

Wilford Community Group

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on Monday 19th April 2010 at Wilford Social and Bowls Club Pavillion

Present: Stephanie Taylor (ST) Chair
Roger Steel (RS) Vice Chair
Sheila Atherton (SA) Treasurer
Daniel Atherton (DA)
Chris Allsopp (CA)
Josie Foster (JF)
Brian Hardy (BH)
Bill Roughton (BR)
Frank Wakelin (FW)

Elaine Stenson (ES) Neighbourhood Action Officer

Residents

Action

1 Apologies

Dave Boulton

- 2 This meeting had been advertised as a Public Meeting in order to inform residents about the latest campaign meeting between the Library Action Group and Christine Dyer, Head of Libraries, John Sadler, Head of Estates, and Mark Hillary, Neighbourhood Management.

It was apparent from the outset of the meeting that their agenda was to discuss the closure of the library; a decision had been made a long while ago to close the library and Christine Dyer confirmed that this was the case.

The Action Group came from the meeting feeling very unhappy, having been given no help or advice as to how we could run or fund the library on a voluntary basis except to be told there was positively no funding available from the council.

ST asked the question "Where do we go from here?"

(a) We do nothing at all.

(b) The Community Group buy the library for £10 and a volunteer group look at how to fund and run the library on a voluntary basis. Whilst in London, Dave Boulton, secretary, took the opportunity to visit a library being run on a voluntary basis, however, it was closed that day because the volunteer had not turned up. One of the facts that emerged whilst looking into how this library was succeeding, DB found that they had financial help from their local council; we would have none.

If we buy the building for £10 we would have the collateral of land with a 125 year lease. If we continue with the idea of running it as a library it is expected that initially we would need £35,000 for repairs and we would be paying a commercial rate for everything from volunteer training through to the books we would have to purchase.

(c) A Community Trust would have to be formed to raise money for repairs and all future funding. Through funding we may get the money for repairs but for books it would be a difficult ongoing situation as the library is a statutory service and so we are not eligible for funding as a library. ST made it clear that she would NOT head up this group.

It was suggested we wait until after the elections on 6th May as another political party may look more kindly on our situation and keep the library open. It was pointed out that we had a Labour council and our local election would not be until next year and it is the local council that funds the library service.

July is the deadline for letting David Trimble know If we wish to take up the offer.

ES suggested that a group called Groundworks would look for funding on our behalf and for themselves.

Cllr Trimble will be at the Area 9 meeting on Wednesday 12th May at the Cornerstone, Clifton, and it was suggested we give a prepared statement with a show of force from the residents.

BH said he had attended Area 9 meetings for over 2 years and felt embarrassed at having used ratepayers' money in securing £4,000 for extra hours of opening at the library. He would not have pursued this if he had been informed 2 years ago that the library was destined for closure. He felt very strongly that this was a political move and the ruinous state of the library had nothing to do with the closure.

The question was asked why there is never any Developer's money put into Wilford? This year £50,000 from the Lark Hill Development is to be spent on the playing field on Ruddington Lane.

ES said that Silverdale and Wilford are on the Open Areas and Green Spaces agenda in the next financial year and she is trying to get as many local people involved as possible.

It was questioned if the £50,000 was part of the 1.4 million being allocated to Clifton/Wilford/Silverdale? One of the criteria for spending was a new development that demonstrates need. We were asked to look at what is needed for the regeneration of Wilford/Silverdale.

A Library is needed! But we cannot use the money in this way.

It should be remembered that until the WCG became involved with Area 9, Wilford did not receive any funding but over the last but since they have been made aware of our needs we now have planters, waste bins, there has been removal of waste from the river bank, graffiti clean ups etc. But 2 years ago we should have been made aware of the decision to close Wilford Library.

A proposal was made that now we had decided not to proceed with the library option we should make a statement to this effect, as follows:

“This Community Group is not going to proceed with saving the library and concede defeat and the library will, reluctantly, close at the end of September”.

