



Minutes of Open Meeting with FirstPort October 17th 2019

Present: Ray Haffenden, Liz Simpson, Marie Whale, Ian Whale, Gary Slinn, Georgia Oxley, Darren Toby, Andy Lunn, David Thornewell, Peter Caffell, Sylvia Varga, Sandor Kremniczki, Keith & Liz Marlow.

Apologies: Rupert Keppell-Palmer, Kelly Welsh, Christine Belton-Brown, Luke Frayling, Charlie McHattie, Jenny Whitmore.

Ray thanked David Thornewell for the use of the Parish Meeting Room, introduced attendees, and handed the chair to Liz Simpson:

The minutes of last year's meeting were read through to check progress on promised upgrading of services to Gold Standard –

- Rebate: Of the promised rebate of £15,000 for 2019-20 Darren reported that £13,000 was credited to management fees for the year, leaving £3,000 in reserve. The committee requested that this should go towards our planned improvements on play equipment for the older children on Aberly Park and picnic benches for both parks.

Next year's £15,000 should go towards adding bays, and improving parking facilities as per our published plan with any surplus to be added to fund for improved play facilities.

- Late start on Section 20 external & internal re-decorations. There was considerable concern that the late start would have a detrimental effect on the quality of the external decorations and possible delay to completion of the work. Darren and Georgia assured us that all paintwork would have to be signed off by the inspection department of Dulux paints to be of an acceptable standard and that the work was on schedule.
- On the issue of contractors and standard of work, it was agreed that joint meetings would be set up with our main contractors GI Landscapes, SafePlay, Cloakley Cleaning, Skyline, and Black Sheep to see how we can improve services and value for money, and to reduce charges.

- Direct Debits. Due to changes within FirstPort payment by D.D. was no longer available for new accounts. Residents who have difficulty finding the whole lump sum in advance are urged to contact FirstPort credit control.
- Peter Caffell tabled a question about overcharging and confusion on billing for Hyde joint ownership residents. The problem has been in errors in the legal documentation Georgia has been working on to this to re-assign invoicing for any wrongly charged residents.

Gary announced some good news on the financing for our projected play equipment on Aberly Park for older children, and picnic benches for both parks. Also for possible financing for some more permanent Christmas lighting for trees on both parks.

David updated us on plans that may affect our development in the near future. The Aylesford Newsprint site is almost completely levelled, although no plans for the development of the site have been submitted.

There were concerns voiced about the traffic using Aberly Drive as a short cut when traffic reaches deadlock on New Hythe Lane, especially as it seems that Aylesford Newsprint administrators are issuing passes for the barriers on Bellingham Way to Station Road to many of the locators on the industrial estates increasing the pressure on Aberly Drive.

The meeting was concluded at 8:30 p.m. and FirstPort representatives were thanked for their assistance and co-operation.