**BRITANNIA SQUARE RESIDENTS’ ASSOCIATION**

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of**

**the Britannia Square Residents’ Association**

held at

**the United Reformed Church, Albany Terrace, Worcester**

at

**7.30 pm on Friday 12 November 2021**

1. **Welcome and opening remarks**

John Ball welcomed everyone, particularly our guests Councillors Lynn Denham and Simon Geraghty and Lisa Smith, Community Engagement Officer, Worcester City Council. John expressed his thanks to the United Reformed Church for the use of their building for our meeting and to our Councillors for their support of our activities.

Before starting the formal agenda, John asked for a moment’s reflection to remember loved ones and neighbours lost in the past two years.

1. **Attendance**
   1. **Apologies were received from:**

Maureen Ball, Susie Bettinson, Richard Cowper, Patrick Eckersley, Jill & Colin Friedlander, Jenny & Michael Goode, Anna & Toby Hooper, Michael Hudson, Sylvie & Simon Humphryes, Jenny Preedy, Vanessa Terry and City Cllr Jabbar Riaz.

* 1. **Those present were:**

**Committee members:** John Ball, Ella Blankstone, Ann Cowper, Robin Dallaway, Carol Inman and Ian Terry.

**Other members**: Tony Bettinson, Claire Dallaway, Virginie Eckersley, Ann & Nick Gilbert, Julia & Robert Holdsworth, Stephen Inman, Angela Lanyon, Sue & Ed Llewellyn, David London, Dan & Kennedy Luton, Nicky Neville-Lee, Andrew & Pat Oddy, Gareth Olden, Stephen Preedy, John & Liz Prosser, Adele & Chris Rimell, Viv Roberts and Gill Yates.

**In attendance:**  City Cllr Lynn Denham, County Cllr Simon Geraghty and Lisa Smith.

1. **Minutes**

The minutes of the last AGM, held on 15 November 2019, were approved. There were no matters arising.

1. **Election of Committee for 2021/22**

The Association’s Committee consists of a maximum of seven elected members and three co-opted members. The following members stood for re-election to the Committee:

John Ball

Carol Inman

Ian Terry

The above members were proposed, seconded and re-elected unopposed.

During the past year, Ella Blankstone had been co-opted to the Committee and Clive Collings, a co-opted member, had resigned as he had moved out of the area.

Ella Blankstone and Ann Cowper have each expressed their willingness to continue to serve as co-opted members. In addition, Robin Dallaway was not seeking re-election but had agreed to continue as a co-opted member to assist with the website.

The Committee is most grateful for their continued support.

Any resident wishing to join the Committee was invited to approach a Committee Member after the meeting and attend as a guest at our next meeting on Tuesday 16 November.

**5. Committee Members’ Reports**

***Copies of the Committee Members’ reports and minutes are published on our website:*** [***www.britanniasquare.org***](http://www.britanniasquare.org)***. Please find the event on the calendar and click through to see the documents or click on Residents’ Area in the header and select Document Library.***

***Additional and significant matters are noted below.***

**5.1. Neighbourhood Watch Report**

Carol Inman briefly explained that the NW scheme had been started over 30 years ago by Michael Hudson and now largely operated using email and WhatsApp messaging. A warning about “Nottingham Knockers” had been circulated a few days ago to alert residents of their presence in the Square. For full details, please see Carol’s report.

**5.2. Highways and Lighting Report**

Carol Inman presented the Highways and Lighting report. As a result of recent works by Western Power, there had been some improvement to lighting on the east side of the Square but there was still one light out between numbers 48 and 49. It was noted that, even if lit, the lamp was covered by a number of overhanging branches. Residents were encouraged to cut back any foliage originating from their properties obscuring lights and also to report faulty lighting to the County Council, via their website.

**5.3. Planning Report**

Carol Inman explained the Committee’s active role in reviewing and commenting on planning applications both within the Conservation Area and in adjacent areas which would affect residents, such as the recent application by The Feathers in The Tything to build a roof terrace. Full details of all planning applications may be viewed on Worcester City Council’s website. Members were reminded to make use of the Council’s website to inspect plans and make comments.