Can we purchase the building to stop the council profiting?

RS responded by saying that Libraries do not make money and there is no revenue in books. It is too big a proposition for us to take on as a library. We must also remember that with the national debt a lot of funding will stop and the local council is in charge of libraries. However, we are being offered a valuable asset and this should not be dismissed. It could be demolished for a reasonable sum and until we decide what to do with the area, grass it over and make it a community orchard.

Volunteers would be making a commitment for the next 5/10 years

The council will lay down terms and conditions and if we sell after purchase the council may be able to claim it.

A resident was suspicious about the council's motives for letting us purchase for £10.

SA suggested we have another public meeting to discuss other uses if we were not going ahead with a voluntary library as this public meeting was specifically for running a library voluntarily. However, it was felt that we would not get many more people attending than were here tonight.

At the last meeting there were 50% more people and when volunteers were requested to help run a library only 14 volunteered. Generating volunteers is going to prove difficult.

Polling Station - In the future what will happen, as from the end of September there will be no public buildings available. RS said that Portakabins might be used as in other areas.

ST said the councillors had been shocked at the response to the closure of Wilford Library and in future may keep us better informed of anything that would affect the community.

We shall keep a campaign going for a mobile library.

RS suggested we gave a Vote of Thanks to the Action Group for their efforts on our behalf.

- 3 ST asked for 2/3 people to form a core group to look into the details of transferring the property to the community and what is involved. In the first instance a meeting with John Sadler and Mark Hillary may be appropriate.

Roger Steel, Christine Liggins and Andrew Rule volunteered and will be acting on behalf of Wilford Community Group. They will report back with their findings to the WCG at the May meeting.

RS/CL/AR

ST thanked them for taking it on and urged the meeting to attend the Area 9 meeting at the Cornerstone, Clifton on Wednesday 12th May at 7.30 pm.

- 4 The meeting continued with a discussion as to why Wilford is so neglected when it comes to funding by the council.

Q. For instance money per capita, there is a total imbalance between Clifton, Wilford and Silverdale.

A. (ES) Wilford is not highly profiled because Clifton is so large but the Ward budget does look to Wilford if it is shown there is a need for finance.

Q. Demands on the City Budget are slight and the library would have been a gesture. – no response

Q. Nothing has been put into Wilford for 50 years and we lost much of what was here then.

A. (ES) The Bowls Club has been helped to stay open.

Q. Any indication over the next 5/10 years of a commercial build?

A. (ES) There is a lack of space.

Q. Why is the Boys' Club on Clifton Lane not being utilised? – no response

Q. Any funds for the Bowls Club in respect of rent?

A. Dedicated forms have gone in

(RS) A £675 grant has been received for publicity of an Open Day on the 31st May at the Bowls Club.

Before this part of the meeting closed ES made a statement about multi waste bins being placed in Wilford. A public consultation is taking place at the Co-op on Wednesday 21st April for residents to say where they would like these 8 bins placing. Some areas have already been identified.

The meeting took a short break before joining the Iremongers Pond committee in the lounge.

5 Iremongers Pond – Julian Taylor, Chairman (JT)

Daniel Atherton spoke of an event he and a group of students from the Emmanuel School have arranged, as part of their GCSE Syllabus, Citizenship, and have chosen as their theme "Get to know your Neighbour a Picnic at the Pond". It is on Sunday 25th April between 12 noon and 3 pm. They have approached the Co-op, who will be supplying nibbles. Asda, B&Q, Gleeds, The Ferry Inn and the Harvester are supplying gift/raffle prizes.

There will be a Scavenger Hunt aimed mainly at young children and a Quiz for older visitors. A small prize will be awarded for the winners of these events. Everyone attending will be given a raffle ticket.

JT will be there for coaching in fishing.

The students have informed the Police and PC Nigel Brown may attend.

