

MEETING OF THE MILTON ROAD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION HELD ON TUESDAY, 29
NOVEMBER 2016
AT 7.00 P.M.

Present: Current MRRA committee members (9): Charles Nisbet (Chairman), Barbara Taylor (Secretary), Andrea Elliott Smith (Treasurer), Maureen Mace, Marcus Smith, Ann Hamill, Steve Brown, Yu Lee Paul, Dorcas Fowler

Other members of the Milton Road Residents' Association:

Other local residents:

1. Welcome and thanks

Charles Nisbet (CN) thanked Clare Hughes, Nick Torrens and Peter Fenton for organising the refreshments, Barbara Taylor (BT) for manning the reception desk and Father Pat for the provision of a venue. He welcomed all those attending.

2. Background

CN gave a detailed account of the formation of the Milton Road Residents' Association, the meetings and interaction with the Greater Cambridge City Deal (GCCD), councillors and officers. All this had been necessitated by the GCCD's proposals for re-structuring Milton Road given the current congestion within Cambridge and the anticipated growth in traffic.

Their plans "Do Something" and "Do Maximum" were contained in a questionnaire circulated as part of their consultation process with a deadline of 15 February 2016. The Milton Road Residents' Association had in effect been set up at a well attended general meeting on 17 December 2015. (CN had asked those present whether a residents' association should be set up and the response was "Yes".) Following that meeting a group of volunteers had formed a committee. (At this point CN introduced the committee members.) A first committee meeting was held on 12 January and this was followed by a general meeting on 21 January, which again attracted a large audience. Input was given by various interested parties, not least Smarter Cambridge Transport and FECRA (the Federation of Cambridge Residents' Associations), which MRRA then joined. MRRA took note of the six objectives set out by GCCD (this had bus priority at the top and improvement to the environment and public realm as the sixth) and drafted its response, publishing that on the newly set up website.

On 28 April MRRA organised a Hustings meeting so that the views of those standing as local councillors in the May elections could be established. A petition ("Save the Trees") had been organised (hard copies and online) and was presented to the GCCity Deal board on 9 June.

Following representations, the GCCD determined that the "Do Something" option should go forward with modifications (i.e. the banned right turns were removed, but the plan to close off Union Lane to traffic and to close access to Highworth Avenue, replacing the current roundabout with traffic lights, were retained.)

The "Save our Trees" petition gained momentum, with yellow ribbons and posters, and then banners being pinned up. CN was interviewed on local

radio and over 3,000 signatures were obtained. This meant that a debate could be triggered at the Cambridgeshire County Council. CN presented the petition and received an extraordinary degree of support from councillors, amongst whom Jocelyne Scutt (Labour councillor for West Chesterton) was prominent. As a result, a resolution was passed to the GCCD to take note.

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The next step taken was the setting up of Local Liaison Fora for Milton Road and Histon Road to tap into the knowledge of local residents and to look in detail at the proposals. Hurst Park Estate Residents' Association (HPERA) and MRRA joined forces and at each meeting of the MRRA Local Liaison Forum workshops, which were set up to consider detail, a resolution was read out that compliance with the meetings did not mean support for what was being proposed and that saving trees and verges was a priority. Note: the workshops included all the local councillors, plus representatives from each of the RAs affected.

On 14 September the Chair of the GCCD (Councillor Lewis Herbert) wrote a letter saying that final plans should have an avenue of mature trees with verges and that there was no need to provide double bus lanes on any stretch of the road (i.e. a commitment to a maximum of three traffic lanes at any point). (Note: the Chairman pointed out that throughout the year local residents had raised issues by asking "public questions" at the North Area Committee, the GCCD Joint Assembly Board and the GCCD Executive Board.)

The GCCD then set up public consultation (including a questionnaire) about tackling peak time congestion in Cambridge. Peak-time control points had been proposed and met with outcry, including a protest march, and it appeared that the plan was being re-considered.

