

Inspired by the past, picture your future...

LOOK! St Albans

our community voice on design

"In the spirit of community-led neighbourhood planning our ethos is to be transparent, proactive, respectful, collaborative, open, diverse, explorative and community-rooted."
<http://www.lookstalbans.org/> email lookstalbans@gmail.com Twitter [@LookStAlbans](https://twitter.com/LookStAlbans)

Minutes

Look! St Albans 5th representatives' group meeting to be held on Monday 22nd June 2015
at 7.30pm in Suite 19,
STANTA Board Room Business Centre, 3 Soothouse Spring, St Albans, Herts AL3 6PF

1) Apologies for absence

John Metcalf, Tim Leicester and Councillor Beric Read

Representatives present

Anthony Oliver, Mel Hilbrow, John Hoad, Vanessa Gregory, James Gregory, Chris Debenham, Helen Bishop, David Lloyd, Alan McCartney, Dan Fletcher, Richard Hardy,

2) Election of officers please see section 5.2 (e) of our constitution

The current officers had indicated they were willing to serve for a 2nd year. No other individuals had put themselves forward to serve in these positions.

Those Representative present made it clear their satisfaction with the current officers remaining in post.

The chairman did point out that the secretary, who had only stood in the absence of any other willing person at our inaugural AGM, was still finding the role a challenge as he worked full time in London. He hoped in due course another volunteer might come forward to take on the role.

3) Conflicts of interest as per 6. of our constitution CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Should any member of Look! St Albans or the Representatives' Group, or any associate partner or relative of such member, have a pecuniary or potential pecuniary interest in any city centre site of interest to Look! St Albans, that member should declare his or her interest at or before the start of the meeting and not vote on any issue pertaining to that site.



developers/landowners was one aspect that needed thought especially in view of the remarks I have already made in this report.

An outline Look! St Albans diary events since last Reps Group Meeting on 24th November 2014 which I, or others named have attended.

Mon 1st December met Councillor Chris White with Mel Hilbrow, for tea

Tuesday 2nd December AM CVS office with Chris Debenham for one-to-one fundraising advice

PM met Councillor Grover for tea

Monday 8th December PM informal Gathering was great fun with Team Look! and our supporters

Monday 9th February AGM I have received positive feedback

Wednesday 11th February [Parliamentary launch Civic Voice manifesto & 'Collaborative Planning for All'](#) Portcullis House 2pm All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Civic Societies.

24th February invited to City Centre partnership evening meeting

13th March with James Gregory and Dan Fletcher Mayors Civic Banquet

24th March with Chris Debenham further one-to-one meeting with CVS

1st April meeting with Dan Fletcher, Chris Debenham and me in Kingston Smith

5th May CVS training 'Better Bid Writing' with James Gregory

12th May CVS training 'The Effective Trustee' with James Gregory

21st May Launch of the Green Triangle at breakfast event <http://www.thegreentriangle.org/>

Amongst Aims and Objectives To develop green technology enterprise in the area. Promote the district as an international centre for green innovation and technology

PM A workshop and gathering for London's neighbourhood planners led by Tony Burton

Evening '4th London Neighbourhood Planning Gathering' **Dan Fletcher and David Lloyd to update us later on this.**

27th May 2015 Historic Towns Forum Annual Legislation Update, Bircham Dyson Bell London

3rd June *Direct Planning (Pilot) Bill introduced in The House of Lords Create Streets Reps Group sent essay explaining underlying rationale & intent*

4th June James Gregory and I attended. *Create Streets held an event at The Legatum Institute entitled 'London needs to build the right housing not just more housing'. The Legatum Institute is a charitable public policy think-tank whose mission is to help people lead more prosperous lives. The Institute defines prosperity as a combination of wealth and wellbeing.*

Comments on Chairman's update

John Hoad explained that the government had given temporary permitted development rights pertaining to changing offices to residential for a period of three years. These new homes had to be occupied by May 2016. In some areas this had been welcomed in others such as St Albans this had changed the character of areas over which residents had expressed concern. There was also concern by some that this had employment disadvantages with the consequential loss of office space. On the other hand these changes had increased the number of housing within St Albans which reduced the need on the Greenbelt.

The chairman thanked John for this update.



Subsequently John Hoad wished to assure the Reps Group that the planning department, as previously reported in our May 2014 meeting, had passed on our contact details to the developer of the Ziguart site in early 2014. John was able to inform the meeting that the developer had since decided to use a design review as their chosen way forward. John reiterated that the planning department could only recommend Look! St Albans in such cases.

There was a general acknowledgement by those present that the planning department had done their best in this case and it was not of course compulsory for a developer to pursue contact with Look! St Albans.

6) Treasurer's update

The Balance Sheet shows that a cash balance of £372.65 was held at the end of the accounting period, and that income exceeded expenditure by £115.89, and these are the bare facts of Look! St Albans' financial situation.

