

FERNWOOD CENTRAL RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION (FCRA)

Minutes of FCRA Committee Meeting held on 09 January 2018 in the Village Hall

Residents Present:

David Mack	Chairman
Benji Fennel-Ross	
Ken Forbes	
Dee Harrison	
Mandy Knowlton-Rayner	
Cheryle Mack	
Iain Moulds	
Pete Murray	
Emma Oldham	
Barry Smith	
Jim Weale	
Mollie Weale	
Nigel Branston	Secretary

Apologies:

Ian McGregor

		ACTION
1	<u>Welcome:</u> The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone, particularly those who were new to the Committee.	
2	<u>Minutes of Last Meeting:</u> There were no comments on the Minutes of the last meeting, so they were accepted as a true record.	Sec
3	<u>Chairman's Report:</u>	
	<p>a. Dave reported that the Vice-Chair, Geoff Bowers, has now resigned from his role on the Committee. The Secretary has also tendered his resignation, with effect from the end of this meeting. The departure of the Treasurer and Sec is in line with the need to separate FCRA officials from members of the Fernwood Parish Council (FPC), to avoid any dangers of possible conflicts of interest. Replacements for all three post-holders are now urgently required. Ian McGregor has told the Chairman that he may be prepared to volunteer as Vice-Chair.</p> <p>b. The fireworks had been very successful, organisation was good with plenty of volunteers, and feedback was all very positive. The presence of Father Christmas was very much enjoyed by all attending kids (and some of their parents!).</p> <p>c. The turnout from the village to support the DabforDaniel event had also been tremendous.</p>	ALL
4	<u>Secretary's Report:</u> Nigel had nothing significant to report; there has been no formal correspondence over the last couple of months.	

5	<p><u>Treasurer's Report:</u> Barry advised that there has been no financial activity since November, and that there is a need to make a payment soon to Forest Schools. The folders are all up to date, ready for whoever takes over as Treasurer. The urgent task is to appoint that person along with new signatories for the bank accounts, without which no financial transactions can take place.</p>	Chair
6	<p><u>Fernwood Forest Schools Report:</u> Emma said that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The FFS is now well settled in its new location. b. In November they were visited by a group of head teachers from China, who loved what they saw and took home many ideas to implement. She has been invited to visit China in March to address a major conference, and to provide advice. In due course she hopes to have an international twinning agreement. c. The FFS Christmas season was really good, with competitions for tree-decorating and the like. d. During January Emma will be training some new volunteers, including 4 of the older children who have offered to return to help mentor younger ones. e. February's sessions will be related to Valentine's Day and nature. 	
7	<p><u>Events:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Dave said that the FPC has traditionally supported events at Fernwood, and in recent years the FCRA has worked with them, with some FPC funding used to support. Barry advised that in 2017, the FPC had supported (financially) the Fernwood summer fete. He wanted to understand who would do what in the future. Particularly, if the FCRA organised more events, whether the FPC would also organise some activities, and/or support FCRA events (by funding or otherwise). b. Barry advised that The FPC is too small to run big events. In the future the FPC will need to represent and work with the other (soon to be built) parts of Fernwood, not just Fernwood Central, so the FCRA can arrange whatever events it likes (liaising as necessary with the Management Company), and can apply to the FPC for funding support if required. If the FPC agrees to provide funds, its normal policy would be to offer up to 50% of the anticipated costs of a given activity. Any subsequent profits would not need to be returned to the FPC but would be retained by the FCRA. This would apply, for example, to activities like the fireworks, fete, etc. c. Dave noted Barry's comments, and said that it was clear that the FCRA would need to be more careful and aware of the financial side of its activities, for the future. Barry pointed out that the FCRA financial status is now quite healthy and it should have no problems with future activities, providing they were approached realistically. d. Mandy asked about the ownership / status of some items of equipment. Barry advised that the gazebos and spotlights belong to the residents, although the FPC is currently storing and maintaining them. If individuals wish to use them, there is a small hire fee which helps to cover cleaning and maintenance. The FCRA would be 	