Eight meetings of the MRRA LLF workshops had been held to date under the chairmanship of Cllr Jocelyne Scutt and detailed consideration of each stretch of Milton Road undertaken. It had become clear that a unified front would carry more weight and, in consequence, the Milton Road Alliance was formed, comprising MRRA, HPERA, and the Cambridge Cycling Campaign. At this point, helpful advice from Matt Danish was given and he produced diagrams as an alternative to the GCCD plan for Milton Road which it was hoped would better represent the views of residents whilst meeting the GCCD objectives in respect, for instance, of greater safety for cyclists and pedestrians by providing separation from vehicles. The diagrams were shown on screen and CN pointed out the main features e.g. a continental (Dutch) style roundabout at the Highworth Avenue/Milton Road/ Elizabeth Way junction, a suggested re-alignment of the Union Lane /Arbury Road junction which would still allow for an all green light phase for pedestrians and bicycles including diagonal crossing, and bi-directional cycle lanes in two stretches of Milton Road. MD's original designs had shown no bus lanes, but, since there was a real fear that the

whole alternative scheme would be thrown out if there was no demonstrable evidence of priority for buses (one of the CD's six objectives), he had produced amendments. These would be for a central bus lane in a strip approaching the Arbury Road junction which would operate at peak times only. Also there would be short bus lanes on approach to some other junctions as necessary. In general residents wanted Union Lane to remain open to traffic, but a compromise position was for a phase of the traffic lights being skipped during peak times.

Bus stops would be re-sited to improve traffic flow (e.g. near Arbury Road), and the principle was for these to be put between the trees. Zebra and toucan crossings would be put at convenient points. It was agreed that there should be no illuminated advertisements on bus shelters or flashing beacons which would disturb residents.

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With regard to the northern end of Milton Road, a suggestion had been made that a continental (Dutch style) roundabout should be substituted for the traffic lights at the Kings Hedges Road junction. Reference was made to traffic congestion generated by the Science Park. The provision of a slip road had been proposed but the officers had rejected that as being impractical due to its closeness to a major junction. It was clear that better traffic management was required.

Other problems were identified, including those related to parking. It was evident that the shops such as those near the Arbury Road junction needed parking bays and that vehicular access to houses on the Elizabeth Way roundabout should be included in any re-design. The width of the proposed cycle way on the south side of Milton Road would preclude parking on that stretch and would affect residents who relied on it. (This point was made later in the meeting by the resident of 40 Milton Road.) Although the CD had agreed to the principle of an avenue of trees, the current cherry trees could not be saved, given the reconstruction work required. It was noted that some of the existing trees were in any case nearing the end of their life span. However, it was important that residents were fully consulted about the new trees to be planted, that written assurances were given about precisely which ones would be chosen, and that the funding required was ring-fenced and openly declared. (The meeting was informed that promises given in connection with the Hills Road re-development had not been kept.) Photographs of the trees/mock ups of how the road would look would be helpful. It was noted that those signing the petition had implicitly voted for flowering trees. The City Council had a tree officer, and the CD had engaged an independent architect specialising in urban design. Boundaries for properties should be established and a detailed timetable of the works produced.

3. Parking issues

There should be a disincentive for commuters to park in side roads. Residents' parking schemes could address the problem, but there should not be a charge for this. More commuter parking would no doubt be generated once the North Cambridge station was open (due in the spring of 2017). During the discussion various points were made, e.g. the distinction between parking and waiting, the need to provide for deliveries, trades people, care workers etc. Currently temporary parking for these purposes sometimes took place on the verges (not all Milton Road residents had drives) and the grass could recover. Special mesh laid under the grass could also be used to mitigate the effect. There would be difficulties if there was no space allowed for such people to park, and there was concern that the diagrams showed the loss of current parking on the pavement (see 2 above).

A vote was taken and 21 people voted in favour of maintaining pavement parking as it was between Gilbert Road and Mitchams' Corner. It was noted that if there were to be a cycle way on the south side of the road as proposed between Gilbert Road and the Elizabeth Way roundabout in addition to that on the north side this would preclude parking.

