

Seabrook Orchards Residents Group (SORG)

Minutes of the 2nd Annual General Meeting

held at Trinity School, Fish Street

Monday 12 September 2022 at 7.15 pm

Present: Nat Baker (NB), Gordon Edwards (GE), Andrew Sails (AS), Mark Sweet (MS) and 30 other members

Apologies had been received from 17 members

AS took the chair of the meeting.

1	Minutes The Minutes of the inaugural AGM held on 9 September 2021 were approved as a correct record. There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.
2	Elections Thanks were expressed to Tracy Brady for her work as a member of the initial SORG Executive Committee elected at the previous AGM. In the course of the year Tracy had had to stand down. The remaining four members of the Executive – NB, GE, AS and MS - had been nominated to continue as officers for the coming year, and were duly re-elected. No additional nominations had been received, but the Chair said that the Executive would welcome one or two additional members: they would be glad to discuss this informally with any members who might be interested in being co-opted onto the Exec. for the coming year. We meet every 6-8 weeks for an hour or so.
3	Annual Report NB presented the annual report for 2021-2022: 3.1 Introduction SORG was formed in September 2021 in response to management invoices issued by the Seabrook Orchards Management Company in May 2021 with no clear rationale for the invoicing to begin nor any dialogue on progress on development plans. 'Seabrook Orchards Residents Group' (SORG) was set up as a way better to represent community interests, bring people together and resolve concerns specifically relating to the Seabrook Orchards development. The SORG executive committee is currently made up of four volunteers living in the Seabrook Orchards development. We seek to hold developers to account on the high standards set out in planning consents, and seek to influence future aspects of community provision. We are also

looking to set up a dialogue with the Seabrook Orchards Management Company, so the community can feel connected and informed as to what is happening where we live.

SORG priorities are focused on areas of the Seabrook Orchards development which will make the greatest difference to our community.

Current priority focus areas are:

- Setting up a dialogue with the Seabrook Orchards Management Company
- M5 noise barrier and associated landscaping
- Highways adoption
- Community facilities yet to be delivered
- Road connections/ ransom strip

3.2 What we've been doing - Community

- September 2021- inaugural meeting of the Seabrook Orchards Residents' Group. Exec committee elected: Andrew Sails, Mark Sweet, Tracey Brady, Gordon Edwards, Nat Holt
- Formed SORG with mandate from community to speak on behalf of residents and seek to resolve community issues
- Raised profile of SORG- councillors, SOMC, planners, Bloor
- Updates sent to residents throughout who are on the SORG mailing list- please let us know if you're not on the mailing list and would like to be kept up to date
- Worked with Co-cars to see Co-cars and co-bikes installed in May
- Helping residents where we can- answering questions and linking people up
- Increasingly close working with Newcourt Community Association, particularly with Gordon Edwards now elected NCA Chair from July 2022
- Work started on a community website to include information about what SORG are working on and a knowledge point for information sharing

3.3 What we've been doing: Research

- Full review of all planning documentation publicly available on the planning portal and have used this to open dialogue with Michael Dart and planning authority.
- Using industry contacts- researched more about Fish Street/ Vernon Close ransom strip
- Investigating street lighting on Ronald Gardens and Ferryman Way (not specified- why not?)
- Gaining clarity on overall development timelines –

See attached map showing planned phases of the development, together with the timetable indicated in the following chart:

Phase	Cumulative	Rough timeframe
Phase 1 = plots 1-200 (200 homes)	200	2017-2020
Phase 2a = plots 200-341 (141 homes)	341	2020-2022
Phase 2b = plots 342-445 (104 homes)	445	2023- ?
Phase 3 = Town square (23 homes)	468	2022-25?

*No further information released on Phase 4 yet but planning consent is for up to 650/700 homes

What	By When	Rough timeframe
Noise barrier complete with planting and foot and cycle paths	Before any dwelling occupied in the noise sensitive area	2017
Community hall construction	Before 350 dwellings completed	2022-25?
Second play area	Before 400 dwellings occupied	
Sports pitch construction	Before 450 dwellings occupied	
Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) construction	Before 450 dwellings occupied	
Laying out and planting of community allotments and orchards	Before 500 dwellings occupied	

NB (1) Although the sports pitches and allotments are located geographically in Phase 1, they are not due to be delivered until 450/500 dwellings have been occupied (ie in Phase 3/4)

NB (2) Above information distilled from planning documentation in the public realm but not cross-checked with developers- could be changes to programme we are not aware of!

