

# Seething Wells Working Group Meeting Notes - 06 June 2022

## Agenda Item 1 - Welcome and Introductions

### Apologies

Alison Witcher, Cllr Hayes gave apologies

### Attendees

Councillors - Green, Holt, Schaper, Yoganathan, Giles.

Landowners Agent - Michael Graham (Icon)

Community Members - John Allen, Simon Tyrell, Councillor Liz Laino (Long Ditton), Ross, Len Reece, Stuart Finlay, Adrian, Mark, Phil Renton, Hubert Kwisthout, Sharron Sumner, Sarah Onions, Donna Nicholson, David Randall. Apologies that I don't have a surname for Ross, Adrian and Mark

Council Officers - Tim Naylor, Herman Kwan

## Agenda Item 2 - matters arising from previous meeting

a) Railings - No update with regards to the section 215 notice, other than to say there was an appeal lodged in time, so it will be going to Wimbledon Magistrates and final details are to be confirmed.

i) Officers to send notice of appeal to Sharron Sumner.

b) TW Overage - no information available and likely to be commercially sensitive.

c) TOR - not circulated in advance, subsequently circulated for discussion at the next meeting.

d) Co-chair - nominations opened

i. Sarah Onions nominated by Donna Nicholson and seconded by Ross

ii. Saron Sumner nominated herself and seconded by Cllr Giles

iii. Michael Graham nominated himself and seconded by Cllr Holt

There was some discussion regarding the vote on the three nominations and it was agreed to come back ahead of the next meeting with the process to be used and vote take place at the next meeting.

e) Appearance of highway 'sagging' subsequent to work on the site with diggers has been raised with no response from RBK officers.

i) Cllr Holt will chase highways team

- f) Why is herbicide spraying still happening without permission from the Environment Agency. Elliott Newton has contacted the EA about spraying and is awaiting a response.
  - i) Elliott Newton to chase EA again

### Agenda Item 3 - Updates

- a) Land Owners Agent - Michael Graham, Icon - provided an update and position statement on behalf of his client, Cascina, the owner of the site, covering the intentions and parameters of the owners development ambitions. Michael expressed the view that prior to the cessation of SW as a water treatment works there had been little historic evidence of wildlife and biodiversity on the site and that the nature conservation interest was a relatively recent occurrence. Michael confirmed that the trees and shrubs that had been allowed to naturally establish on the site were at risk of undermining the historic structure and that the work currently underway to clear the site was to safeguard against the eventuality of any further damage to the structural integrity.
- b) Michael Graham went on to express concerns about his lack of confidence in the planning process regarding assertions that confidential pre-application information has been made available and posted on social media. Michael also raised concerns about the lack of clarity regarding the purpose of this group and the it's relationship with the Council's constitutional role in decision making through Strategic Committees and Planning Committee.
- c) Regarding the owners dialogue with local groups, Michael Graham referenced that a lengthy dialogue with Charles Deacon had taken place previously. And also referenced the behaviour of some elements of the local community groups that were opposed to any development on the site suggesting that some of information posted on social media contained inaccurate assertions regarding the owners motivation and also contained targeted vitriol.
- d) There followed extensive discussion involving SWAG, Friends of SW, Councillors and other parties and residents around the table, representing a variety of views and observations. Key points included:
  - i) Michael Graham confirmed that the owners are not looking to sell the site. The owners will be bringing forward a development plan and they are promoting the site as part of the Local Plan process. They do not see the site as being or even could be a nature reserve.
  - ii) Discussion regarding the appropriate baseline for heritage and biodiversity at the site, as different groups see different starting points.
  - iii) Cllr Green expressed that, whilst Chair of the Planning Committee, she is pre-determined on this site and therefore would not sit on any application decision.

- iv) Sharron Sumner confirmed that Elliot Newton was not a member of SWAG.
- v) Sharron Sumner would not reveal her source of the pre-application information but confirmed that it was not a council officer.
- vi) SWAG did not recollect any approaches from the owner to meet and discuss the site with the owner but confirmed that they would like to have a dialogue, which should go through the co-chairs - Hubert and Phil. The owners would like community involvement to discuss community benefit as part of a development proposal.
- vii) An application was made to make the site an Asset of Community Value, but had not heard back.
- viii) There were questions around the management of the site that Michael Graham could not answer - such as repeated herbicide spraying and draining of the beds.
- ix) SWAG also announced that a consultation on the site is to be held on 12 July.

Timing did not allow for updates from other groups and working group members.

#### Actions

1. Appeal details on section 215 on railing repair to be sent to working group members.
2. Officers to follow up on Asset of Community Value application
3. Terms of Reference and process for community co-chair election will be circulated in a week.
4. Cllr Holt to chase on highways sagging issue
5. Elliott Newton to chase EA on spraying issue
6. Owners are asked to send someone, who has day to day management of the site responsibility, to the next meeting to answer any questions.
7. Date of next meeting to be confirmed - to be in approximately 4 weeks time with a starting time of 6pm.

Meeting Close 16:10 hrs.