**MINUTES OF THE TETTENHALL COMMUNITY FORUM**

**Parish Rooms, Tettenhall**

**19th December 2024**

**at 6.30 pm**

**APOLOGIES**

Sally Hathaway, Colin Whittingham, John Green and Liz Hacking.

There were 9 residents in attendance including 1 new member.

**MATTERS ARISING**

**ROCK JUNCTION**

See report under Steering Group Update.

**SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS**

Nicola Rudge (NR) reported that the new arrangements continued to work well and that the content was now much more clearly focussed on the Trust’s activities whilst allowing other agencies reasonable access. A discussion took place on how to engage younger residents. It was acknowledged that they were more likely to be engaged with short picture video type material. We needed to identify opportunities for 1 and a half minute interesting videos of our activities.

**APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION**

At the time of the meeting our application is complete and we were two weeks into the review period which is anticipated to be six weeks in all.

**MEETING WITH WMP&CC**

No progress as yet regarding meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner’s office and it was noted that another serious accident had occurred at the Rock junction in the previous week. The vehicle failed to complete a right turn into Lower Street due to excessive speed and demolished the adjacent street light. Note - this was not an accident related to any of the restrictions proposed by the Council. It was also recorded under this item that a new Safety Commissioner was being appointed by the WMP&CC.

**TREES**

It was noted that our excellent proposal for a Sycamore Gap tree had been unsuccessful. Successful entries appeared to have been associated with areas such as local parks and hospital grounds. A number of members have made a suggestion that they would support an opportunity for residents to be able to plant trees in appropriate places in memorium or to recognise significant events. There continues to be concern regarding a lack of replanting strategy for the Green, but noting that Sally Garner (SG) has secured commitment from the Council to plant a replacement tree for the one which blew down in early December. It was noted that some parts of Wolverhampton, including Wednesfield, took part in the Village in Bloom initiative. Perhaps Tettenhall should consider getting involved.

**PLANNING**

See under WCC item 4 below.

**UPDATE ON 910AD BATTLES**

Becky Cresswell (RC) gave an update on her activities. On the creative side work had progressed with an exhibition in Wolverhampton town centre being visited by a number of local people and a number of Forum members had attended the exhibition and commented favourably on the exhibits and how it had been put together. A questionnaire to establish the views of local people had received unanimous approval and appreciation for the aims and objecives of the project. The diffiulty regarding funding remains the major stumbling block. Neal Kelshaw (NK) identified opportunities with the Proceeds of crime Fund and RC is investigating a number of smaller funds and was still waiting for feedback from Severn Trent. It was noted that the Smestow Valley Wildlife Program was looking to do some tidying up work on the opposite platform at the Cupcake Lane station and there might be some opportunities for further promotional activities around this initiative.

**WCC LOCAL PLAN**

Fran Jackson (FJ) had attended a drop-in meeting in the City centre on this item and apparently she was the only member of the public attending. Confirmation received that there were virtually no suitable brownfield sites in the Wolverhampton area for housing development and the Council was pressing on with further high rise developments in the City centre locations. A no consierge policy appears to have been adopted for these high rise developments. There is some suggestion that the Council is looking at some arable land. It was acknowledged that traffic flows from developments outside the Borough are expected to be heavy and increasing. There is a 9th January 2025 deadline for responses and reactions via the Council website. It was noted that it has been almost impossible for individual residents to assimilate the details of the Plan which extend to well over 1,000 pages of documentation making it even more imperative that the existing and new requirements for our Neighbourhood Plan, as discussed and recorded at a previous meeting, are increasingly important in retaining the character and facilities of the Tettenhall area.

