

WALTON MANOR RESIDENTS ASSOCIATIONS

Minutes of Committee Meeting 5th October 2025

PRESENT

Bryan Pickup **BP**
Caroline Martin **CM**
Charlotte Beatson **CB**
Godfrey Cole **GC**
Helena Webster **HW**
Janet Minot **JM**
Maggie Black **MB**
Tom Landell Mills **TLM**

APOLOGIES

Mary Pegler **MP**
Jo Lane **JL**

Constitutional Amendments and Committee Membership

The committee confirmed that the **constitutional amendments** discussed over the summer have been finalised and uploaded to the website, resolving outstanding governance issues.

- Janet had previously coordinated the amendments, including election process updates, with agreement on the final version. This is now posted on the website.
- Mary has confirmed she will be stepping down from the committee, while Tom will continue his role without change.
- Three new candidates have come forward to join the committee. Though the candidates seem good there is a problem in that appointing all of them will exceed the membership limit of **ten** by one. It was therefore proposed to co-opt one candidate as an **extraordinary member** to avoid an election. This member would automatically become a full member in the event of a vacancy.
- The committee agreed with this proposal, with **Laura Heybrook** suggested for this role due to her lower availability and specific interest in environmental issues. Laura Heybrook also offered to lead OxClean.
- **Diane Pearson** has offered to take on the role of secretary, bringing her long-term Oxford experience and education background
- **Jonathan Davis** offers strong communications and previous planning knowledge.
- The committee stressed that members serve the community, not just their own streets, but will assign informal street monitoring roles to improve information flow and coverage. Caroline will prepare a slide showing committee roles and street coverage for the AGM.
- It was suggested that WMRA committee members use local WhatsApp resident groups that they are part of to inform people of the WMRA and steer them to our website and key events such as the AGM, OxClean and social events at the Gardener's Arms.

Planning and Local Development Updates

The committee provided a detailed update on the **former party shop redevelopment** and other local planning matters, highlighting significant community concerns about traffic and project timelines.

- The demolition phase, originally scheduled to start at the end of **September**, has been delayed by ongoing design tweaks and planning applications, with the latest contractor estimate aiming for a start within **three weeks** from early October.
- Demolition is expected to take **six to eight weeks**, followed by a construction phase projected to last **about one year**, though the timeline is uncertain due to pending ground surveys and contractual finalizations.
- Tom raised concerns that there is a danger of subsidence arising from exposed excavation, which could undermine nearby roads and buildings.
- The committee raised traffic management objections, particularly regarding the use of **Longworth Road**, which they consider unsafe for large vehicles, but contractors have only partially adjusted their plans .
- Concerns about the impact on immediately adjacent tenants were emphasized, including potential temporary relocation offers from St. John's flats, though occupants are currently reluctant to move.
- Other planning applications discussed include a new apartment block behind the former Daisies site, which received community support due to aesthetic improvements over existing structures.

The Schwarzman Centre will be opening soon with public programs starting in **April**, there was discussion about the potential impact of traffic in the neighbourhood with up to **500 attendees** at events. It was noted that there is no additional provision for car parking on site or in the surrounding area and people will need to come by public transport or taxi if they cannot walk or cycle. An increase in car parking in the surrounding area maybe a problem and there were s concerns about impact on disabled parking.

Community Engagement and Communication Strategy

The committee outlined plans to boost community engagement through better communication tools and neighborhood coverage ahead of the AGM.

- It was suggested that a listing of **WhatsApp groups** across the neighbourhood is undertaken to improve information flow. This will be published on the website. However, we will continue to reinforce that committee members represent the community, not individual streets. Action: CM and others
- WhatsApp group admins will be asked to promote the online newsletter and website, which has grown from **205 to 290 subscribers** out of approximately **800 households**, showing good but improvable reach.
- The committee also plans to highlight community service activities like Oxclean and "Meet Your Neighbours" events during the AGM.
- The next Meet Your Neighbours event at the Gardiners Arms will be on **10th December, 5.30 onwards**. Action: MB, CM, JL

AGM Planning and Event Logistics

Preparations for the upcoming AGM focus on smooth technical delivery, effective communication, and welcoming new members.

- Caroline Martin is coordinating with D'Overbroecks and David Clark, the speaker, to understand the venue's audio-visual capabilities, with concerns about USB use and virus risks prompting plans to bring a personal laptop and hire external projector and sound equipment as backup.
- The programme will include brief reports on planning, committee activities, and community events, with slides updated from last year's version . Action: CM, MB, BP, HW, JL
- Photos from recent community events and appraisals will be integrated to enhance engagement, with members sharing images for inclusion . All Members to contribute
- The AGM will announce the re-standing of four committee members serving over three years and introduce the three new candidates, explaining the co-option arrangement. **Action: MB**
- Flyers and posters advertising the AGM speaker event on **historic ironwork** will be printed in quantities of **25 posters** and **800 flyers**, parceled by street for distribution, with minor design tweaks to improve visibility. Members will collect leaflets from CM for distribution to their streets. Action CM and others.
- The committee decided to continue serving **non-alcoholic refreshments** at the AGM, including elderflower cordial, sparkling water, and snacks, with donations encouraged via decorated collection boxes . **Jo will organize glasses and refreshments; if unavailable, Janet and Caroline will provide back-up. Action: MB to ask JL**

Conservation Area Appraisal and Advocacy

The committee members raised concerns regarding delays and challenges in advancing the **Walton Manor Conservation Area Appraisal** by Oxford City Council. a key long-term preservation goal

- Initial progress was strong, with a draft expected in **March**, but the planner was reassigned, causing a loss of momentum and communication
- Attempts to re-engage planning chair Alex Hollingsworth have so far been met with silence despite reminders, risking the appraisal being indefinitely postponed
- The committee resolved to keep applying pressure on city and county council contacts, including James and Louise, to maintain focus on completing the appraisal and avoid restarting the process after local government reorganisation
- This appraisal is overdue by about **10 years** since Walton Manor was designated a conservation area in **1975**, with neighbouring areas like Norfolk having completed appraisals more recently (
- The committee recognises the importance of sustaining momentum to protect local heritage amid ongoing development pressures.

Meeting Scheduling and Next Steps

The next committee meeting is scheduled for 18th January at Godfrey's house, (**Action: GC to circulate his address and time of mtg.**)