**5.4. Events Report**

Ian Terry thanked all the residents who had taken part in our street cleaning day on 4 July, supported by Worcester City Council.

He also reported that the Summer Party held on 1 August in the grounds of RGS Springfield had been a great success. In particular, he thanked Angela Lanyon for entertaining us with a selection of poems and added that her Covid verses could be found on the BSRA website.

**5.5. Financial Report**

As Treasurer, Ian Terry presented the accounts for 2020/21 which were approved by the meeting. The sole sponsor of the website is now Fisher German.

On gull deterrence, it was noted that £222.35 remained from funds collected from residents in 2020. The City Council’s Environment Committee had applied for additional funding for hawking next Spring, for which a financial contribution of around £500 would be sought from our area. The Committee planned to discuss whether a general appeal would be issued as before or a specific sum, say £10, should be requested from each household willing to donate.

Ian added that he was in the process of moving the Association’s bank account from HSBC to Nat West following HSBC’s decision to introduce charges for community accounts from 1 November 2021.

**5.6. Website Report**

Robin Dallaway commented that the website was maintained to provide a central resource for information about the area, including the House Painting guide, which had been prepared following a question raised at the 2019 AGM.

Robin also reported on the continuing work on the Photographic Project, launched in 2017, to create a visual record of our area. Over 200 images are available on the website, with more still to be added from the Historic England archive. Robin invited any residents who had any suitable photographs that they would be willing to be included within the project to contact him.

Finally, he reminded everyone that all future events are advertised on the home page and past events are documented via the calendar, often accompanied by photographs.

**5.7. Wine Club Report**

John Ball presented the Wine Club’s report and commented that, due to lockdown restrictions, only one event had been held this year. This was the Summer Party held in the URC Hall on 6 August, having been relocated there due to a forecast of high winds which would have been a risk to the garden gazebos normally erected for this event.

Anyone new to the area with an interest in wine was invited to contact John to be added to the invitation list.

1. **Any other business**

On behalf of those living on the south side of the Square, Gill Yates asked the Committee to express gratitude to her neighbour, Andrew Wilkes, who had been instrumental in getting Severn Trent to clear blocked drains in Back Lane South. The works had entailed a lengthy road closure but ultimately had been successful.

Referring to the need to find a replacement parking space for the one lost to create vehicular access to 36A Britannia Square, Andrew Oddy asked whether two spaces could be created if a suitable location could be found, for example outside 37/38 Britannia Square. Cllr Geraghty agreed to take this request back to the Highways team.

Tony Bettinson queried whether funds spent on putting wire cages on chimneys to deter gulls from nesting would be better spent lobbying MPs to change the law which classified gulls as a protected species. Ian Terry reported that he and John Ball attend the Gull Forum on behalf of the Association and referred to research which showed that gulls are not attracted to Worcester primarily to find food but rather as a result of the height of the city’s roofs and chimneys which both provide ideal nesting sites. The Association belongs to NORA, the national umbrella organisation for residents’ associations, which is active in lobbying government ministers but regrettably changing the law on gulls is not high on the government’s agenda. A number of residents had reported a significant improvement in their well-being due to the success of the gull deterrence measures taken in the area so hawking, nest disturbance and chimney wiring would continue in an effort to make our area as unattractive to gulls as possible.

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Following the meeting, a “BSRA Question Time” was held to enable residents to put questions on local issues to local councillors. The Panel comprised Cllr Lynn Denham, City Councillor, Cathedral Ward and Cllr Simon Geraghty, County Councillor, Riverside Division.

Areas covered included the Britannia Square Residents’ Parking Scheme (Zone B), footpaths in Albany Terrace, environmental measures taken by the City & County Councils, pollution monitoring around schools, the City Council’s planning department, The Feathers’ planning application, contravention of the one way section in the Square, overgrown shrubs alongside the river, dredging of the River Severn, the long-term future of the Swan Theatre site and Worcestershire Parkway railway station.