

Shepton Mallet (Phase 7) Residents Association

www.SM7RA.com
administration@sm7ra.com
14 Clarks Meadow, Shepton Mallet, BA4 4FD

Annual General Meeting, 26th March 2020

Annual Report

Since its formation on 18th July 2019, the Committee of the Association has met on six occasions. It has conducted the following business:

Membership

Membership stands at 22 households out of a possible 91, so there is still some way to go to increase membership, but for the first nine months, it's a good start. Membership fees stand at £5 per household which goes towards cost of actions.

Chamonix Estate Management

Concern about our Estate Management Company (Shepton Mallet (Phase 7) Management Company Limited, or EMC) together with dissatisfaction both with the initial work done by our Agent, Chamonix, and the level of their fees (currently 59% of the total charge against a national average of 20%) has dominated much of our time.

Residents have not always understood that Chamonix is our Agent, and is working for us, because together we own the EMC. We have a good relationship with the Agent's representative, Carly Newton, but this has not resolved our concerns. In November, seven members of the Company wrote formally to the Company Secretary asking for a copy of the Register of Members, and this communication was ignored – in itself a criminal offence. The EMC is filing dormant accounts, and has devolved most of the running of the company to Chamonix, which in turn has refused to consider holding a meeting to appointing directors from the current residents in contravention of the Company's Articles of Association, citing the current problems with road and space adoption. If they wish, EMC members can require a company meeting but there is currently no structure to organise this. Cllr Garfield Kennedy has agreed to write to the Company Secretary and raise the issue with Mendip Council if there is no progress.

Roads Adoption

The Developer, Bloor Homes, is refusing to bring the roads and roadside furniture (lights, humps, etc) to an acceptable standard for adoption by the Council. This has resulted in damage to cars crossing the 'humps', failure to address parking issues, and other delays including provision of play equipment promised in the Section 106 agreement. The Association believes that both Bloor and the Local Council are jointly responsible, and that this situation has gone on long enough. We are actively seeking to resolve the issue.

Protecting Green Spaces

The Association is represented on the Shepton Mallet Neighbourhood Planning Group by Sally Lever, and is lobbying the Group for the protection of our Green Spaces. The Group has agreed to include our Green Spaces as Protected Spaces in the Neighbourhood Plan if sufficient evidence can be presented. It will be difficult for any developer to gain planning

permission on any green space which gains protected status in the Neighbourhood Plan, so this is a key issue for us. Please see our website, www.sm7ra.com for details.

NASS Festival

The Association has made representations to the NASS festival about better control of festival-goers following the difficulties last year. An improved traffic management plan together with restrictions on leaving the site after entry is designed to help this year, but there are still concerns about the use of shopping trolleys from Tesco, and the failure of Tesco local management to respond to contacts from NASS designed to relieve this problem.

Thanks

Every member of the Committee has given considerable amounts of time to these issues, sometimes under considerable pressure, and it would be invidious to single out anyone in particular, so thanks go to all. Tracy Gane, who led our roads group, has left us during the year, and we wish her well. Sally Lever takes on her work as lead on this group.

Priorities for 2020-21

We have three priorities for the coming year:

1. Establishing proper control over the Estate Management Company that we own and that operates in our name.
2. Gaining support from residents for the protection of green spaces, trees, effective traffic management and other issues in the upcoming consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan.
3. Resolving the stalemate between Bloor Homes, Mendip District Council and Somerset County Council over the adoption of roads and the sub-standard road furniture and finishings.

In order to achieve these aims, we need the support of the local community. We encourage people to join the Association to support what we are trying to achieve.

Richard Thomas

On behalf of the Association Committee