

Friends of Mitcham's Corner

Minutes of AGM held on 20 April 2016

1 Apologies for absence

Paddy Mannion, Adrian Medd, Amy Barker, Damien Tunnacliffe, two members from Albert St.

2 Chairman's report

I would like to thank everyone on the committee for their hard work in the past year, and also thank all members for their continuing support, which sustains us in our efforts to improve Mitcham's Corner.

Later in the meeting Alastair will give a review of the year's activities and forthcoming events. We believe we have achieved a lot this year, and have been very successful in maintaining media coverage of Mitcham's Corner, thanks largely to Adrian Medd. In the coming year we expect that our focus will move away from local building developments and be dominated by transport issues, particularly the City Deal. We also expect to be providing input to the final consultation on the Local Plan, and working with the planning team at the council on a master plan for the Mitcham's Corner area.

Finally, I would like to appeal for new committee members, particularly anyone who can help with writing pieces for the website, developing FMC's social media presence, or assisting with fund raising.

3 Treasurer's report

A copy of the 2015/16 accounts is attached.

In terms of income, we received a number of grants from the City Council: a grant from section 106 contributions for the Mitcham's Models mannequins; £1400 for the Christmas lights, organised by Polly Plouviez; and a general grant of £600. The vintage tea rooms and pre-loved sale, organised by Paddy Mannion, raised £1200, of which the majority will go to charity.

We have not been awarded any grants for 2016-17, because the Council considers our previous grants to have been "seed" funding, and we are now well enough established to be expected to fund ourselves; the Council's overall grant allowance has also been cut. We are awaiting the final grant instalment from the council for 2015/16, but assuming that comes in we are in the black.

One concern is that we collected only £74 from subscriptions, which is very poor: we will need to make more effort to get in subs this year. The annual subscription has been increased to £5 per individual or £10 per household/business. We will also need to use events partly to fund our activities, not solely for charity as at present.

In terms of outgoings, our main expenses are the website, room hire, printing and photocopying, insurance and publicity (e.g. banners).

4 Election of officers

The chairman Anne Cooper, secretary Mary Rose Baugh and treasurer Simon Watkins were re-elected to their positions.

5 Overview of the year (Alastair Boyles)

In February last year we circulated a **survey** to 1500 local residents, traders and workers, asking a series of questions about what they wanted at Mitcham's Corner. The results reinforced our own thinking about the area, and gave us credibility in the eyes of the authorities as representatives of the local community.

Following this, we organised a **public meeting** in the Portland Arms with Glen Richardson and Brian Stinton, at which we presented the results of the survey, and also heard an introduction to the forthcoming City Deal plans, as well as possibilities for restructuring Mitcham's Corner.

As a follow-up, in June we helped Glen to organise a **Planning for Real workshop** in the Victoria Homes Pavilion with various stakeholders, to consider possibilities for future development at Mitcham's Corner and Chesterton Road. The results of the brainstorming sessions are being used to support Glen's case for improving Mitcham's Corner.

Sounds Around the Corner, which was timed to coincide with the weekend of the Mitcham's and More Festival in September, was very well received and the musicians are keen to do it again. It raised £150 for charities.

The **Vintage Tea Rooms and Pre-Loved Sale** later in September, organised by Paddy Mannion, were highly successful and raised £1200. It was a beautiful day, and the event gave us a great opportunity to talk informally to local people.

Paddy also organised the second year of **Mitcham's Models**, which this time were all placed securely in shop windows, and decorated with verse written by local poets. As before, the mannequins will be auctioned and proceeds will go to charity.

In December we supported Polly Plouviez's efforts to organise **Christmas lights**, and three trees in the centre of Mitcham's Corner were illuminated. The **Christmas Market** was also well attended.

