

# LOUGHTON RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

## Minutes of the meeting

held on: Tuesday, 14 July 2009  
at 38A Bradwell Road, Loughton, at 8pm

Present: Simon Kirkman (Chair), Barry Anderson (Treasurer), Miriam Selwyn (Secretary), Malihe Sanatian, Anita Hancock, Carolyn (Lynne) Rose, Irene Barnard, Elaine Anderson, Maggie Kirkman, Ray Williams, Rob Wills, Mike Jones, Janet Cooper

Apologies: Owen Ashby, David Bowen, Sally Watts

## Matters Arising

### 1. Minutes of the previous AGM meeting

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting, held on 01 May 2008 were Agreed.

### 2. LRA Constitution

The original Constitution of the LRA was discussed and it was agreed that it was only possible to alter the Constitution at an AGM (and it must then be agreed by 2/3rds majority). It was decided to discuss the Constitution at the next meeting, and take any suggestions forward to 2010 AGM (and a reminder was put forward that everyone should read this document in preparation for the next meeting; date not yet fixed).

### 3. Treasurer's Report

Barry announced that, happily, LRA has made good profits from newsletter advertising and that the accounts looked healthy. The necessary paperwork has been submitted to Lloyds bank for new signatories, namely Simon and Barry. Lyn remains as an existing signatory.

### 4. Charitable Donation

The matter of the £100 annual charitable donation was discussed. As Lynne pointed out, the LRA has supported a great many local causes and in order not to donate to a previous recipient it was felt appropriate to find a new cause. It was agreed to contribute towards Charlotte Cashman's forthcoming VSO work in Ghana, where she will help to set up a school (and Lyn hopes to get regular updates on the LRA the website/newsletter article). Charlotte had been instrumental in keeping the LRA 'up and running' as previous Chair.

### 5a Planning Issues

- (a) 'Garage' at Pool House, School Lane: This building was discussed and it was ascertained that 'yes' planning permission (as it currently stands) was granted. Maggie had kindly researched this item.

- (b) Pitcher Lane/School Lane (planning appeal): Ray reported on this item, as he, and Mike Cashman were the main local residents, involved in the case. He noted that 28 July 2009 is the deadline for any further objections (to the non-approval of planning) to be raised.

The Chair pointed out that there had been a lack of consultation from the applicant/developer (to local residents), which may be against agreed planning permission principles, and added that Mike (C) had suggested we make an official comment to this effect (ie it counters their argument that they had consulted locals).

Ray will draft an online letter on behalf of the LRA for submission to the Secretary of State regarding Pitcher lane/School Lane development plans.  
Simon to submit as Chair

Lynne suggested also LRA writes to the Council, to show approval & support them in their unanimous decision to reject the planning proposal.  
Simon to draft as Chair.

Miriam suggested that LRA also makes the most of the Planning Committee's comments about Loughton being 'special' (Clr. Bristow, for instance) and push to give Loughton a higher profile within the MK publicity – for instance, it has been noted that many joggers from the City Centre use Loughton during the lunch-time.

Lynne suggested creating a 'tourist book' on Loughton.

- (c) Elm House: Lynne reported that nothing is currently taking place re: plans to develop this site & property and that she and Maggie are closely watching events.
- (d) Prestige Homes' site, Linceslade Grove: Simon said that the plot (which had originally been ear-marked for development, when that area was created) and which has now been purchased by Prestige Homes, was currently over-grown and needed dealing with. It may be useful to ascertain when building works begin?
- (e) The Paddocks' Development: Lynne stated that part of the land belongs to Loughton (ie: Council land) and that a letter should be written to clarify this (in case the developers encroach upon it) and to ascertain who is responsible for its' maintenance as a pleasant 'meadow' type area.

In summary, regarding planning applications, it was pointed out that in future, the more letters commenting on planning applications affecting Loughton, the better – not just from the LRA but from Loughton residents in general. As part of the updating of the website, a template letter (with details of where it should be sent) could be included for residents to 'top and tail'.

Barry mentioned that *conservation area* rules do not appear to be very clear – clarification and publicity for this (and other Loughton 'PR' activities) could feature in the new LRA website. Simon wondered whether Owen Ashby (who kindly offered professional assistance) could help Loughton regarding advertising/increasing publicity for portraying it as a special 'village'/green area; especially precious being

within walking distance of the heart of the concrete city (and amenable to all).

