around the lake. Where there are houses, the land down to the path is part of the property and the land between the path and the lake is generally too steep to make a bench practicable. There is also the issue of potential noise nuisance if benches are sited close to houses.

PM asked how the final decision would be made and **IW** responded that, after consultation, formal proposals with costings would be put to the Ward Councillors who, if they support the proposals, would refer them to the Local Committee.

KH asked whether the money could be used to support mental health provision coming out of Covid 19? **IW** thought not as it was for infrastructure projects. **KH** felt that Interpretation Boards were not good value.

MA was not sure that mental health issues fitted the CIL criteria but said that benches were a good idea. If not round the lake, would they be around North Meadow and the sports field?

SD asked if the possible uses could be listed in next Goldsworth News with a request for residents’ views.

IW explained that the options would be considered and those that are viable will be progressed.

j) Cllr A-MB updated the meeting on Government proposals for Unitary Authorities.

At present, SCC is responsible for education; social care; strategic planning; transport; fire; highways; libraries; birth, marriage and death registration; trading standards; recreation, arts and museums; and waste disposal.

District and Borough Councils are responsible for: collection of council tax and non-domestic rates; environmental health; housing; leisure centres; local plans and planning applications; public conveniences and waste collection.

The government is proposing that **all** services should be provided by one single tier authority which could have an elected Mayor. A White Paper will be published in September.

SCC is proposing that it should become the unitary authority for the whole County and have put a bid in to the Government. While some people are concerned that towns like Woking will lose their identity, others would prefer to have all services “in one place”. Surrey is a large County and it might be appropriate to have 2, 3 or even 4 unitary authorities.

Cllr SH said that the unitary system in Surrey would give huge savings of up to £135m p.a. depending on the final pattern. The single unitary authority, as proposed by SCC, would give more power and influence to community groups.

GB asked if there was a maximum population for a unitary authority. Cllr A-MB said that there was no maximum but the minimum population was 400,000; Surrey has a population of 1.2m.

LH thought that, as few people understood the issues, could the CIL money be used to inform and consult residents. **IW** said not, but that once the White Paper has been published, there would be explanations and consultation.

5. Officers’ Reports

5.1 Chair’s report

IW gave a quick update on membership of the new CIO; there are now 60 individual members and 23 corporate members.

It has been quiet since our last meeting, especially so since lockdown, so there is little to report other than things already mentioned.

5.2 Treasurer

The Treasurer will report at the AGM on 21st October 2020

5.3 Editor Goldsworth News

The GPCA could not publish and distribute a printed version of Goldsworth News in June, owing to Covid-19. However, to keep continuity, a digital version was produced and sent to all those on the CIO membership registers and other mailing lists. It is also available on the website.

The next edition of Goldsworth News is due in September. Options for advertising and delivery are being investigated and, if it is not possible to produce a printed edition, another digital edition will be produced.

5.4 Natural Goldsworth Park

GS sent his apologies but provided a brief report on activities.

The wildflower meadow was quite spectacular at its peak but, due to lockdown, the opportunity for collecting seeds may have been lost. The fencing will be removed soon, in time for the early autumn cut. Unfortunately, the seedling planted by children from Beaufort School did not survive, but the children had fun planting them.

Thames Water started on a path through the woods but did not complete the work due to lockdown. Hopefully, it can be completed as part of the Year 2 work for the area. Most of the budget will go on tree management but TW suggest that the work could include the removal of the cherry laurel that currently lines the lake path by the woodland with the intention of opening up this end of the woodland area to encourage more diversity. There are concerns that this would encourage people to trample everywhere but others may think having a more open view is more desirable. TW would like the views of the community about clearing the laurels and, to that end, there will be a request for views on clearing the cherry laurels in the next Goldsworth News. They would also like the views of the community about any other ideas on enhancement activity that TW could consider, within their very limited £8k budget.

RW also sent his apologies. The lake continues to thrive. It seems to have lost its swans but gained significant numbers of grey lag geese. Angling has been very popular since it came back onto the list of permitted list. The Angling Club arranged work parties to cut back some of the growth around the platforms and top dress them with wood chippings.

5.5 Social

CS sent her apologies but says she has little to report since the Easter Treasure Hunt and the Autumn event in conjunction with Dianthus Trading were cancelled when WBC cancelled all events on its land until the end of the year due to the Pandemic.

6. Any Other Business

6.2 **GR-M** said that Dianthus will remain closed until at least September but there are plans to open a café in the Community Hall Snug; it would be take away service only in the first instance but it won't be open until GR-M is certain of the safety of doing so.

6.3 **MH** asked whether the GPCA could send a letter of thanks to Waitrose for providing a safe and excellent service to the Goldsworth Park community during the pandemic. **GB** suggested that thanks were also due to Boots and Martin's the Newsagents which also remained open. **Cllr SH** suggested that a letter should be published in the Woking News & Mail.

Note: the Chair wrote a letter to the WN&M on this topic in May – see Appendix 3 – but is happy to write to the shops individually.

6.4 **IW** was sorry to announce that Hannah Rees, Neighbourhood Officer, has been seconded to the Integrated Transport Project for 4 years. Hannah has been a real help to many of us during her time as Neighbourhood Officer and she was sure everyone would wish her well in her new role. She would like to record the GPCA's thanks for all her work over the past few years.

Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be the first AGM of the GPCA CIO on Wednesday, 21st October, at 7.30pm.

There being no other business, the Meeting closed at 9.45pm.

Proposed sign and locations.



Goldsworth Park Lake and Footpath



Please be a responsible dog owner

Respect other lake users and wildlife at all times



Thank you





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YOUR LETTERS

Helping stay-at-homers keep up with the news

Dear Editor

CONGRATULATIONS to the *Woking News & Mail* for carrying on, with the support of #WeAreWoking, at a time when so much else is on hold.

Free home delivery is a boon to all who, like me, are staying at home and self-isolating but want to keep in touch with what is happening in the borough.

I am sure I speak for everyone in Goldsworth Park when I say I would like to record our heartfelt thanks to all NHS and care in the community staff.

Thanks are also due to everyone who is doing something practical to help, whether it is taking food and treats to NHS staff or sewing scrubs for hospitals and care homes.

While we stay at home, we are relying on all those people who have to go to work to keep our lives as normal as possible – staff in supermarkets and pharmacies, police officers and firefighters, postmen, binmen and delivery drivers – we owe them all a huge debt of gratitude.

I would particularly like to thank all the volunteers, whether they are working through an organisation or just being good neighbours, who are helping the stay-at-homers with shopping or collecting prescriptions, and offering chats over the phone. Keeping in touch by phone, Skype or Zoom is so important at the moment.

So keep up the good work at the *News & Mail* and keep on supplying us with positive, good news stories at this difficult time.

Irene Watson
Chairman,
Goldsworth Park Community Association