

# STRUTT'S PARK RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

## Annual General Meeting

### held on 23 March 2015 at Derby Rowing Club, Darley Grove

#### 1 & 2. Welcome and Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from the following members: Brenda Watson, Rosa Drohomirecka, John and Alison Axton and Pat Greatorex.

Joan Dutton was in the chair, and welcomed 24 members of the Association, Cllrs Martin Repton, Jack Stanton and Lisa Eldret and PCSO Linda Ball.

#### 3. The work of the Derby Civic Society

Derek Limer explained the twentieth century history of Derby that led to the foundation of the Civic Society in response to the threat posed to many historic buildings in the clearance and modernisation schemes following the second world war. An early success for the Society had been the saving of the Midland Railway cottages opposite the Midland Station, which had been proposed for demolition, but which had instead been restored and now form an attractive area of housing.

In order to promote good and sensitive design in new building and in restoration projects in the city, the Civic Society has established an annual competition for the *A Brighter City of Derby* awards. Certificates are awarded for the best new build and the best restoration each year (when suitable candidate buildings are available), with other projects in both categories receiving commendations. Derek Limer exhibited a display board depicting the buildings that had won in 2015, including the Derby Arena and Sadlergate Bridge Studios in the new build categories, and, in the restoration category, Darley Hall Stable block, the former police station and courts in Full Street, Ashgate School in Ashbourne Road, King's Chambers and the shops in Queen Street and the Cycle Works in Full Street.

Derek Limer said that membership of the Civic Society is open to the public, and details of their programme of talks and visits are available on their website.

Joan Dutton thanked Derek Limer for his presentation.

#### 4. Minutes of the 8 April 2014 AGM

These minutes, copies of which were generally available at the meeting, were noted and approved.

#### 5. Matters arising from the Minutes

*(from item 10)* Jane Temple asked if the S. Alkmund's Way footbridge had been repaired permanently. Cllr Martin Repton replied that he thought it had, but he would make enquiries and let Jane Temple know the outcome. He would copy his findings to Clive Lemmon, who will forward them to SPRA members electronically. Derek Limer said that he had contacted the City Council recently about the failed lighting on the footbridge and had been told that there was a plan to overhaul the lighting installation.

**Action: Clive Lemmon**

#### 6. Chairman's Report

Jude King delivered the following report on behalf of the committee:

*Once again the SPRA committee has met seven times since the last AGM, in the homes of committee members, so reducing running costs. At an early meeting a presentation was made to Derek Limer in thanks for his long service on the committee, most recently in his rôle as Chairman. Since he stood down at the last AGM, chiring meetings has revolved among the committee members, hence this report being presented on behalf of the whole committee.*

*Early in the SPRA year the committee discussed vehicle break-ins, which were particularly frequent at the time. It was felt that the reinvigoration of Neighbourhood Watches would help as a deterrent, but no-one came forward to co-ordinate new watches. Fortunately, with increased police activity, the wave of vehicle damage seems to have abated, but it is sadly evident from recent Police Alerts that break-ins to houses and especially garden sheds and garages has increased in recent months, and many bicycles have been stolen.*

*The committee has continued to consider the problems of through traffic and parking in the area. Attention has focused on the issue of speeding in Belper Road, and various options for mitigation, such as the installation of chicanes, have been discussed. There will be an opportunity later this evening to consider this issue further.*

*The weekly list of Planning Applications is regularly checked for proposals affecting the SPRA area. There have been relatively few of note in the past year, but the recent one, for the demolition of the large villa, Oaklands, in Duffield Road, and its replacement with a gated community of 11 detached houses in a modern style, has*

*attracted an objection from SPRA. This is on the grounds of the inadequacy of the proposed access (from the narrow northern spur of Queen Mary Court), the inappropriate design proposed for the new houses, and the introduction of a gated development, which will undermine community cohesion. The developer, in the face of opposition, has withdrawn his original proposal and is re-considering.*