	welcome to assume ownership responsibilities if it wished to.	
8	<p><u>Fernwood Fanfare:</u> The Fanfare started life as the newsletter of the FPC, but in practice has become a joint FPC/FCRA creation, with the FPC providing the funds and inserting some items when appropriate. The value of the publication, as well as the difficulty in producing, printing and disseminating it was discussed at some length. Costs are about £350 per issue, and there is sadly quite a lot of evidence to suggest that many people never even open it. Emma suggested that future issues could be divided into two parts, clearly marked (with logos or whatever) to show which is what. The issue was left open for further debate and consideration. Barry advised that in the longer term, once the FPC needs to communicate with all the areas of Fernwood, it will be crucial for the FPC to have its own publication.</p>	
9	<p><u>First Port Meeting:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Dave opened by explaining his understanding of the issues between First Port and the FPC. Barry said that the FPC was opposed to all developments which use a management company, and would oppose planning applications which included such an intention. He explained that the FPC take the view that future residents should not have to suffer the same problems as those experienced by Fernwood Central for the past 17 years. b. Dave said that First Port had made it clear that it will only deal with a residents' association, not a parish council, thus the FCRA needs to work with and deal with First Port, in looking to the future, regardless of past history. c. Iain said that he had discussed related issues with a number of residents, over the last couple of weeks, and had learned that almost no-one understands the differences between the FPC, FCRA and First Port, nor has any understanding of the relationships between them. d. Dave reiterated that he feels that someone - the FCRA - needs to work with First Port for the future, and attempt to represent the residents' perspective. Various attendees made it clear that the current problems with the relationship between First Port and Fernwood residents were not really historic, but had begun only about 2 years ago when Gary was appointed by First Port as their Fernwood manager. Prior to that, once agreement had been reached between the FCRA and FirstPort on most of the financial issues (over-payments, extra charges and the creation of the maintenance group), relationships had begun to develop more positively. e. Dave advised that he wanted to ensure the success of any future forum that was created for liaison between residents and First Port on maintenance issues. Dave stated that we should not dwell on past issues, but should use past experience to ensure it didn't happen again. Barry responded by explaining the long fight to get refunds to cover the amounts incorrectly charged to residents, and the delaying tactics which the management company had used when asked for detailed (line-by-line) accounts to enable the FCRA to check the charges. He (supported by others) stressed that although Dave was 	

	<p>right not to wish to dwell on the past, any future negotiations must be based on an awareness and understanding of what has gone before.</p> <p>f. The point was made that everyone present fully supports what the FRCA chairman has achieved so far, and what he is proposing to do, but that he should understand that the main reason for the difficulty in creating a cohesive community at Fernwood has, in the last couple of years, been First Port and their attitude to the residents. Dave responded that unless we took a more positive attitude, we would just hit more barriers in getting a good outcome for the residents - and that, of course, is who we represent. He was hoping for some positive results from the First Port meeting at the end of the month.</p> <p>g. Iain suggested asking the school to issue an information sheet to all pupils, to take home for parents to read - it was less likely to be instantly binned, if it came via that route. Dave agreed to look into the possibility. Emma suggested that, if people won't read information, they might watch it. She had a contact who was prepared to assist in producing a video which the FCRA could use to encourage interest, maybe by dissemination through the Facebook page. Dave agreed that she should liaise with her contact to see what could be done.</p> <p>h. Pete suggested posting sign-boards around the village in order to draw attention to issues, and volunteered to produce some.</p>	
10	<p><u>Next Meeting:</u> The next Committee Meeting will be held in the Village Hall at 7.30p.m. on Tuesday 6 February.</p>	<p>Sec All</p>

Nigel Branston

NIGEL BRANSTON

Secretary

Tel: 07495 432475

e-mail: nigel.branston@gmail.com