

Draft Minutes of the Romsey Action AGM 2014

Held in the Jordan Room, Romsey Mill on Wednesday 29th October

Contact: info@romseyaction.org or 4 David Street.

Attendance and Apologies

The meeting was well attended including three of our local councillors, Kilian Bourke, Catherine Smart and Dave Baigent. Apologies for absence were received from Bernard Shaw.

Previous minutes

The abbreviated minutes from the 2013 AGM were accepted.

Chair's report

Although activity has been low this year there are a number of successes:

- The mailing list is now up to nearly 200 people.
- The surprise books have been selling well; more books are needed, in particular children's books.
- Many local issues have been shared through the mailing list

Romsey Action needs a new chair as well as more committee members, in particular a recruitment officer. If you are interested please let us know.

Treasurer's report

Current funds are £360 in the bank and £40 in cash

Most expenditure has been on printing leaflets and cards that were sold last Winter Fair (nearly all of which have now been sold).

Income is from membership, donations and surprise books.

Webmaster's report

The Website registered an average of 120 unique visitors per month in the first half of the year, rising to 200 per month since July.

Twitter report

There are now nearly 500 followers on twitter.

Planning report

There are three areas of concern currently that are being monitored by Romsey Action and EMRAG.

- The Labour Club
- The old Coop Site
- Romsey Terrace

Labour Club: This is expected to have a community area on the ground floor with accommodation for students or young professionals on the first floor. In contrast to McClaren (see below) the developer has been communicative and helpful in meeting the community to discuss the best use of the site.

Coop Site: McClaren Homes are intending to build 301 rooms in a gated development on this site aimed at students. There was much discussion about this in the meeting arising the following points.

- This is not in line with the current Local Plan as the entire space is designed for students
- There will be no car parking or significant open space in the development
- The development is not associated with Anglia Ruskin University in anyway
- McClaren are very dismissive of concerns or comments from residents and councillors.
- McClaren have claimed that the plans have been well received by the residents although this is not believed to be the case.
- Meetings have been announced with little notice or advertising

See resolutions for an official Romsey Action statement on the development.

Romsey Terrace: Robinson College half a dozen houses in Romsey Terrace and wanted to build 10 houses in the gardens and car park. A concerted campaign was waged.

- The council recommended the plans be changed, however the changes were not a real improvement
- A letter writing campaign to the Cambridge News led to the story being featured with a picture of the campaigners
- A Development Control Form was granted by the council
- All the Robinson fellows were emailed

The end result was that the developers withdrew the planning application. However it is likely that it will be back in a different form at some point.

The message here is persistence can pay off and also to draw on on the experience of those in the community – Colin Wiles (of Romsey Action and EMRAG) and the local councilors gave a lot of assistance.

Some important points were made in general for people wanting to comment on planning proposals.

- Sending in a comment gives you the right to speak at planning meetings if you should wish to
- Always include the sentence following sentence with your comments *"I reserve the right to make further comments on this application in the future."*

It was suggested that Romsey Action supply points on which to comment for these and future developments. *Post meeting: comments on the Coop Site sent to the mailing list.*

Suggestions for the next year

- Support the Chisholm Trail
- Campaign for more primary school places in Romsey
County policy is that there is enough capacity in Cambridge as a whole, however that requires parents to drive their children to school.
Could the Ridgeons site be turned into a primary school
- Support the Cambridge Lakes proposal
It is believed that the overwhelming majority of residents are in favour of the plans

Other reports

Mill Road Bridges: Mill Road Bridges runs the mill-road.com website and the sends out a regular newsletter to all homes near Mill Road. It was also responsible for incubating the Mill Road History Project. It is always in need of articles for the newsletter and also more committee members. Email info@mill-road.com if you can help out.

Mill Road History Project: The project has been running officially for 1 year now, although 2 years were spent planning it before then, and is coming along well. A recent talk at Ross Street Community Centre on a stormy night was packed out with more than 30 people turned away. Next event is at Ross Street again on Wednesday 12th November.

Mill Road Society: Current focus is on fighting the new Mickey Flynn change of use application. There was a difference of opinion as to whether the new application for mixed use would allow conversion to purely retail in the future.
Post meeting: the central planning committee have approved the new application.

Deaf Centre: The deaf centre in Romsey Terrace has had a major refit and is expected stay open for the foreseeable future. There will be an open day sometime soon which will be publicised on the mailing list.

Royal Standard: Construction has started.

Mosque: It is believed that the money for the project is still being raised.

Romsey Town Square: Plans for the town square idea outside the Coop, and also for changes to the bottom of Cavendish Road are underway and should be open for comment soon.

Mill Road Resurfacing

The pinch point at Cutlacks is to be partially alleviated by recentering the road crown. Also the removal of the centre lines – which is being done to reduce traffic speed – will help with this particular issue. Red surfacing is still to be added in the cycle Advance Stop Boxes and on the 20mph roundels.

The 20mph zone now extends to Brookfields however the police have not been treating it as a priority as they have said the signage is not good enough. Dave Baigent is trying to improve this situation.

If you notice any problems with the resurfacing work then send photos to Cllr Kilian Bourke at kilian.bourke@gmail.com.

Mill Road Winter Fair 2014

A stall has been requested in Hope Street Yard to be shared with Romsey Garden Club and Mill Road Bridges as last year. *Post meeting: this has been confirmed, however we need to supply our own table and gazebo – if you can help please let us know.*

Talk from Ceri Littlechild, Mill Road Coordinator

Ceri gave an interesting summary of the work that she has been doing as Mill Road Coordinator, a post that is now 2 years through a 3 year contract.

Some of the successes were as follows.

- A Traders Association has been set up with 180 members of which around 80 are active. Website at <http://millroadtraders.org>
- The council attends the traders association meetings so there is communication
- A competition to find the best shop front was run last year, the next is a customer service award.
- Mill Road Feast events now run every 3 months, alternating Romsey and Petersfield.
- There is a Mill Road sign next to Pizza Hut by Parkers Piece, there is planning permission for a larger sign by Kelsey Kerridge, but it needs funding.
- Good links with the various local groups, support where necessary, e.g. the Mill Road Mural.
- Increased the CCTV on Mill Road and campaigned against anti-social behaviour.
- Growing number of festive light trees – new at Ditchburn Place this year.

The challenges:

- Lack of budget means the traders have to be asked to fund initiatives
- Snowflake lights will not be shown this year due to lack of money
- Money still needed to repair the tree lights outside Mickey Flynn's
- Trying to find a way to fund a coordinator/traders association after the contract is up

Resolutions

Romsey Action will donate £50 to the Mill Road Festive Lights fund.

Romsey Action will issue the following statement by on the Coop Site development.

"Romsey Action strongly opposes the McLaren Homes plan for development of the old CoOp site at 315-349 Mill Road as it is not in line with the current or emerging Local Plans and there is no support from local residents. We believe that Mill Road needs a mixture of housing types including social and affordable dwellings with parking and public open areas that add to

the community rather than a gated development of solely student accommodation that is cut off from it."

The members of Romsey Action expressed their thanks and appreciation for the hard work of the current chair Eryl Griffiths.