



## **AGM 2021 – online via Zoom**

**7.30pm Monday 10 November 2021**

### **PRESENT**

**Committee:** Shamus Donald [Chair], Bob Colenutt, David Nimmo Smith, Deborah Bryceson, Henk van Es, Natasha Robinson, Geoffrey Randell

**Councillors:** Lawrence Fouweather, Andrew Gant, Tom Landell Mills, Katherine Miles,

**Members:** Heather Bliss, John Senior, Martin Kessler, Paul Blay, Lesley Evans, Mr & Mrs Peter Thompson, Matthew Cheetham, Laurel Glockner, Liz Lake, Colin McDiarmid, Neil MacLennan, Chris Pownall, Brenda Boardman, Jane Stockton, Jim Girling, John Fuller, Paul Lewis, Dorothy Merriott, Diana Roberts, Jonathan Bard, Lynn ?, Iftikhar Malik, Jeremy Hudson, Nick M, Josephine ?, Ed Perutz, Kevin Sheppard, Mark Hull, Diewke van Es, Dai Richards, Rebecca ?, Sue Anderson, William Smith, David Sprigings, Dorothy ?, Gillian Argyle, Richard Briant, Philip Allen, J Nimmo Smith, Anna Proudfoot, Liz Wade, Tina Leonard, Simon Hunt

**Guests:** Anna Strongman [CEO OUD, and resident in SuStM] , Carolyn Ploszynski [ Head of Regeneration, Oxford City Council] Trudy Godfrey [Regeneration Team, Oxford City Council]

**Apologies:** Alison Hull, Caroline and David Laing, Cllr John Howson

The meeting being quorate, it was opened at 7.01 with an introduction and welcome from the Chair and explanation of how the meeting would be conducted, and topics on the agenda.

Sam Clarke, immediate past Chair, gave a tribute to **Martin Roberts**, founding Chair of the Forum and also previously head of Cherwell School. Martin sadly died very recently, having continued to attend meetings of the Diamond Place Working Group, his longstanding area of special interest, until shortly before his death. Martin's widow Diana was present at the meeting.

### **CHAIR'S REPORT FOR 2021**

Shamus Donald gave his report of the preceding year [the slides can be found on the Forum website]

Members of the **Steering Committee** are David Nimmo Smith [Vice Chair], Henk van Es [Treasurer], Natasha Robinson [Secretary], Bob Colenutt, Deborah Bryceson and Geoffrey Randell.

Local Councillors are ex-officio members

Bob Colenutt has served 2x3 year terms and will stand down. BC will continue to chair the Diamond Place Working Group.

**CIL funds** have been awarded during 2020 [2 rounds] and 2021. Not all funds have been finally paid where projects remain incomplete. Awards were made for the following:

- New cycle stands in Summertown
- Marston Ferry Allotments access route
- Breast Feeding support group
- St Margaret's Institute floor
- Garden at St Michaels and All Angels Church
- Pollinator Gardens [Wytham Woods], first one to be created at Alexandra Park
- Christmas lights in Summertown

We hope to have £27k available for distribution in 2022

**Alexandra Park Working Group** [led by Henk van Es] has been busy improving the area through tree planting, renewed play surfaces, added seating, garden developments, mostly funded by CIL. The aim is for completion by the centenary in 2025.

**Diamond Place Working Group** is chaired by Bob Colenutt. A draft community plan for the Diamond Place site has been produced. The Group liaises with the Council and Oxford University Development. The site is 50:50 owned by each.

**Transport Working Group** started in 2021 led by Deborah Bryceson who participated in the Woodstock Rd corridor study, now under public consultation. The Group has also surveyed the use of parking in Diamond Place.

**A Planning Working Group** will start work imminently to monitor planning applications in and around our neighbourhood. Chris Pownall, a local resident, will be joining the group.

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## **AGM BUSINESS**

### **MINUTES OF AGM 2020**

These were published on the website. Proposed for approval by Sam Clarke, seconded by David Nimmo Smith and passed by a significant majority

### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

The report is available on the website.

#### **Expenditure**

We spent £1k, mostly on website development/maintenance/subscription

We spent money on publicity for Diamond Place public meetings

#### **Income**

Friends of the Forum have donated. £500 received from Cllr John Howson. £150 raised by cake stall.

Balance has increased modestly but is insufficient to support 4 working groups and the website for which we will need >£2k in 2022. We will need to identify funding streams to support continued work.

### **ELECTIONS**

We have one proposal to stand for election to Steering Committee, Sir David Madden, who gave a short presentation.

Proposed by Shamus Donald, seconded by Natasha Robinson and elected unanimously with no objections [voted online].

Shamus welcomed Sir David to the Committee

#### **AOB**

There was none.

