

Tuesday, 6 April, 2021

Virtual Meeting, 8pm

Minutes

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Paul Headland
2. **Welcome**
Present: Jayne Arnold, Rob Lewis, Sandra Lewis, Agnes Barstow, Sarah Jenkins, Mike Cancedda, George Woolfenden.
3. **Minutes of the meeting of the 23 February, 2021.**
Agreed
4. **Matters Arising**
None
5. **NORA (National Organisation of Residents Associations) – Rob Lewis**
We are getting some useful information from NORA. Justifies the £25 membership fee.
6. **West Common update and Whitton's Park – George**
Common is in a poor state after the winter, due to wet weather and horses remaining on over winter. GW is asking whether the football pitch can be rolled. Drainage issues around West Parade gate will be addressed in spring. GW has got permission for Trudy's bench to be installed on Whitton's park. **ACTION:** GW will finish its renovation when gets time.
7. **Speed Indicator Device**
Our next turn to have this is in September.
8. **Bookswap cabinet**
Still awaiting funding decision by Tesco. **ACTION:** Ideas please for suitable supplier/design. Needs to fit in alcove therefore approx. 1m wide, 5/6 shelves high. Lockable doors, metal or uPVC. Could approach local tradesmen for installation/sponsorship. To ask on facebook a bit nearer the time.
9. **St Faith's play park- Sandra**
Needs to have safety inspection, then repairs, then another inspection. A work in progress.
10. **Hampton St car park access – Sarah**
There have been police visits and they have moved people on. This has improved the situation. It has also been established that the sign is correct, and traffic wardens can issue tickets on the strength of it.
11. **Benches on footpath to Pyewipe**
Request for assistance in asking Council for these. Have identified person need to speak to is Chris Marsh, head of footpaths and bridleways. **ACTION:** JA to refer back to Mrs Hollamby with contact details for Chris.
12. **Open gardens**

Not going to hold this year. Maybe next year.

13. Planning Matters

- Flats Ground, 1 & 2, at 7 The Avenue
Granted, with restriction of one occupant per bedroom.
- 13 Albert Crescent
Refused
- 6, York Ave
Has been visited by council.
- 5, Allison St
Still pending decision
- 13, Allison St
Still pending decision
- 47 West Parade
- Will keep an eye on 260 West Parade – has recently been sold.

14. AOB

• **Council response to freedom of Info request re Council Tax exemptions – Rob**

RL made a Freedom of Information request asking how much income the City Council has not been able to collect due to housing being occupied by students. Also asked how much the contribution by central government has been in compensation.

Answer:

1. Cost of exemption for student- only accommodation in private sector: £2,700,000.
2. Cost of exemption for student Halls of Residence: £2,055,000
3. Cost of student nurse discount: £132,000
Total lost revenue is almost £5m.
4. No central government compensation. This is because business rates now go to the Council rather than to central government.

RL made the following points

- A. Normal council tax payers are subsidising the non-payers.
- B. HMOs incur extra costs to the Council eg extra bins, ASB issues, litter
- C. These properties are not paying business rates and yet are being run as businesses. They are however called investments, not businesses.
- D. There is little political will to change this situation because a significant number of MPs are also landlords.

RL made the following suggestions for action:

1. Write to Cllr Rick Metcalfe, Leader of City of Lincoln Council to ask that no more properties be allowed to be used for students without them paying council tax.
2. Send these figures to Karl McCartney, MP.
3. Send figures to NORA – National Association of Residents Associations, and ask if they are going to co-ordinate a national campaign.

A vote was taken and WERA committee agreed to the above three courses of action. Many thanks to RL for volunteering to do this.

- **Reprint of Residents Info Booklet**

This needs to be started in order to get it ready for September. **ACTION:** JA to liaise with Nigel Manders re using template from previous booklet. Also, to ask uni whether any graphic design students would be available to design this year's. Uni sponsor printing of 2000 booklets.

15. Date of next meeting

Monday May 17, 8pm, by zoom.