3.4 What we've been doing: Meetings

- Met with Michael Dart in November 2021 to discuss site issues. Learnt some things but didn't achieve clarity on others and have struggled for follow up meeting(s) since. Will continue to pursue.
- Wrote to Exeter City Council planning department (May 2022) to enquire about compliance with legal planning documentation and definitions of 'responsible body' as to who is able to manage community facilities such as green spaces and community hall. Receipt confirmed of enquiry and ECC have raised enquiry to developers, but no feedback as yet.
- Met with Councillors Andrew Leadbeatter (Devon County Council and Exeter City Council) and Joshua Ellis-Jones (Exeter City Council) in June to help take matters forwards.

3.5 Other issues noted:

- Playground completed April 2022

- No management invoices issued yet in 2022. (Issued May 2021 which caused local concern and led to formation of SORG.)
- Recent estate activity may indicate Bloor are preparing to de-mobilise from site once phase 2a has been completed.
- Works happening on Dart Avenue and other estate roads which *may* signal Bloor trying to tie up loose ends to be able to dress the road with the final topcoat and therefore be able to hand over to DCC for adoption.
- Other tying up works would also trigger handover of 'managed green space' to the Seabrook Orchards Management Company, to whom we pay our annual management fees. This is money paid in advance for maintenance of the communal facilities on the estate (green space, playgrounds etc).
- EconetiQ charger for electric vehicles now installed and operational (next to the co-car space on Ferryman Way). Co Cars and Co Bikes station now fully operational on Dart Avenue – with usage outstripping similar much longer established installations at Cranbrook and Digby& Sowton.

3.6 Aspirations going forwards

- Set up ongoing regular dialogue with Seabrook Orchards Management Company so the community can be updated with regard to developments (upcoming plans and long-term plans... we'd all like to know and dispel rumours).
- Pursue answers and resolution around M5 noise barrier and associated landscaping (planning compliance)
- Seek to influence future community facilities e.g. playground number 2
- Seek to understand plans for running community facilities (community hall, allotments, orchard, sports pitches etc) in line with planning timeframes
- Pursue relevant bodies for a resolution on the ransom strip and road connections
- Continue to give the Seabrook Orchards community a voice
- keep the community informed

3.7 How residents can help

Do you have expertise in Town planning, Housing development, Web design, Communications, or anything else you think might be useful? If so maybe you would consider helping SORG with our next steps- please get in touch! Your help could be ad hoc, short term or long term- don't be put off by thinking it's a huge commitment.

Members warmly applauded the report.

4	A variety of issues were raised in subsequent discussion: 4.1 Possible invitations to AGM visiting speakers No invitations had been issued. Our local Councillors had recently attended the AGM of the Newcourt Community Association (of which Seabrook is a part), and had also met with the SORG Exec. Consideration would be given to issuing invitations to the Councillors, Michael Dart, City Planners and/or Bloor Homes to attend the 2023 Seabrook AGM. 4.2 Ransom Strip. Members expressed the hope that the Fish Street/Vernon Crescent ransom strip issue would soon be resolved, and the road opened up for vehicular access. There was particular concern expressed re access for emergency vehicles, and the need for ambulances to access vulnerable people in Phase 2. The ransom strip is not owned by Bloor or Persimmon, and there was a perceived danger that they might simply ignore the issue. The pedestrian access is useful but not a legal right of way. The proposed link between the top end of Dart Avenue and Admiral Way (currently fully fenced off) may also involve ransom strip issues, but Section 106 does not require that this is put in place for some considerable time - until 600/700 dwellings have been occupied. We will pursue conversations with ECC planners and Counsellors around these matters. 4.3 Adoption of roads by Devon CC Concerns were expressed about road safety issues with at least one significant accident by the sharp Dart Ave/Savoy St corner. There were also flooding issues at certain points on Dart Avenue. Bloor have not indicated a timescale for road adoption, but it looks like they are tidying up for withdrawal in Phase 1, and there is a hope that adoption of Phase 1 roads may happen sooner rather than later. Until that point, Bloor remain responsible for road issues. In principle they are liable to challenges re health and safety, but in practice many issues are unlikely to be addressed until the roads are adopted. DCC (unlike Bloor) can then install road signage and yellow lines as well as other traffic calming measures. Once the transition has occurred, we should consider requesting a risk assessment/ safety audits from DCC. It was not expected that the secondary access road from Topsham Road to Phase 2 would be opened as a public highway before phase 2b was completed.

	4.4 South West Water Compensation Letter Many residents had received a promise of £25 compensation from SW Water with regard to smells coming from recent major sewerage works at Countess Wear, but this letter does not appear to have gone to everyone on the development. This letter did not relate to specific local sewerage problems in individual properties: these needed to be addressed by individual householders via warranty or otherwise by employing contractors. 4.5 Solar Panels Questions were asked on how to access payments for electricity generated by solar panels. Different members appeared to be receiving very different amounts. SORG would seek further advice from members experiences and hoped to be able to share collective knowledge in due course.	
	The meeting concluded with thanks to all involved at 8.20 p.m.	