

Old Ratton Residents Association

Extraordinary General Meeting – 12th December 2024

7.30pm Willingdon Memorial Hall

Attendees

ORRA Committee Members John Cuzick – Acting Chairman, Charles Hattersley, Janet Olliff - Treasurer, Jan Creasy, Greg Evans, Jenny Diack, Gary Robinson. Liz Bedwell (LACON)

ORRA Residents

Residents were represented from the following properties:

Walnut Tree Walk: 1, 2, 3, 5, 11, 16, 18, 19, 22, 28

The Close: 2, 8

Ratton Drive: 2, 9, 10, 11, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 26, 39, 43

Ratton Garden: 2, 5, 6, 7, 17

Upper Ratton Drive: 52

Linkway: 6

The Grove: 2, 10, 13, 17

Apologies

Walnut Tree Walk: 23

The Close: 6

Ratton Drive: 12, 14

Ratton Garden: 10, 12, 15

Upper Ratton Drive: 50

Linkway: 8

Agenda

Introduction and brief opening statement by John Cuzick Acting Chairman

- Broadband BT Open Reach Update – John Cuzick
 - Q&A
- Roads Survey Update and Required Works – Greg Evans
 - Q&A
- Committee Changes – Charles Hattersley
 - Q&A
- Meeting Close

John Cuzick opened the meeting – he introduced himself as the Acting Chairman and introduced the committee. He told the audience that he had only recently joined the committee as a co-opted member and had agreed to act as chairman until the next AGM and was duly elected to the position. John noted that he would actively encourage someone to put themselves forward to take on the permanent role, as his interests were leading in other areas of committee work. He reinforced that his aim was to see a strong community spirit across the estate and encouraged residents to come forward to see how the committee worked and to potentially join the group to support the management of the estate.

John mentioned to the audience that only the three requested agenda items would be discussed during the meeting, and if a vote on any of those items was necessary it would be able to go ahead as a quorum had been reached.

Fast Fibre UPDATE –

John Cuzick gave this update on Fast Fibre installation progress – below is the verbatim report that John Cuzick delivered at the EGM

'I took over as lead for fast fibre in late November 2024. Since then, I have attempted to move the project forward. Last Friday 6th December I posted an update on Facebook which I will repeat now for the benefit of those who do not use Facebook.

I have spoken to several residents who might be impacted by proposed dig works by Openreach on Walnut Tree Walk. While there were various concerns raised, all were in favour of the project proceeding. Further consultation with affected residents will be ongoing.

I have also contacted the project manager for Openreach. The current phase of works in the Hampden Park ward has concluded and the ORRA estate was not included in those works. However, Openreach are committed to providing full Ultrafast fibre coverage and there will be opportunities to revisit the estate in the future.

I continue to press Openreach regarding the timeline of these works and I will update residents when I know more.

I would like to reassure residents that existing connections will remain in place until the upgrade can occur. We are not in danger of being disconnected from this essential service.

That statement was posted on the 6th Dec. However, I spoke to the Openreach project manager on the 12th Dec and have a further update:

The Openreach representative stated that Openreach would like permissions for the whole ORRA estate so that they can complete all the remaining works in one go. However, I told him that if an affected resident did refuse permission, an alternative solution would need to be found. We discussed some options and agreed to arrange a site visit in the new year to examine problem areas in more detail.

Openreach do seem keen to complete the project, and I am hopeful that a mutually acceptable agreement can be found. If all issues regarding permissions can be resolved, the project lead at BT suggested that works might commence in the Spring of 2025. Residents will be fully consulted before any works are agreed and I will continue to provide updates as I receive them'.

Completed verbatim report followed by questions from the audience:

Dr Wilkinson asked if negotiations were ongoing and how many properties were objecting to work being carried out on their land?

John stated that digging permissions would be needed from at least three properties on Walnut Tree walk to clear blocked ducting. While none of the affected properties had refused permission, some had reservations regarding reinstatement guarantees from Openreach. These negotiations are ongoing.

Mr Carn asked how many properties are involved to complete the project.

Janet responded there are 149 properties on the ORRA estate.

John mentioned that the current speed of the BT connection for the estate is a maximum of 76 MB per second. Once Fast Fibre is installed it would reach speeds of up to 1600 MB per second. Many neighbouring streets that border the estate have already been upgraded to this higher speed of 1600 MB per second.

It was commented by one of the residents that not being able to offer Fast Fibre on the Ratton Estate may affect property values, particularly when many people have a hybrid working arrangement and require faster speeds.

Mr Giles asked if all residents have been informed of the project.

John responded the project had been presented by Mr Pavey at the AGM in May 2024.

Terence Clark asked if telegraph poles could be used.

John confirmed that telegraph poles might be an alternative to digging up the ducting if the issue of permissions could not be resolved satisfactorily.

Mark Blunden asked for information about the route into Walnut Tree Walk.

John explained that there is ducting in Walnut Tree Walk and everyone is being consulted individually as to the impact of work being carried out using the existing ducting. It was confirmed that there is a blockage in three areas in Walnut Tree Walk and residents have been consulted with a view to allow BT access to rectify. It was noted that mole technology may damage existing infrastructure and this is not an ideal option. John mentioned that there are two ducting feeds from the main road into the estate: a short section covering lower Ratton Drive and a main feed that passes up Walnut Tree Walk to serve the majority of the estate.

