

VICTORIA ROAD GROUP

Notes of the meeting held on Saturday 15th March 2020 at 11 am at Sam and Ali's (no. 56).

Present: Jonathan, Sally, Paul, Mary, Philippa, Mick, Barbara, Sam, Ali, Chris, Lindsay, Anna

Apologies: Laura, Mike, Mireille, Jean, Pen, Jessica, Alfred, Bill.

1. Matters arising: It has been confirmed that the Garden Party will take place on September 6th and be hosted by the Leighfields.
2. Finances: the current state of the treasury is unchanged since January at £341.26.
3. Review of recent event – Media Madness: deemed a success, people from an estimated 20 houses attended (~30 people in total). There was plenty of help with moving unwanted items to the charity shop. It was decided that in future years, it should be made clear that this is not a clearance sale. One option would be to restrict the number of books that each person could bring. Sally and Jonathan were thanked for hosting the event.
4. **COVID-19 considerations:** it was agreed that it was particularly desirable to keep outdoor events going over the next period
5. Front Garden Competition: This is confirmed and will take place in the week beginning 8th June. All gardens with addresses in Victoria Road and Victoria Gate are eligible to enter. Mary and Sally are the organisers and will judge the gardens. It will be advertised by sending around a small flyer with a tear-off response slip by the end of this month. People will have to formally enter the competition and will be invited to provide a short description of the thinking behind their front-garden – particularly welcome would be any innovations or tips to increase the sustainability of their gardens. They should also indicate which category (or categories) they are entering and whether or not they give their permission to include a photograph of their garden for use by the VRG. For the judging, there will be four categories:
 - i) Container/window-box
 - ii) Wildlife-friendly
 - iii) Borders
 - iv) Multi-purpose. E.g. integrated bins/bicycle sheds/car-port

There will also be an overall winner. There will be a prize for each category and the for the overall winner, in the form of a voucher that can be spent at a garden centre. Prizes will be announced on Sunday 14th June at a small tea-party to be held in the garden at no. 56.

Action: Sally & Mary & Sam to produce flyer.

6. Green Balloon Day: The date is confirmed as Saturday 16th May, 2020. It was reaffirmed that GBD would be 'light-touch' every second year and this is one of those years. It will take place between 3 pm and 6 pm, but we may have a bar and BBQ from 6pm. A request will be made to the council to shut the road from the bend to the entrance to King's Cross Road. The residents in that part of the road will be consulted first. The plan is to close the road all day, but explain to residents that they can come and go until ~2 pm.
- i) The organising committee will consist of: **Sam, Jonathan, Lindsay, Mick**. They will meet (or communicate) to organise the flyer and check that things are generally happening.
 - ii) The flyer will be sent out to residents by ~23rd April. It should include clear information about BBQ, including what to bring etc.
 - iii) Chris will organise the BBQ equipment. He/ (Ali?) will also organise wine for the bar using a friend he knows who runs a wine-shop. They can also provide glasses to be used for the day.
 - iv) The events will be: tea/coffee and cakes; leaky buckets; slow bicycle race; table tennis (Mick), treasure hunt (Chris); chalk painting on pavements. Jonathan offered to organise the tea stall. Also bar and BBQ.
 - v) People are encouraged to place items on pavement for collection by other residents, but they must take these items back by 6 pm if no-one has collected them by then.

COVID-19 considerations: this event is a social gathering, so it might be subject to restrictions and all we can do is keep an eye on the official advice and adapt accordingly. As it is an open air event we will hope to be able to keep it.

Action: Sam, Jonathan, Mick and Lindsay – need to organise the flyer by April 23rd.
Ali – to organise the road closure. Chris / (Ali?) bar and BBQ

7. COVID-19 community support: there was a lively discussion about possible support that we can offer to residents. Inevitably, there was also some disagreement – unsurprising given current levels of uncertainty. However, we agreed to begin by asking all residents on the road if they would like to be part of a community support group. Its main function is to provide moral and practical support to anyone living on the road who finds themselves having or choosing to self-isolate.

We also agreed that we should not give advice to residents, but urge them to keep themselves updated by checking the websites of:

- i) [Public Health England](#).
- ii) [FCO](#) if considering travel.
- iii) [Oxford University website](#), which contains updated links and includes an FAQs section.

There was some discussion about how best to organise community support, given that many residents of the road fall into vulnerable categories but often do not have smartphones or use email regularly. We decided that the best solution is to organise a flyer ASAP, to be delivered to all residents in the road, asking them to tear off and

return a slip indicating whether they want to join the support group. Confidentiality should be maintained at all times. People can indicate that they are self-isolating, but do not need to state why. People should indicate whether or not they are happy to share their contact details (email address and/or mobile number) with other members of the group. If not, they can still ask for help by contacting one of three co-ordinators: Jonathan, Philippa and Mary, whose contact details will be provided on the leaflet. Jonathan will organise a what's app group. This will be one way that people can ask for and provide support. It is not necessary to use what's app to receive help, but it is a useful platform for those who do use it to communicate easily. The form of support envisioned is: i) phoning the person daily to check that they are OK, and to offer moral support; ii) providing a shopping and delivery service for urgent items (LAT note – obviously best if possible to organise a delivery via a delivery service for general stuff – but could we offer to help elderly people do this if they don't know how?).

Action: Chris and Ali to design and deliver leaflet

8. Tallest sunflower competition: Sally has had the brilliant idea to organise a 'grow the tallest sunflower' competition for children in the road. She will provide three seeds to anyone who wants to participate, so they are all the same type and it will be down to nurture, not nature. It will be advertised via the Front Gardens Competition flyer.

Action: Sally

9. AOB: none

10. Date of next meeting: Will be on Saturday 2nd May at 11 am at Jonathan and Sally's (no. 59). All welcome