**STEERING GROUP UPDATE - Including Rock Junction**

NK and the rest of the Steering Group have been heavily involved in escalating the many complaints regarding the initial Rock Junction TTRO and the Council’s continued lack of response over a 12 month period to residents’ complaints and suggestions and to the formal submisison of the residents’ petition for alternative actions to the Council’s proposals. We strongly believe that Council official procedures on responses to complaints and petitions are not being followed eg the Council’s Ethics Committee (attended by Jonathan Crofts, a Wightwick Ward Councillor) was refusing to consider complaints until they had reached Stage 2 of the Council’s Escalation Process whilst in the meantime, in spite of repeated requests to raise various complaints to Stage 2 as a result of non-response by the Council, the Council were refusing to accept escalation to Stage 2. Also there is no evidence to support the Council’s statement that our petition will be responded to as part of the independent consultation on the Council’s plans for the junction, in fact there is evidence to the contrary indicating that the consultant’s brief does not include the consultant’s consideration of the large proportion of the recommendations and suggestions included in our petition. The Council have repeatedly declined to attend meetings with residents and their representative bodies to discuss both the Council’s and the residents’ proposals.

**MEETINGS SCHEDULE 2025**

A proposal to schedule meetings of the Forum on a 3 weekly basis from the beginning of 2025 was accepted on the basis that it would allow more meaningful progress to take place between meetings. The next meeting of the Forum was therefore scheduled to take place on 9th January and subsequently every 3 weeks. NK reminded the Forum members that an AGM for the Trust had been indicated for 30th January which would coincide with the next Forum meeting. There was then considerable discussion regarding the proposed AGM. Robin Hacking (RH) was strongly of the opinion that the Trust was not ready for the formality of an AGM, was concerned that there was insufficient time to formally notify members of the Trust and that there was definitely insufficient time for candidates to put forward their submissions for Trusteeship and the various offices of the Trust and Community Interest Company. NK was very reluctant not to go ahead with the AGM on that date on the grounds that it had been widely publicised to be taking place and it would have a negative effect on members of the Trust if the first AGM was to be rescheduled. After a lengthy discussion around the table it became apparent that the Forum members were still relatively unclear regarding the relationship between the various entities, namely the Trust, the CIC, the Forum and the Steering Group. It was also pointed out that regular minutes from the Steering Group would improve communication between the various groups of members and their understanding of the relationship between the various entities that the Trust encompassed. Malcolm Rudge (MR) suggested that a picture showing the relationship between the various entities would also help people’s understanding. RH also pointed out that it would be difficult for people to propose themseves and be seconded for roles within the Trust for which they had yet to have a full understanding of the responsibilities and accountabilities of those roles. NK pointed out that these roles and responsibilites were defined in the Trust’s documentation and the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the CIC, which is a company registered at Companies House. NK also expressed concern that prior to an AGM for the CIC the initially nominated directors, namely himself and Matthew Caffrey, each had 50% control of the company and that before the company held significant funds it would be appropriate for a wider group of directors to be appointed, notwithstanding the integrity of the current directors but recognising the proberty of having a broader group ongoing.

***POST MEETING*** *NK and RH met to discuss a way forward and agreed the following:-*

*The next meeting of the Forum would be 2 weeks from 9th January, namely 23rd January, with the 3 weekly meetings following on from that date so as not to clash with the AGM. The meeting of the 23rd would largely be devoted to a discussion for the purpose of clarifying the relationship between the various entities of the Trust and the roles and responsibilities for the positions that will need to be filled, for the Forum members. The following week on 30th January the AGM will go ahead at 6.30pm in the Danescourt Room, South Staffs Golf Club, Danescourt Road WV6 9BQ but without elections and with the main purpose being to achieve the same objectives of clarity and understanding with the broader Trust membership as per the Forum meeting of the previous week. A calling notice will be issued for this AGM early in the New Year.*

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chairman would like to thank Jane Meek and FJ on behalf of all the Forum members for the mince pies and mulled wine which gave the last meeting of 2024 a very Christmassy feeling. There being no other business the meeting closed later than usual.

A reminder that the next 3 meetings will on 9th January, 23rd January and 13th February at the Parish Rooms.

Outline agenda for next meeting:

* APOLOGIES
* MATTERS ARISING
* AGM PREPARATION
* ANY OTHER BUSINESS