

Bera AGM 25th March

Meeting opened at 8pm.

1. Welcome and apologies for absences

Ron welcomed everyone to 25th Year of BERA.

Welcome the committee - Avis is not able to attend

Emma gives apologies

2. Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes proposed George Pitcher. Seconded Joyce Weaver

3. Matters arising NONE

4. Police Report

Ron summarised the report and read out the stats. There are some highs and lows. There is crime in our area although Thorpe Bay is one of the safest areas in Southend to live. BERA has a good relationship with the police and will continue to support the good work they are doing. There has been a 21.4% increase in car crime with the biggest single increase in crime being theft from unlocked cars. Members were advised to always lock their cars and leave nothing of value on show.

There has also been a large increase in serious sexual crime. BERA has personal alarms, panic alarms and Select DNA kits available, where each valuable item can be marked and associated with your address. SAVS will also come round and look at your house.

5. Tram Stop Project

Bob Craven apologies. Mike Stafford takes over and advises that Bob is still working from home, chasing up people. After a lot of work, the Tram stop is now registered as a charity, with 4 trustees, so VAT can be claimed back and when funding is applied for, this is a benefit. There is also the opportunity to claim gift aid. The council have now agreed a 20 year lease which is important for funding and the Tram stop website will be up and running in 2 weeks time. www.tramstopshelter.co.uk with information available for anyone who wants to donate time or money. BERA members can help by volunteering to "man" the tram stop. The concern is that it will be abused if it is just left open. Ron asks if the council has given any financial help to this project. MS answers NO! The survey has been completed and the condition of the toilets is fairly bad as they have suffered from years of neglect. The Tram Stop have committed to doing work on them as well, probably making them unisex (the same as Jubilee Beach have) and steel work will have to go down through the toilets. The top part is going to have to be demolished as the top steels are rotten and some storage areas will also be added. This is very achievable by the builders. The toilets have to be open in the summer. Work starting next winter.

The council has been asked if it is possible to put in a slipway for disabled people. The plans were drawn up by the council architect but they have refused the ramp down the slipway as there is already enough access for disabled people. TS will pursue this further with the council.

Ron notes that the Toilets award for Southend was won on the basis of a few carefully selected toilets and certainly not the ones at the tram stop.

6. Sea Wall Update

Peter Lovett.

We have now collected 524 letters of objection. Please sign the attached letter if you are also against the current proposed plan.

BERA's contribution regarding alternatives. We consulted many people and made the presentation to the council on that basis. The Council lost it and then rushed the decision through, increasing the cost of BERAs method (it would be 4.5 - 5million) which is cheaper than the council's option. BERA will keep fighting and will write to the Secretary of State to look into the matter.

Peter (Friends of Shoebury Common) has been fighting this for over 18 months now with Ray and Peter Grubb.

Previously it was recommended that Shoebury Common should be sorted out in 2025.

The council has already removed lots of sand from the beach.

Fees paid to Black & Veatch went from £80K to 400K.

7. Membership Secretary's report (verbal report) Ian Murdoch

There are nearly 1,000 members from households representing well over 1000 people. 600 of these members have email but sending information is not always successful so we may have to go back to hard copy. In May we will send out a letter to the members who have not renewed. Funds raised go to planting trees, shrub borders and putting up Christmas lights.

Q : Lissett - thinks that the letter goes out too early.

Ron responds - BERA will send out renewals at the end of the January so that people don't forget, which will keep down the cost of the printing, envelopes and reminders. Alternatively people can download the membership form from the internet.

8. Chair's report Ron Woodley

(verbal report)

Planning - Various applications have come through during the year and BERA wins about 90% of the objections that they take on. Others redraw plans based on the objections.

Mike and Ron get a list of applications and they check every one to ensure that it is in the integrity of the estate.

Thorpe Hall Ave and Acacia Drive - Development will be 9 Georgian style houses with 5 flats above. Covenant issues do not apply. With the block of flats opposite it is pretty limited in the possible objections. The developer has been responsive. A big thanks to the planning adviser.

Christmas Lights

One of the lamp columns had a fault and EDF had to repair.

Now the plan is to check the wires down each side of the street and there is a plan to light up both sides of the street.

Localism - currently winning everything without having to use this power. The street scene is relatively litter free, spraying for weeds, cutting shrubs. The council has listened and acted. All the paving and road will be brought up to standard over the next 5 years. This is throughout the whole borough. Please ensure builders protect the paving stones when deliveries happen.

Litter still annoying. Please could everyone make an effort to collect. If litter is there then people are more likely to litter. Streets off the seafront to be cleaned daily as well as other high risk areas.

Website. Newsletters will be put on there. Anti social driving on verges will attract fines from the council. Just put an application in to drop down your kerb.

Shoebury Committee Looking for a chairman of the Shoebury committee to help more focussed presence there.

New station car parking. Scruffy looking shrubs have now been cleared. Action taken within 10 days of making comments.

Q: Brian

Questions if huge house at the corner of Johnston and Parkanaur is a single dwelling. Ron confirms it is now a scaled back version of the original plan.

Q: Sheila Pitcher

Southchurch Park is disgusting. A disabled person could not get across the path. Turning into a terrible place.

Ron responds

New paths. Lighting will go in. Railings for disabled access - have not been put up correctly. One of the contractors has had a heart attack and this has delayed things. The pilings are going in. It has been delayed but it will happen.

Lighting will happen over 5 years.

Raising the path by the football club.

In the east of the park there was some anti social behaviour, specifically cottaging. It is now being developed back into a park. The unused bit by the football pitches to be used for a scooter park and bicycle bank.

Also looking at stopping cars on the Greenways and cycle ways for the children and reduce the number of cars coming into the area.

Where the cars park there will be lighting and CCTV and it will not be a pay and display area.

Cycle bank this year. Tree planting this winter. The path and disabled access will be this year. More shrubs to be planted in Station Road. Some have gone in today.

Proposed George Pitcher and seconded Jackie Henderson.

9. Treasurer's report Mike Stafford (accounts attached)

Been a busy year. More has been done with the covenants and keeping people informed. It is money well spent as we have now freed up 1,000 household from Thorpe Estate. A culmination of 10 years work. There has also been an investment in the lights. It has been good to get all the shops involved. Next year the money will be put back into the area.

Proposed by Philip Powel seconded by Arnold Baker.

10. Re-election of Committee members

Members of the committee retiring on rotation.

DF, CM, IM, MS, AF and PP

Ron requests - please vote them back

Agreed to accept those people back onto the committee

A firm yes from the crowd.

11. Pier Management/ Covenant Issues

There are about 600 homes who have not taken up the offer. If you have not heard about it please call Ron. So that he can ensure householders know, BERA are going to send another letter to 90 leaseholders who have not taken up the offer. About 500 freeholders have not taken up the offer. The end of April the offer will close. Talk to your neighbours, be an ambassador for your area.

The discussion opens up as to how the absolute covenants are enforced. Do the members wish for the covenants to be managed by BERA? Currently it is Thorpe Estates who should be enforcing these covenants. Ron is keen for it to be managed by the residents.

Any general questions come and see Jerry at the end.

If you have not had a letter act NOW.

12. Any other business - NONE.

Meeting closes at 9:03pm.

Followed by Refreshments