

Minutes of meeting of New Marston (South) Residents' Association committee held at 311 Marston Road, New Marston at 8 pm on Monday 25th March 2024

Present: Adam Wright (Chair), Tessa Hennessy (Secretary), Roy Darke, Helen Burlingham, Crista Popescu, Mike Charles, Liz Adams, Nigel Berry, Trevor Stevens

Adam welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Charles Parrack.

Minutes of the last meeting: these were agreed.

Matters arising: there were none

Treasurer's report: Fiona was absent and no apologies had been received. Adam said that he had sent her several emails but had received no response; there was now some urgency to opening a new bank account and Adam said he was happy to undertake this. He said he would email Fiona to let her know.

Planning/other issues:

- **New Marston Meadows (NMM):** Oxford University (OU) has been carrying out fencing work on Ferry Lane and will plant a new hedge (native species) in due course. There will also be fencing work on the north side of the cycle track field as cattle will graze that field. Concern was expressed about the roe deer and whether the new fences would impede them and also about a recent dog chasing deer incident (this was reported to OU).
- **Bollard proposal for the lane to Park Farm:** OU seems very keen to engage with the local community about the proposed sighting of a new lockable bollard on the track down to Park Farm and is seeking a letter of support from NMSRA. The purpose of the bollard is to stop unauthorised traffic both during the day (commuters) and at night (drug dealers). The bollard would leave a 1.1 metre gap for passage on foot/bike. It was noted that the track is a footpath, not a bridleway. While there was support for the proposal, concern was expressed as to whether the gap was wide enough and as to how a letter of support should be phrased. It was proposed that Crista would draft a letter to OU and circulate this to the committee.

The issue of cycle safety was also raised and it was felt that the bollard would increase safety for cyclists (and pedestrians) crossing at the bottom of Edgeway Road. This led on to the issue of poor road marking/lack of raised kerb at the junction. The road marking issue has been raised in the past with Cllr Mark Lygo (Roy has written to him about this) and the need for the re-painting of road markings to be prioritised.

- **Oxford Heritage Asset Register:** Roy reported that the application for NMM is now pending, whereas the application for Millham Ford School (MFS) is nowhere to be seen. Roy has been told that the meeting to discuss recent applications will be held in early 2024 but no date has been given. Nigel said that in view of development plans for the MFS site, it would be good to pursue the application.

- **Plans for Exeter/Hertford college playing fields:** Adam reported that he attended a meeting about this last week. First, he said that both colleges are on board with the proposal to instal a bollard. Second, he reported that the colleges have scaled back their plans to create additional parking/increase usage of the track to the farm. The proposal is now for 4 padel courts inside and 3 outside. The colleges have consulted with sports bodies, including Sport England. There would be a tiered system for usage of the courts: students having priority, then local people. Users of the courts would be expected to cycle or walk and a new pedestrian track would be constructed leading from the new gate near Hertford College pavilion. There was no mention of installing additional lighting on the existing cycle track/footpath.

The plans are likely to cost between £2 million and £3 million including refurbishment of the Exeter pavilion which has been badly vandalised. The existing squash courts would also be refurbished. The colleges are keen for the new facilities (which will include community space) to be used locally as this will reduce vandalism. There was discussion about engaging young people in the conversation, while recognising how difficult this is.

The colleges are now laying the groundwork for a formal planning application and have said that as part of this they will consult publicly with the local community, late April being mooted for this. The committee expressed broad support for the proposals but concern was expressed about light pollution and the lack of a new footpath running adjacent to the existing path/provision of lighting.

- **Local Plan 2040:** Roy updated the committee on this. The consultation about soundness of the Plan has been completed and the next step is for this to go to a public enquiry before a planning inspector later in 2024. As NMSRA has commented on the plan it would be open to us to send someone to the enquiry if we wished.

AOB:

- It was noted that the 15 minute city concept has been abandoned.
- The ANPR work for the traffic filters/bus gates is in progress. As far as we know, they will be switched on later this year, though this depends on the Botley Road work. Tessa mentioned that there is a talk on the traffic filters/bus gates on Tuesday 9th April in central Oxford. She said she would circulate details to the committee.
- Wheelie bins – people should be encouraged to put these away promptly after emptying. It was felt that this was a council matter.
- Guided walk of NMM – OU has offered to do a guided walk on Wednesday 5th June at 2 pm. It was agreed that more than one walk would be needed as it is likely to be very popular. Tessa said she had suggested this to Nigel Fisher (OU).

Date of next meeting: Adam suggested we meet in June or July (date tbc) at the pub, hopefully outside.

He thanked everyone for their time and contributions and the meeting closed at 9 pm.