Mark Thornton asked if the Open Reach policy was to make good.

John responded that they are a reputable company and once we have more detail, we can give greater assurance to all of the residents. Mark recommended that there should be a mechanism for updating residents on Open Reach progress. Initially it was agreed that this most recent update will be included in the Spring Newsletter. If residents were agreeable, the Committee would obtain email addresses and telephone numbers for everyone to provide continuous updates. **(Within GDPR guidance these email addresses would not be shared widely outside of the ORRA residents' group and would only be held by the committee and used to communicate important updates).**

Jo Ansell commented that she had not seen the Open Reach map.

It was agreed by the committee that this will be made available on the website.

Road Survey Update – Greg Evans

Greg Evans mentioned that the road survey completed in 2024 had highlighted as a priority 2 properties that were affected by driveway flooding every time there was a heavy downpour the recommendation from the report was for upstands to be installed at the top of the drives at numbers 20 and 39 Ratton Drive to interrupt the flow of surface water, a specification has been sent to a contractors to commence work to be agreed and commenced as soon as possible.

There is also a recommendation to clear all gullies to ensure they are clear of silt and debris; this will be part of an ongoing drain and gully improvement plan.

Greg mentioned that County Clean have cleared leaves from the estate as a requirement to attempt to keep gullies clear during the autumn.

Greg reinforced to the residents that it has been challenging to get road contractors to take on smaller projects such as these, hence the delay in starting the work, as mentioned previously a contractor has now been identified.

Questions for Greg on the back of his report –

Dr, Wilkinson asked to see the proposals and Greg agreed to liaise with him and Mr Pavey asked what was proposed for his flooding issues and Greg responded by saying upstands will be used to alleviate the issue and he would also liaise with him prior to work starting.

Carl Williams asked if the council were able to clear leaves on the estate, Julia Batchelor commented that this had happened in previous years however Sandy Boyce Sharpe commented that she was aware that the local council have stretched finances, and they are currently only sweeping major roads. This was previously only a goodwill concession to the Ratton Estate and not something we could rely on.

Mark Blunden reported a few potholes on Ratton Drive – could these be rectified as soon as possible Greg responded that he was aware and work to rectify would be part of an ongoing programme alongside gully and drain clearance.

Sue Greenleigh from Ratton Gardens asked if there had been any recommendations to rectify the excess water issues on the paths to the Ratton Garden flats, Greg and Gary commented that they had seen no evidence of that flooding and had visited the flats after a downpour but could not identify the problem, both were agreeable to consider work if

there were issues and requested some photos of the problem when it happened next.

Committee Changes during 2024 – presented by Charles Hattersley

Charles talked through the changes including the resignation of the previous chairman Nigel Wesson who moved from the area in the Spring 2024.

Charles Hattersley was elected to the committee at the AGM in May 2024 and then two more members were co-opted onto the committee they are Janice Creasy – working with Jenny Diack on the tree management on the estate and John Cuzick – who is Acting Chairman.

Charles presented the case for new members, many of the audience were previously committee members and Charles asked them to raise their hands at the meeting, clearly a lot of previous expertise.

Charles asked for residents to come forward if they were interested in joining the committee and invited them to get in touch with any committee member if they were interested, anyone would be welcome to come along to a committee meeting to see how it runs and there would be no obligation to join if they could not commit the time.

Questions and comments from the audience.....

John Nay was very complimentary on the improvements in communication.

Carol Fage raised query about the Lacon management company responsibility on the estate and Liz Bedwell from Lacon responded to this question, she told the audience that it is still a work in progress situation and Lacon are still looking at how they work with the committee to best serve the community.

Liz reinforced that there is still a lot to learn about the road, tree management and planning as part of her responsibilities in addition to dealing with day to day requests from residents on behalf of the committee.

Julia Batchelor asked if the original contract requirements with Lacon were being adhered to. Liz noted that there had been changes since the original contract was agreed. Julia said that she did not think ORRA were where they needed to be from a contractual point of view with Lacon. Several committee members mentioned that they had recently had a meeting at Lacon offices to make recommendations on how to work together more effectively. It is the aim of the committee to continue with a hybrid working arrangement and this may take time and patience.

Carl Williams asked whether there was an arrangement with the council to provide leaf sweeping of the roads. He was told there is currently no arrangement in place. Since we are a private estate, private contractors are used to provide road sweeping.

Dr. Wilkinson asked where he could find committee biographies as he had no idea of who's who, John directed him to the website.

Mrs Wilkinson requested that there is more information on which committee member leads on a particular topic – roles and responsibilities.

Peter Davey from Ratton Gardens said it may be useful to look at the Ratton Gardens management company model as this may help with LACON integration.

Trevor Clark – highlighted that he thought John Cuzick would make a great chairman and thanked him for his input but also thought that Lacon could do more and have greater responsibility – John responded saying that Liz Bedwell from Lacon cannot achieve everything in the timeframe allocated.

Phil Tong then remarked to the audience that we elect a committee to represent us and it is up to the committee to look at how we can work more efficiently with Lacon Property Management.

Mr Carn – Thanked the chairman for chairing the meeting and said he would like to see how the committee works and would welcome a discussion about becoming a committee member with the potential to attend a committee meeting.

John's final comment at the end of his opening was please consider joining us!

John Cuzick closed the EGM, thanking residents for their attendance.