It was agreed that the whole issue of parking along the road needed to be re-examined. Those with specific views were asked to contact the MRRRA Secretary, Barbara Taylor.

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4. Yellow ribbons on trees

The yellow ribbons on trees had been removed – it was not known by whom. It was agreed that they had aided publicity. Since it was now apparent that specific trees could not be saved, it was suggested that it might be best to put up appropriately worded posters as and when the yellow ribbons were re-instated.

5. Future meetings

The officers and consultants would have the opportunity to consider the draft resolutions being put forward by the LLF. At the public meeting of the City Deal at 6.30 p.m. on 8 December at Shire Hall they would be formally presented. The lay-out proposed as a result of the deliberations of the LLF workshops (called "Do Optimum") would be considered at that meeting and a request that it go forward "in preference or in parallel" to the amended "Do Something" which was on the table.

At 8.50 p.m. the general meeting was closed and the AGM began (only members were entitled to vote and these were identified by the green cards given out on arrival).

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Milton Road Residents' Association held on Tuesday, 29 November 2016

Present: Charles Nisbet (Chairman), Barbara Taylor (Secretary), Andrea Elliott Smith (Treasurer), and committee members: Maureen Mace, Yu Lee Paul, Steve Brown, Anne Hamill, Marcus Smith, Dorcas Fowler; plus 15 other members of the MRRRA, a total of 24 members.

The chairman checked that the meeting was quorate i.e. at least 10 members from 10 different households in Milton Road.

1. Apologies for absence

None had been received.

2. MRRRA Constitution

A vote was taken and the constitution was approved (24 voting in favour)

3. Chairman's report

All those present had heard the Chairman's report which had been given at the general meeting which preceded the AGM.

4. Secretary's report

The Secretary reported that there were 70 signed up members of the Milton Road Residents' Association. Members were asked to encourage neighbours to sign up. It was noted that the mailing list which, unlike the membership list, included non-Milton Road residents was currently 250. The Chairman of FECRA suggested that non-residents who

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were on the mailing list should be named "associate members". This would be considered at the next AGM.

5. Treasurer's report

Figures displayed on the screen showed income and expenditure. Of the £615 donations, £559 had been spent, mainly on printing, postage and stationery. Each mailing cost around £30, and banners around £20 each. Donations were welcome.

It was agreed that at an appropriate time a general meeting could be held to update local residents and that a request for donations could be made then. It would be helpful if it were possible to display photographs/mock ups illustrating what was existing and what was proposed for Milton Road at such a meeting.

6. Election of committee members

The current committee members had indicated their willingness to stand again. 15 having voted in favour, they were duly re-elected. It was noted that under the constitution other members could be co-opted, a welcome provision.

7. Method of consultation

The Chairman referred to the problem of consultation, asking members how far they wished to be involved directly and how far they were prepared for the committee to represent their views or indeed the Chairman of the MRRRA on his own given the nature of the meetings

organised by the local authority to which he and other representatives of MRRA were invited. For example, at the Milton Road LLF workshops there had been separate tables including a wide range of interests from different bodies, and the composite view of each table had been presented. He had used the initial MRRA response to the City Deal in February 2016 as a background guide, but clearly the process had moved on.

Reference was made to the information on the MRRA website which was constantly updated. Items expressing individual opinions appeared on Facebook and Twitter. Local residents without email access were periodically leafleted notifying them of meetings and key issues.

It was a thorny issue and the committee was urged to do the best it could. To improve transparency, it was agreed that in future all minutes/records of MRRA committee meetings would be circulated to members via email. The chairman determined the agenda, but any member wishing to raise an item at a meeting was welcome to do so. He/she would be invited to speak to it. (Note: items for the agenda should be submitted to the Secretary.)

The Chairman thanked the committee and the members for their attendance and the meeting was closed at 9.15 p.m.