

# Downshire Hill Residents' Association

## Minutes of Committee Meeting, Sunday 7 February 2016 at 7pm

Present: Stephen Ainger (Chairman), Cristabel Dennis, Peter Freedman, Patricia Morison, Redding Thompson, Nicki Sinclair, Nigel Stewart, Peter Tausig

Apologies: Bob Buhr, Mark Dennis, Redding Thompson, Andrew Neale

1. **Minutes** of previous meeting were circulated.

### 2. **Issues relating to the Police Station/Abacus free school redevelopment**

It is not known when the school intends to apply for planning. There will be 30 days to prepare our response once the application is lodged. Therefore DHRA needs to have its response ready as soon as possible.

**Traffic.** Andrew had contacted traffic consultants. They propose a five-junction survey. Approximate cost might be around £8,000. Their view is that objections to the school on the grounds of traffic volume and nuisance would not in itself be sufficient to cause the scheme to be turned down.

The traffic consultants advised that DHRA would need to take a different or additional approach, and demonstrate that a school designed for 420 pupils would constitute significant overdevelopment of the site. For example, the rooftop playground which the school architects had mooted.

The traffic consultants advised that DHRA should obtain transport plans from as many local schools as possible, for information e.g. on the percentage of children going by car.

Nigel Stewart will consult two people with expertise on issues relating to local schools. E.g., are free schools treated differently by the planners?

**Single or double-form entry.** Andrew has offered to sketch a scheme suitable for the single-form entry of 210 pupils, which might be more acceptable to DHRA residents than 420. The committee accepted with thanks. It was noted that it is highly unlikely the school would be viable with single-form entry.

**Over-intensification of schools in the area** would be another valid argument against granting planning consent. The Heath & Hampstead Society has objected to the consultation.

Loss of amenity is also a ground for objection, e.g. noise from a rooftop playground.

The committee was alarmed by the high cost of the traffic survey. However, they felt that on balance, a survey was necessary, perhaps of reduced scale. Without up-to-date and authoritative data, DHRA would be at a disadvantage if the school puts forward erroneous data about the likely traffic impact.

**Extraordinary meeting of DHRA.** Residents will be invited to contribute to the traffic consultation. Patricia to ask Stephen Bobasch if we can hire Keats Library for an extraordinary meeting in February.

Keats Grove and Thurlow Road residents to be invited to the meeting. Both roads will be seriously affected by school traffic.

Stephen to invite Councillor Tom Curry to the next DHRA meeting, to express residents' concerns.

### **3. Rubbish**

The committee thanked Andrew for his continuing efforts to track the rubbish left at the top of the street which now had been attracting Rats.

### **4. Freemasons Arms**

Nicki reported noise on several nights and a discourteous response when she complained. Nicki to talk to Mark Dennis, as he keeps pub-watch.

The meeting ended at 8pm

**Next meeting will be 6<sup>th</sup> March**