

Minutes of Friends of Quarry AGM 2019

Date: 14 November 2019

Venue: Quarry Village Hall

Co-ordinator: Jeff McIlhinney

Present: 42 members

Apologies:

David Kiggell

Minutes of the 2018 AGM:

Accepted as an accurate record of the 2018 AGM.

Proposed by Phil Siswick and seconded by Julia Gasper.

Co-Ordinators report

The Co-ordinator reminded the AGM that one remit of FOQ was to protect the character of Headington Quarry and that in this regard an important planning issue would come up later in the agenda.

Events

Over the last year FoQ had organised several social events: including picnic in the park, cheese and wine event, quiz night and bulb planting. There had been an excellent turn out for the bulb planting and it had been an excellent community effort.

Controlled Parking Zone

In the survey for controlled parking Quarry had a high return rate, with 70% of the returns being positive. It was almost certain that we would get a CPZ in the Quarry and further formal consultation should take place. Councillor Roz Smith interjected to suggest that this could be in Dec/Jan with implementation scheduled for September 2020. Further information on the CPZ would be distributed by FOQ when available.

Bench project and stone at Quarry entrance.

Problem with change of ownership of the shop has delayed the bench project.

Progress on stone sign at the entrance to Quarry had been made, and an "Artist's impression" was shown on a slide. Portland limestone was being proposed for the sign. Suggestions for details to be included on the stone would be welcome. FoQ were engaged in getting quote for the work.

Membership

The changes introduced for changes in the payment of FOQ membership fees after the last AGM had been widely taken up.

Treasurer's report

The treasurer said that FoQ had had a small surplus on the year, and that the expenditure of two quiz nights were shown in the figures owing to the dates when they were held and that of the AGM.

The Daffodil bulbs for the bulb planting had cost £80 for 1,000 which had been covered by a Grant from the City Council. The subscription income had been good owing to take-up of new membership criteria rules as a result of the 10-year membership subscription. Other regular expenditure had been the production of the newsletter. Overall there had been a £288 profit on the year with £2,000 in the bank.

Questions were invited from the floor and the treasurer's report was proposed by Robert Wright, seconded Anne McIlhinney and passed.

Election of committee

The Committee currently consists of: Jeff McIlhinney, Richard Bradley, Lawrence Kelly, David Kiggell, Ken Weavers, Julia Gasper, Jonny Ives, Paul Rogers, Laura Biron-Scott, Janice Wheeler, Phil Siswick and James McNally.

Re-election: Proposed by Roz Smith, seconded Jenny Elliot. The committee was duly elected.

The Co-ordinator noted new committee members always welcome. Proposed social events had a smaller programme than last year. New events might include daffodil

viewing in the spring and other ideas were welcome. A show of hands for interest in a local history lecture with an entrance fee suggested widespread support.

Ongoing projects

Bulb planting will continue at junction of Gladstone Road and London Road.

Richard Bradley spoke on the reasons for pursuing the planting with the ongoing aim being to green the Quarry. He pointed out the difficulties in greening public areas with having to deal with two councils and various departments and with some land looked after by highways, and some looked after by the city council.

He suggested that once the daffodils had bloomed the some for planting some bushes could be investigated. There was also scope for possible tree planting opposite Six Bells. There was discussion of the possibility for tree planting and/or wild flowers on ring road central reservation as Oxfordshire County Council has an ongoing wild flower planting project. However tree planting and maintenance are very expensive in light of need for road closures, mature trees and their watering. There was general agreement that such planting projects were a good idea.

Traffic and parking

Co-ordinator: Traffic and parking a perennial problem in the Quarry with up to 500 cars passing through at peak hour and 200 per hour during non-peak hours. A Council survey of parking for CPZ showed 30% of parking non-residential. Matches FOQ's own figures. New Connecting Oxford transport proposals could mean more rat-running through the Quarry with a big impact on residents and infrastructure. Some response seems necessary. In 2011 FOQ produced a document exploring traffic management options all of which had financial and other implications. For example a CPZ could mean less parking but could increase the speed of cars. Reducing traffic by a filtering point at the Margaret Road/Quarry High Street/Hollow Way junctions could alleviate the traffic flow but would be cause some inconvenience for residents. It might be possible to block access at the ring road but traditionally brings objections from Risinghurst residents and could impact local businesses. There are no simple solutions but we would any welcome ideas and suggestions. FOQ has no formal position in any of the above but does recognise that something needs to be done urgently. Any proposals for filtering or other measures would need consultation.

Planning

Lawrence Kelly gave summary of a number of planning applications within the Quarry but highlighted two specific cases.

A development on Quarry High Street included a garden room within the planning application. Planning permission was granted but the size of the garden room has proved much higher than expected from the perspective of adjacent properties in Quarry Hollow. It appears that planning application notices were posted on Quarry High Street but not on Quarry Hollow, from where the impact of the garden room would have been seen to be much greater. Lawrence emphasised the importance of reading planning application notices and noted that

residents can sign up for planning alerts on planning website to receive email updates of local planning applications. Development at 1a Quarry High Street has provoked widespread criticism for its overbearing size which seems at odds with the original planning application. Despite recent articles in the Oxford Times, which quoted the developer's assertion that the building would be an arts and concert venue, the new building is a terrace of six one-bedroom flats. Comparison with the original artist's impression drawings of the building in its context show the current building to be considerably oversized.

Following the identification of a number of issues with the development FOQ have registered a planning application enquiry. Planning officers have agreed that the building is too high and have informed us that a retrospective planning application was requested. Should this be submitted it would allow a comparison of the original drawings

with building being constructed. Anyone can comment on retrospective planning permission.

We note:

Cllr Roz Smith declared an interest as member of planning committee: could not participate in this debate

It was noted that in the original approval letter contained Condition 15 regarding a detailed plan requiring approval for appropriate scale and height. To date no evidence was available for this condition having been fulfilled and evidence for it was being sought. There was some discussion of a suggestion of immunity from enforcement owing to the delay on the project. However it appears that the Council can enforce a planning issue at any time during the process for development. FOQ are pursuing a Freedom of Information request for all relevant documents, including those relating to approval of conditions. There followed a discussion of a number of issues including the exacerbation of traffic problems by new dwellings on the site, the number of cars likely on site, whether there was a covenant on the land and the restoration of the stone wall. FOQ will continue to press the Council up these and other issues and will seek support from the Oxford Civic Society and the Oxford Preservation Trust. Should a retrospective planning application be submitted FOQ would encourage people to comment in any way they might feel appropriate.

Any other business

A question was asked whether Quarry Hollow might be an appropriate venue for 'trim trail' fitness equipment?

It was suggested that the enquiry might be directed to Friends of Quarry Hollow and/or Headington Action. It was noted that such equipment had been installed in Headington Hill Park and had not been welcomed by the park's friends group.

Talk on the history of Holy Trinity churchyard.

The meeting ended with an interesting and entertaining talk by Roy Kerry on the History of the churchyard of Holy Trinity Church which was warmly received. Our thanks to him for doing this