#### 5b Should we form a Planning Sub-Committee?

The LRA decided this would be a good idea and Maggie, Ray and Lynne elected to be the key individual responsible for checking and alerting the LRA to new applications.

#### 6. LRA Website

Mike reported that he had given a talk/demonstration to Mike Flood & Susan Hughes after the AGM, and that he had also spoken to Mike/Charlotte Cashman's son who had created the original website. The website remains registered & hosted by Mike (C)'s company, until March 2010 (at £15 for 2 years) and that it was fine for us to continue using it. Mike C. will give Mike J access to the domain for administration purposes. There is one condition, though, and that is that Mike's company should continue to advertise on it. It was also noted that Mike's family use the website for personal emailing.

Mike stated that the current 9 or so pages were out of date and he would like to see these replaced, in a similar format, with new material. He & Susan are proposing that a Content Management System (database) be set up; which is time consuming to install but easy to maintain. Mike asked for suggestions of what he should put on the website. He asked "who is it for?" – the answer is: it is mainly for the residents of Loughton; but that it could also be used for those outside the area, so to bear this in mind. He added that other aims could include:

- To support aims and objectives of LRA
- To build community spirit
- To protect environment (nature and buildings)
- To represent community interests
- Planning issues: highlighting links to Council website, discussing how to object to plans and information on the Conservation Area (what it is etc)
- LRA's views on planning application
- What is Loughton? (history, inventory of trees & buildings & even 'famous'/interesting people!)
- Neighbourhood Watch (which Janet & Lynne founded in Loughton; Janet currently 'runs' it)
- Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG)

Finally, Mike asked if anyone else would like to get involved on the website, and perhaps form a working group? Potential group: Mike J, Susan, Owen and Simon. Mike has a copy of Owen Ashby's email, discussing generous ways in which he feels able to assist LRA on this (and possibly the newsletter). Mike will liaise with all parties on this.

Ray suggested a 'flyer' to post through residents' letterboxes, to let people know that the LRA is in very good health, given that the last Newsletter had indicated that it might "fold". We could also advertise the fact that a new improved website will be developed where regular updates could be posted, and campaigning and other matters could run.

## 7. LRA Newsletter

As Susan was not present, this item will now be added to the next meeting's Agenda.

## 8. Any Other Business

8a Lynne spoke – regarding the cheque donation for Charlotte: she will contact her for 'payee' details.

8b Tree Preservation Order – a local resident (at 40A Bradwell Rd) contacted the LRA via Janet, to express concern over the health of a Horse Chestnut tree. Simon had visited the residents at 40A prior to the meeting and was able to show a copy of an arboreculturalist's report on the health of the tree dated January 2009 and some photographs illustrating the residents concerns over potential root damage to their property. Maggie also provided a leaf sample.

Lynne assumed that the issue may be related to the size/shape of the tree and suggested she should have it pollarded (as indeed she had done for 2 of her very old trees)

There was some disapproval and sadness expressed that felling it was being considered. The Chair observed that short of a terminal disease whereby the tree could cause a public danger, it was unlikely that Milton Keynes Borough Council would lift the TPO. Whilst the report indicated some disease present in the tree it was not considered terminal at that time.

It was also noted that, unfortunately there is a major problem in Britain right now with the introduction of a new tree disease, which could kill around 40% of otherwise healthy mature deciduous trees (including h. chestnut, oak and others). Miriam added that in view of this alone, we must really treasure the wonderful trees that we have within the area (only felling them when they actually die). It was pointed out that if trees are regularly inspected and well maintained (e.g. by pruning, or pollarding if necessary) then there should be no issues between trees & buildings. Loughton is special, because of these 'special' and old trees.

8c Homeless man It has been observed that there is a man 'hanging around' the bus shelter on Bradwell Rd. Lynne is aware of him, and said that the police also know of him. He is harmless (although has been a bit noisy in the past!). There is nothing anyone can do, unless he actually breaks the law.

## 9 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting (in September) is to be decided. Miriam will email everyone to get the best day & date.