*Progress with the two 'empty homes' in the area, 10 Chevin Place and 98 Belper Road, has been slow. Refurbishment of the former has long been complete, and a tenant has now moved in, but repeated legal challenges by the former owner of 98 Belper Road to the compulsory purchase process has meant that the house remains unsold, and so unrestored.*

*Bob Knight represents the SPRA committee on the Darley Ward Neighbourhood Board, and on its Transport & Planning sub-group. He has kept the committee updated with reports on issues of concern to the wider ward community, and particularly with respect to the two 20 mph road speed pilot schemes just recently introduced in Chester Green and Darley Abbey.*

*Work to produce the first Park 'Welcome' board has continued through the year, in conjunction with the Friends of Darley Open Spaces (FoDOS) and the City Council's Parks' Team. A standard basic form for the boards, to be put up at entrances round the parks, has been agreed, and the artwork for the first board, to be located at the Darley Grove entrance, has been developed. SPRA's bid to the Neighbourhood Board for funding for this first board was largely successful, £500 having been granted, with FoDOS kindly offering to provide the balance of over £300 from their funds, so it is hoped to have the board erected during the course of this year. Boards at other entrances will be erected at later dates as funding and sponsorship allow.*

*The Derby Rowing Club approached SPRA with a request to support them in their bid to Sport England for money to make improvements to their premises, and to increase the club's community involvement. SPRA has been pleased to lend their support, and, as a result, we are meeting here tonight, free of charge! We do hope you will show your appreciation by making purchases at the bar during the course of the evening! The Derby Rowing Club is also bidding for charity funding for a defibrillator to be mounted outside their building for emergency use. SPRA is also supporting them in this bid, as external access to a defibrillator in an area so regularly used by members of the public, especially when engaged in physical pursuits, seems an undoubted public good.*

*An Autumn 2014 Newsletter was prepared and distributed to all members, updating them on the work of the Association. Thanks go to those who wrote articles and were involved in its production and distribution.*

*Recently a kit containing equipment for security marking possessions has come to light. It was purchased when the first Strutt's Park Neighbourhood Watch was established, about 1990. The kit contains marker pens, punches for postcode marking of possessions etc. If anyone would like to borrow it to apply security marking to their property, please apply to the SPRA Secretary.*

*SPRA joined the National Organisation of Residents' Associations (NORA) during the year. Your Secretary has been the principal link with them and it has been interesting to note where our experience and concerns coincide with those from other parts of the country, and where they differ. NORA has some input to national government consultations and our first year's experience encourages us to continue our membership for the future.*

*It is difficult for the committee to thank itself for all its work during the year, but we hope you understand what we mean when we mention it! If you have any issues relating to the area that you would like the committee to consider, please mention them in the discussion later this evening, or bring them to the attention of the committee throughout the year.*

## **7. Treasurer's Report**

The Annual Accounts had been circulated by Matthew Scarborough, the treasurer, and these were duly approved. It was noted that the £500 grant awarded by the Neighbourhood Board towards the cost of the first Park 'Welcome' board was still being held in the SPRA funds until the board was made and installed.

## **8. Election of Committee and Officers**

Nominations had been received for Clive Lemmon as Secretary, Matthew Scarborough as Treasurer and Brenda Watson, Jude King, Belinda Elliott-Dawes, Bob Knight and Joan Dutton as committee members, and these were duly elected for a further year. As a further committee post remains vacant, further nominations were invited from the floor, but none were forthcoming.

## **9. Other Community Groups**

Alison Grimwood, Chair of Friends of Darley Open Spaces (FoDOS), spoke of its involvement with the recently published Conservation Management Plan for the parks, with the development of the 'welcome' boards at the entrances to the parks (see item 6 above), with the new interpretation board for Darley Hall stables, with the Derby Open Spaces Forum and with the National Hydrangea Collection, housed in a walled garden in Darley Park. Several people present commented on the need to make the Hydrangea collection better known nationally as well as locally, and Alison Grimwood explained the steps being taken to this end, adding that the collection had been

visited in 2014 by a party from the United States of America. The 2015 Open Day for the collection will be on 9 August.