#### **QUESTIONS**

None

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### **PRESENTATION FROM DIAMOND PLACE WORKING GROUP: A COMMUNITY PLAN**

A year ago we heard from Carter Jonas and the City Council about proposals to develop the Diamond Place site, which prompted the Forum to set up the Working Group to ensure that the needs of the community were understood. However progress has halted until both City Council and OUD are ready, but the need still exists in the community to develop the site. Henk van Es presented 'The Case for Diamond Place'. There is a need for a redeveloped 'heart' for Summertown to improve the neighbourhood. There is a need for housing [including affordable], a new Community Centre, a new Health Centre fit for 21C, and a green space.

The preferred model would be a co-design process between the community, OUD and OCC, supported by consultation. This would produce a masterplan, to try and provide the development in a step by step way as we cannot wait for years. The community plan is a starting place, without fine detail but providing a framework. Henk then described what design features were considered essential, namely connectivity and permeability, a focal centre for a diverse community, high quality sustainable buildings.

The site is currently an unattractive carpark behind the shops. There are 3 access points, 2 from Banbury Rd, one from Marston Ferry Road. Better integration with Banbury Road would be desirable. A community green could be a focal point. The leisure centre is architecturally unappealing and could be modified to enhance the area [ditto the backs of the shops]. Facilities [Health and Community Centres and toilets] should be grouped. Good housing design is essential. Safe access for cyclists and pedestrians [especially Cherwell School pupils] must be established. Parking will be retained but needs to be repositioned. Access from the area to the Cherwell river would be a very attractive feature if it can be included.

[Slides of the presentation can be found on the website]

### **PRESENTATION FROM ANNA STRONGMAN, CEO Oxford University Development (joint OU and Legal & General body)**

Anna gave context for the overall OUD project with Legal & General to develop various sites all over Oxford, and outwith. This will aim to provide subsidised housing for graduates and university workers, plus research and some commercial space. Sites are all over the City, at Begbroke and at Swindon.

The Summertown site consists of Ewert Place and Ewert House which accommodates examination halls and the Department of Continuing Education. Both will need to be rehoused before Ewert Place can be developed. The preferred site for Continuing Education is at an early stage of development [Wellington Sq]. OUD will provide the land for L&G to develop subsidised accommodation for 300 graduates, providing a high standard of accommodation, without car parking and with a focus on sustainability. OU plans to accommodate 300 students, not much provision will be for families. Student families rarely have cars so parking will not be allocated.

The site is awkward [for both parties], and land ownership is 'not straightforward' between OU and OCC. Commercial discussions between the 2 parties will be needed. Anna complimented the approach of DPWG in terms of site design principles and critical features to be addressed. We need to start working out the principles and also the land ownership and commercial realities which will determine viability. Summer Fields School is adjacent to the site but does not wish to make land available until 2030 at the earliest. A broad-based sustainability strategy encompassing more than just carbon will be developed. Biodiversity net gain will be achieved through site and building design. This will all take time.

Carolyn Ploszynski [Head of Regeneration at Oxford City Council] responded, referring to the previous 2020 report by Carter Jonas that focused on capacity. She expressed a desire to work alongside OUD, and ourselves. The Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan determine some features for inclusion. We need to understand the car parking needs more clearly. OCC is keen to accommodate a new HC and needs to better understand what the CCG requirements are, but does not expect to provide subsidy. Phasing may be very difficult because of the nature of the site and maintaining continuity for the leisure and community centres. The leisure centre will not be included in the development scheme. The site is complicated and will take 'years of planning to get right'.

Shamus thanked both guest speakers for their contributions.

## **DISCUSSION FROM THE FLOOR**

Matthew Cheetham, GP lead from the 2 Summertown GP practices, expressed despair at the failure of all parties involved to respond to the urgent need for a new Health Centre [OCC, Oxon CCG, and OUD]. There has been no progress in a year. The GPs already have 30k patients to serve. CCG has commissioned a report but it seems not to have been shared with OCC, and engagement has been difficult. Trudy Godfrey [OCC] reported that the CCG report has been shared today. They are considering 3 sites [of which DP is one] for best VFM, determined by district valuer. Is redevelopment on either GP sites feasible? MC said not.

BC raised that the Carter Jonas report has not been shared, and the Council has yet to respond to the Forum's request for a joint working arrangement to progress the development, with the Forum included from the start. CP said the definitive report has not yet been shared [confirmed it is a capacity study] but hope to share it very shortly [end of 2021].

Car parking provision was discussed further, alongside transport planning. There will be no basement car parks. There will be a reduction in public parking spaces, and the housing development will be car free. The design and extent of housing development will depend on limiting public parking. There will be impact on transport through the area when the OUD sites in Cherwell are developed. OUD is aware that this needs to be coordinated and sustainable.

Separate development between OCC and OUD may mean that OCC development may become non-viable. Phased development was thought to be impractical by both OCC and OUD.

Shamus summed up, emphasising the local frustration about the slow pace of progress, in particular the urgent need for a new health centre to meet current and future needs. We need to hear the findings of the Carter Jonas report ASAP. The Forum can play a key role in trying to coordinate progress with a masterplan by working with all parties involved. He thanked our guest speakers again, and the audience for the debate and demonstrating the keen local interest.

The meeting finished at 20.50