DA asked ES if the council would cut the grass in the area where they intend to hold the picnic. ES said there might be a problem as it is not part of the maintenance routine and her dilemma is, who pays? But she will investigate and let DA know the outcome.

ES

RS said the Rugby Club has a rotary mower if there is a problems contact him.

Another possibility, it could be strimmed.

DA asked if anyone had a gazebo and be prepared to let them borrow it, just in case of inclement weather. JT also suggested approaching the Ferry to see if they would let them use their garden as they have picnic tables with large umbrellas.

RS said he had a couple of gazebos which they could utilize

The Ferry have also agreed to let the group make use of their toilet facilities and car park

A First Aider will be on hand and will be bringing water from the school. JT is also qualified to give First Aid.

The students had also thought of providing music and some were willing to play various instruments and DA had thought of providing taped music until it was pointed out that a music licence would be required. JT asked DA to thank those who had offered to play.

As people pay to fish at Iremonger's JT asked if a poster could be placed by the pond advertising the event and warning fishermen that the day could be busy and noisy.

RS suggested placing a banner at the Crossroads.

ES suggested asking the local ice cream vendor to attend the event.

ES has invited the Ward Councillors and DA said other expected visitors are the Humanities Department and probably about 10 teachers from the Emmanuel School.

JT thanked BR for helping plan the event with Daniel, however JT was concerned that DA had been left to his own devices with regard to Risk Assessment.

6 Application for Funding to Complete Path around Iremongers Pond

JT spoke of an application he is making for completion of the path around the pond. He is applying to a group called Changing Spaces and JT was applying for £25,000 but they expect it to increase, possibly up to £50,000 and he is asking the wider community if it is alright to go ahead with plans for a replacement bridge. The reason for the increase of grant money is because of the 11 projects submitted for funding 10 are for playgrounds and this application stood out because it was different.

The bridge would be 8/9 metres wide as the one that is there is unfit for purpose.

RS supported the application. It is an essential facility for provision of completion of path and bridge particularly for the disabled and elderly.

It should also be emphasized on the application form that the sides of the bank, where the bridge is required, are very steep and need raising and this would not restrict the flow of the river.

JT would like a letter of support from the WCG.

JT is doing a survey and would we circulate through the WCG – ST agreed that we would.

Suggested wording for a petition "We the undersigned support the extension of the path and a bridge". This could be circulated at the Picnic on Sunday.

ES asked if there were any examples of surveys already carried out? JT said he wasn't aware of any and asked if ES would enquire among her colleagues about examples.

ES asked about placing the survey in the library – but it is against library policy to do so.

The Ward Councillors are supporting the application.

JT said they would definitely get the footpath, the bridge would be a plus.

JT would welcome any comments that would further benefit the site. It was suggested that seating would be very welcome and JT said they were looking into using natural material such as tree trunks carved into seating.

JF mentioned a similar pond in Leicester that is run by volunteers with funding from the local council, and they have made good use of natural materials. This is Benion Pool, just off Benion Road, Thurcaston. JT said it was in his area and he would go and have a look.

JT informed us that If/when the tram comes into Wilford, access for wheelchairs will be available.

8 Website Hosting

DB has managed to secure the hosting of our website with our current provider for £25 plus VAT for the 2010/11 year and asked the committee to formally agree to this. On a show of hands the committee all agreed to this offer.

9 Grant towards Open Day at Bowling Club

RS has received a cheque for £675 made payable to the WCG and we have to say whether we still wish to receive the grant.

RS will sort everything and administer the bills for publicity banners and printing.

All he needs is for SA to bank the cheque and pay out cheques to his receipts.

SA said this was not what had been agreed and the cheque should be administered through the Bowling Club. RS said it was not possible to go through the Bowling Club it had to go through the WCG books.

In these circumstances, SA resigned from her post as Treasurer to the WCG with immediate effect.

10 The meeting closed at 10.00 pm

Date of Next Meeting: 7.30 pm 21st May 2010 at Wilford Social and Bowls Club.

Signed Date