## **10. Any other business**

PCSO Linda Ball introduced herself and, commenting on the recent spate of burglaries and break-ins to sheds and garages, explained what residents could do to guard their property and deter theft. She left, for people to take away, Crime Prevention Advice leaflets on shed security and property marking and some ultra-violet marking pens for people to use to mark their property with house number and postcode to assist restoration in the event of theft. She also drew the meeting's attention to the Crime Prevention Event to be held on Wednesday 6 May from 4.00 to 7.00 pm at the Kingston Street/Otter Street corner.

Mike Wheeler asked about the plans for flood prevention in the area, and Cllr Martin Repton said that details of the *Our City, Our River* planning applications could be viewed on the City Council's planning website (*Post meeting note: application reference 02/15/00210.*).

Belinda Elliott-Dawes said that her recent report to Streetpride of fly-tipping in the area had resulted in a very speedy clean up. Others said that their reports to both police and City Council had not met with a satisfactory response. One case, in Riverview Close, resulted in no action because the tipping was on private property, despite the danger of the combustible material being adjacent an electricity control box. Cllr Martin Repton said that in any case where a report of fly-tipping did not result in a response in a reasonable time, the matter could be referred to the ward councillors who would take the matter up on the resident's behalf.

A resident in Arthur Street asked for advice on how to deal with the case of a dog, believed to live at a house in Belper Road, that barks continuously, and is especially annoying in the daytime. It was suggested that it was essential to identify the house involved, and then, if possible, to speak to the owner. A persistent case could be reported to the City Council, and, in the case of ill-treatment of the dog, the RSPCA might be able to help.

## **11. Formal Closure**

Joan Dutton and closed the meeting formally at 8.20 pm.

### **Informal discussion**

*Following a break for refreshment, Joan Dutton opened the floor to informal discussion.*

*The first item discussed was a suggestion from the SPRA committee that the idea of introducing one or more chicanes on Belper Road might slow the traffic in the road and reduce the amount of through traffic for the whole area. Whilst there was general approval for the idea of limiting though traffic and reducing speed, there was no particular consensus on how those objects might be achieved. Cllr Martin Repton suggested that a meeting with David Gartside of the City Council's Highways Department might be the best way of exploring possible means of securing the desired end, but he warned that any proposals would have to be prioritised through the Neighbourhood Board and that the City Council has very limited funds at its disposal. There was general support for a meeting to be arranged with David Gartside, perhaps for July or September and the SPRA committee will discuss this further.*

**Action: SPRA committee**

*Cllr Martin Repton mentioned the Neighbourhood Speeding Project and that groups of local residents could be trained in the use of traffic speed guns and could then mount occasional speed monitoring events, which have been shewn, over time, to discourage speeding. The Neighbourhood Manager, Jane Harrison, is the person to contact to pursue this.*

*The problem of the single traffic lane available between cars parked in Otter Street etc was discussed. It was explained that a previous SPRA house-to-house survey on the introduction of a one-way system had led to such inconclusive results that no progress could be made.*

*The damaged state of pavements was mentioned, and the problem of vehicles parked on pavements was discussed.*

*Dust bins left on pavements was raised as an issue. It is a particular problem in places such as Arthur Street, where some of the houses have no easy access to bin stores. Cllr Martin Repton said the problem was much worse in other parts of the Ward, but that if particular houses posed continuing problems, a reference to the councillors would be appropriate. In the case of student housing, a gentle word by a neighbour, even just to remind the residents of the dustbin collection day, and the system for sorting refuse, could result in improved behaviour. If that does not work, contacting the letting agent could help.*

*Joan Dutton closed the meeting at 9.10 pm.*