2016 has been dominated by the **City Deal consultation**, for which FMC put together a response. The proposals, which seem to have been universally condemned, did at least galvanise public interest in the future of Milton Road and Mitcham's Corner. Unfortunately the options put forward included nothing for Mitcham's Corner, and since then we have had several meetings with Glen Richardson, Lewis Herbert, Brian Stinton, Richard Preston and councillors to promote our objectives.

Glen has set up a **Mitcham's Corner Steering Committee** with the City Deal consultants and engineers, including an FMC committee member (Anil Malhotra). This is looking at urban design and transport solutions for Mitcham's Corner, and hopes to influence the City Deal decision-makers as well as other relevant organisations.

We continue to make efforts to keep the authorities aware of Mitcham's Corner; for example, committee members asked questions at the North Area Committee meeting and at a plenary City Council meeting. FMC has also been the subject of several articles in the Cambridge News.

6 Ongoing and possible issues for 2016/17 (Alastair Boyles)

The City Deal consultation process will continue throughout the year. On 28 April we are holding a **joint meeting ("hustings")** with residents associations from Milton Road and Hurst Park Avenue, at which candidates for the upcoming local elections will be asked to summarise their views on the City Deal proposals, and their plans for the future of the area.

In late May or in June we will hold a **public meeting** to discuss Mitcham's Corner in more general terms, not just in relation to the City Deal. We hope to invite Edward Leigh, leader of Smarter Cambridge Transport (www.smartertransport.uk/), as the keynote speaker, to present some alternative ideas. This meeting is timed to come ahead of the publication of various studies on transport in Cambridge, both the City Deal report and studies on citywide issues such as parking. The intention is to focus attention on Mitcham's Corner, which plays a very central role in the entire traffic system.

In June we expect the publication of a report presenting the results from the City Deal consultation earlier this year. It will be very useful to us to hear members' views on this report so that we can keep up pressure. Based on that, revised or new proposals will be put forward and then there will be another round of consultation.

Sometime in the summer or autumn we hope to arrange a **guided walk** around the area led by Allan Brigham, who is extremely knowledgeable and also a staunch supporter of the Mitcham's Corner cause.

We expect to have another **fundraising event** like the Vintage Tea Rooms.

We are planning another **Sounds Around the Corner** event on Saturday 3 September, as before coinciding with the Mitcham's & More Festival. This time there will be no public performances on the Sunday; instead, this day will involve performances at local care homes.

The Christmas Market and switch-on of the Christmas lights will happen on 3 December (both organised by Polly Plouviez).

7 Q&A and any other business

Q: Have you explored the possibility of using BACCS transfer for paying subscriptions? This would make it easier for people to pay. A: [Simon Watkins] My experience from a previous group is that it would not be a good idea to post details of FMC's bank account on our website, as people may attempt to set up direct debits, etc. [Simon Baugh] We hope to make it easier for people to pay their membership subs by enabling payment by Twitter, once FMC's Twitter account is up and running.

Q: When will the new Local Plan come into effect? A: [Mike Sergeant] Central government required the Council to make some changes, in particular increasing the target for building of homes. The revised Local Plan will be put out for consultation later this year, and is expected to be ratified and come into effect early next year.

Q: Would Polly like to say something about the History Festival, which we had to pull out of in 2015? A: [Polly Plouviez] The annual Cambridge History Festival will be running in February 2017, and we hope to include displays of photos and information about some key buildings around Mitcham's Corner such as the Barclay's site and the Tivoli. There will also be tours and a talk in the Portland Arms. [Simon Baugh] Shelley Lockwood from the Museum of Cambridge wants to expand the Capturing Cambridge website (www.capturingcambridge.org) to include historical material, photos and spoken narrative about the Mitcham's Corner area (the site already covers Arbury and Mill Road). An FMC member has volunteered to lead the local research on this.

Q: What is happening about Wetherspoons? A: [Polly Plouviez] It seems the company is in negotiations with its insurer, which is unwilling to pay for the full cost of refurbishment (£3 million). I believe it does intend to renovate the site and continue business.