The reality of Look!'s finances is perhaps better shown by the Summary of Receipts and Payments, from which you will see that all Receipts were attributable to donations collected at our public meetings, or from individuals, the latter mainly but not exclusively the paying of bills by officers. Whilst not a desirable state of affairs, it is quite common in the early years of a new voluntary body, and possibly a reflection of the fact that Look! is not only a new body but also a new concept in the field of town planning. This makes it harder to engender public enthusiasm for Look!'s aims other than amongst those sections of the St Albans public from time to time affected by a planning proposal with which Look! is concerned.

The Summary of Receipts and Payments includes items that have been paid directly by individuals to the payee. Those items have therefore not gone through the bank account, but it is considered important to show them within the Summary as an indication of liabilities for which Look! must budget.

Raising funds continues to be a problem, not only for the reason already mentioned, but because Look!'s activities are not sanctioned for funding through the Department for Communities and Local Government. There is however genuine hope that this latter state of affairs may change if proposed new legislation comes into effect; but it would remain to be seen whether that legislation would simply fund neighbourhood bodies in settling new design codes with a local authority (a stage already achieved by Look!), rather than also funding charrettes with developers thereafter.

June 2015

Christopher Debenham, Treasurer

Look! St Albans - Our Community Voice on Design



Balance sheet at 31st March 2015

	<u>2014/15</u>	<u>2013/14</u>
ASSETS		
Cash at bank	372.65	256.76
Represented by:		
ACCUMULATED FUND		
As at 31.03.14	256.76	0.00
Add surplus/(deficit) for year	<u>115.89</u>	<u>256.76</u>
As at 31.03.15	<u>£372.65</u>	<u>£256.76</u>

Budgeted Expenditure 2015

Annual costs

(i.e. costs likely to be payable annually regardless of whether Look! St Albans is involved in a charrette/workshop)

Indemnity insurance policy premium	£475.00
Subscriptions to other bodies, e.g. CVA, Flickr	40.00
Printing, postage and stationery	100.00
Website - hosting, domain name	85.00
- maintenance	250.00
Hire of premises, e.g. AGM	<u>75.00</u>
	<u>£1,025.00</u>

Likely charrette/workshop costs (per charrette)

(i.e. those costs Look! St Albans should expect to have to pay on the occasion of each charrette - assuming a small to medium sized development, one day charrette)

Publicity and printing costs	£250.00
Banner - costs to erect and remove	500.00
Venue - hire for charrette	250.00
Venue - hire for public meeting (pre charrette)	125.00
- hire for public meeting (post charrette)	125.00
Refreshments - allow	<u>200.00</u>
	<u>£1,450.00</u>

Guideline costs for independent external facilitators (per charrette)

(assumes a small to medium sized development. The majority of such costs would be expected as a contribution from the developer/landowner. However, Look! St Albans might be required to settle any difference)



Two specialists @ £1,000 each per day
(assume 4 days' preparation, charrette and report) £8,000.00

One facilitator @ £650 per day
(assume 10 days' preparation, charrette and report) £6,500.00

£14,500.00

7) Updates on events and activities from individual Representative Group members acting as ambassadors for Look! St Albans since last group meeting.

Dan Fletcher's Summary report on the Neighbourhood Planning Gathering on 21 May. Dan Fletcher and David Lloyd attended on behalf of Look! St Albans

On the evening of May 21 I attended the 4th LONDON N'HOOD PLANNING GATHERING Spring Series, organised by Angela Koch of Imagine Places. It was held in the excellent setting of the Queen Elizabeth Hall Roof Garden at the Southbank Centre. It was advertised as an informal get together of like-minded people and weather was good, and the conversation flowed. Many of those there were people from London interested in neighbourhood planning. They had previously been to a workshop and gathering for London's neighbourhood planners during the afternoon at the nearby Coin Street Centre. The afternoon was led by Tony Burton, a freelance community planner, with a long history of working within neighbourhood planning. He founded Civic Voice in 2010, and has various relevant board roles including the Big Lottery Fund. I chatted to him and he was very supportive of the energy and vision of those there working away in their neighbourhoods. There were also representatives from DCLG (Aidan Wilkie and Jenny Frew), as well as many neighbourhood fora.

My take-home message from the event was that St Albans is seen as a pace-setter in the realms of neighbourhood planning. The fact that we have already collaborated on local design codes, have good connections with various stakeholders and have managed to hold a Charrette, is seen as something for other areas to emulate. They face barriers include gathering consensus from enough local people, gaining traction with local government and having credibility with developers. We may have side-stepped some London-style challenges in St Albans because of the defined nature of our area of interest, but we should be pleased with what we have achieved and seek to publicise what we do to motivate those in London wanting to do the same.

David confirmed that he too had enjoyed both the evening event and had also attended the workshop for London's neighbourhood planners led by Tony Burton.

Anthony Oliver updated us on Skipton Building Society Grassroots giving award scheme.

8) Chairman to close meeting. Confirm date for next informal gathering as 20th July, venue to be decided.

(The informal gathering was held in The Peahen Pub on 20th July)

The meeting closed at 9pm and members adjourned to nearest hostelry for refreshments.



These minutes were approved by those present and signed by the chairman at the 5th representatives' group meeting held on Monday 25th January 2016

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Chair Look! St Albans Our Community Voice on Design

