

# VICTORIA ROAD GROUP

## Notes of the meeting held on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2019 8.00pm at Mick and Philippa's, no.102a

**Present:** Sally (Chair), Jonathan (notes), Mick and Philippa O'Connor, Paul and Mary Lewis

### 1 Apologies

Barbara Harriss-White, Pen Keyte, Mireille Fouquet, Mike Haffey, Jessica Osborne, Anna and Gordon Buchanan

### 2 Finance

There had been good takings from Green Balloon Day, with a net profit of just over **£150**. The current balance (bank and cash) is **£518.74**. Anticipated significant expenditure in the remainder of 2019 is around £80 for annual insurance and £100 for Christmas drinks. The finances are healthy and no specific fundraising is required in the immediate future.

### 3 Green Balloon Day review

It was good to see some former residents who had been invited (Alan and Sandy Goodworth, Nick Lee and Sue Austin, Dick Wolff).

Detailed event planning/scheduling had worked well (Sally, Philippa). The considerable efforts by Ali to arrange the road closure, and to keep neighbours informed and in agreement, were noted with thanks.

#### 3.1 *Review of specific activities:*

- **Piper:** OK, nice start to the day
- **Pavement art:** no strong feelings, definitely OK
- **Bottle gardens:** not many people involved, but it seemed to be appreciated
- **Music in the evening:** the weather had become colder, so hardly anyone was around when Mick O'Connor and Dick Wolff did some playing
- **Children's story:** there were only about 3 children. Perhaps too much else happening at the same time? Mick noted that there was no enclosed or focused space for it. Maybe side hangings on a gazebo could provide the right ambience?
- **Drumming:** very good, much appreciated and enjoyed
- **Slow bike race:** Philippa had to drum up business – probably would not repeat this.
- **Leaky bucket race:** great fun, much enjoyed
- **Pet show:** Derek did a great job but there were very few participants.
- **BBQ:** done well (thanks to Bill and Chris!) but needs more clarity on what people should bring/provide and how it all works. Bill and Chris had provided some spare food and it was all used (people made donations for this).
- **Plant stall:** there was lots of material despite some gloomy predictions, and it had yielded useful cash donations for plants.
- **Table tennis:** was used a little, appreciated by older (teen) youngsters
- **Eva's "25" cupcakes:** a brilliant idea, much appreciated – thanks!
- **Recycling/swap:** There was a great deal left over at the end. Perhaps this aspect has outlived its usefulness, as there so many other mechanisms available now (Freegle website, Council recycling, mailing lists etc). It's time-consuming and inappropriate for us to take responsibility for disposing of the large amount of left-over material.

#### 3.2 *Suggestions for future Green Balloon Days*

If everything (bar, BBQ etc) were to coalesce into a smaller area at the end, it might feel more active and neighbourly – there was a sense that it was too diffuse.

We must be mindful of steering clear of the big Seven Roads weekend event. There seems to be some confusion, especially among Victoria Road residents, between the two events.

There was general agreement that alternate years should have a smaller GBD event, to limit organizational effort and to make the big events more “special”. For any future road closure, consider closing part of the western (Banbury Road) end of the street instead, as residents at that end might have felt isolated from this year’s event.

This led to a discussion of our publicity. Some felt that VRG material is too much like the huge volume of commercial advertising flyers that we all receive, and we need something more immediately identifiable and characteristic. As a start we should consistently use the vivid green paper colour, and consider putting notices on lamp-posts (with obvious concerns about individuals’ security and publicising events that might take a lot of residents out of their homes).

#### 4 Garden Party

This will take place on 8<sup>th</sup> September at No.36 (Barbara Harriss-White). An invitation printed on card should go out at the end of July; Mary agreed to distribute it with her boys. Noted that 8<sup>th</sup> Sept is Anna’s birthday!

Mary agreed to arrange tea rota. Mick will set up DIY name labels near the entrance. Mary will ask Janet about cups; otherwise, Bromleys and Lewises have plenty that could be used.

We need helpers: Oliver (no.40) to be asked, along with the usual team of volunteers – we will ask Chris, Felipe, Sam, Bill as well as those present.

Set up from 1pm subject to agreement from Barbara – Jonathan to try to contact her on 22<sup>nd</sup>.

#### 5 Other future events

- Christmas drinks 15<sup>th</sup> December: singing 5.15, drinks from 6pm. Details to be arranged at next meeting.
- Media Madness, Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> Feb 2020

#### 6 AOB

- **Bonfires:** There had been an issue with smoky bonfires. Sally had checked and it seems that no offence had been committed, so we chose to put this to one side and review as needed.
- **Notice boards:** were OK at the moment, but we should be careful to avoid commercial promotions (a Good Energy promotional notice has sprung up inappropriately on one board). We should, however, consider advertising for very local enterprises (e.g. Philippa’s “Good Fill”, see below) provided there is a Victoria Road resident actively involved.
- **EasyHotel:** It seems that Hamilton and Portland Roads may canvass residents about asking the Council to change the parking restrictions (CPZ). Those present felt that this should probably be postponed at least until the hotel is in operation, as it’s inappropriate to lobby the Council to make changes that might be unnecessary.

#### 7 Date of next meeting

Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2019, 11.00am at Paul and Mary’s (46)

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#### Appendix: The Good Fill

Outside the meeting, Philippa told us of her social enterprise “The Good Fill” with its tag line “old containers, new habits”. Its first day of operation will be 10<sup>th</sup> August from 10am to 1pm in St Michael’s Threshold building. It will sell dry food and household materials with the aim of avoiding single-use plastic packaging. We wished Philippa good fortune with her enterprise.