

ERITH TOWN FORUM GENERAL MEETING



Thursday, 28 July 2016 - 8.00pm-9.00pm
Bexley College (Erith Campus), Walnut Tree Road, Erith

ATTENDANCE

Forum Members:

Doreen Ives (*Chair*), Cllr Edward Boateng, Cllr Abena Oppong-Asare, DJ Akande ((Erith Riverside Residents Association), Joan Armitage (*Treasurer*)(Bexley Civic Society), Chris Broadbent (Disabilities Groups), Bill Brookes (Erith Playhouse Theatre), Alison Fisher (Erith Rowing Club), Ray Hudson (Bexley Neighbourhood Watch Association), Jacquie McDonnell (Bexley College), Jerry Martin (Erith Safer Neighbourhood Panel), Dennis Roberts (Erith Baptist Church) and Alec Tapper (FORGE).

Members of the Public:

Janet Baxter (Carrack House, Bexley Road), Duncan & Eileen Brodie (Windrush Court), Tracy Copley (Lesney Park), Dan Fee (Lesney Park Road), Linda Finch (Bexley Road), Peter Kilner (Brasted Road), Barry Lupton (Appold Street), Joan McCarthy (Avenue Road), Caroline Moore (Orbit South Housing Association), Therese Oliver (Lesney Park), Irwin Parkhurst (Lesney Park Road) and Chris Wakeman (Lesney Park Road).

Speakers – London Borough of Bexley:

Deborah Efemini (DECK Social, Regeneration Consultancy), Carole Field (Orbit South Housing Association) and Peter Kot (Evergreen Care Bexley).

Also Present:

John Abbott (Note Taker).

Apologies for Absence:

Teresa Pearce (MP for Erith & Thamesmead) and Cllr Joe Ferreira.

NOTES OF MEETING

Action

1. PRESENTATION – EVERGREEN CARE BEXLEY – PETER KOT.

- 1.1 Peter Kot gave a presentation on the services provided by Evergreen Care Bexley for older vulnerable adults in the local community to improve their circumstances through advocacy, friendship and practical support.
- 1.2 He highlighted in particular the Home Support service to assist in areas of shopping, cleaning, laundry and meals, the Clean Team – a free and confidential service for struggling senior citizens and vulnerable adults to reinstate cleanliness and order in their homes, and the Wellbeing service provided by Home Support workers to check on the wellbeing, safety and security of people in their home.
- 1.3 The service employed 14 people based at the Belvedere Baptist Church but without any Government funding business sponsorship and any financial or other help was welcomed.
- 1.4 The Forum was impressed by the valuable work performed by Evergreen Care Bexley in assisting elderly citizens for example returning home after a stay in hospital and overcoming the risk of isolation many might otherwise suffer.
- 1.5 Jacquie McDonnell said that there was scope for students on the social work course at Bexley College to assist with the scheme as part of their work experience requirement.

2. PRESENTATION – ARTHUR STREET ESTATE, ERITH – CAROLE FIELD.

- 2.1 Carole Field gave a presentation on the recent public consultation exercise carried out with the residents of the Arthur Street housing estate on possible future regeneration now that the first phases of the new Erith Park estate were completed and occupied.

NOTES OF MEETING		Action
2.2	Despite the resources spent on managing the estate, Orbit had found that residents considered it an unattractive and unpopular place to live. An overwhelming 90% of residents said they would wish to leave and welcomed any changes that the housing association could make.	
2.3	Carole Field reported that the results of the consultation were still being fully assessed but that any regeneration scheme would likely retain the same housing density (approx. 280 homes) and similar proportions of affordable housing and tenure as the Erith Park scheme (80% affordable).	
3.	PRESENTATION – PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS – DEBORAH EFEMINI.	
3.1	Deborah Efemini gave a presentation on the public consultation exercise being carried out into the Erith Links Project following funding of £4.2 million being secured from the London Enterprise Panel's Growing Places Fund for Erith Regeneration Programme and £2.7 million funding from Transport for London. TfL had agreed initial funding for improvements to the public areas in the town and agreed to follow this up with further investment over the next three to five years.	
3.2	This built on the success of the Council's bid to the London Regeneration Fund to finance major physical improvements to key areas of the town, particularly to the area between the Town Hall and the Post Office.	
3.3	Deborah Efemini explained that the consultation was based on the three areas of the route between the train station and the town centre, traffic and the "Fish" roundabout and the public realm around the town centre.	
3.4	The Chair noted that apart from the "Fish" roundabout, a number of public art features already existed in Erith – the Thames Barge at the former White Hart PH, and the Earth columns by the roundabout	
3.5	The main issues raised at the meeting were the need to resolve the longstanding problem of providing disabled access at Erith Railway Station, the traffic congestion in Queens Road/South Road (with a suggestion that a traffic underpass be built at the roundabout) and the allocation of funding for improvements at Erith Riverside.	
4.	CHAIR'S REPORT.	
4.1	Doreen Ives thanked everyone for their good wishes during her time in hospital and recovery.	
4.2	The Council was inviting bids (deadline extended to 5 August 2016) for financial support up to £2,500 for Christmas lighting in town centres. She raised the question of whether the Forum should bid for Christmas lighting or perhaps a Christmas tree in the town centre or consider other options of either not bidding (like Northumberland Heath last year) or using the money to promote events at other times during the year.	
4.3	After discussion during which there was some criticism of the Christmas lighting last year, it was agreed that there was a preference for a Christmas tree in the town centre and that the Forum should work with the Town Centre Manager on activities to promote footfall in the town.	
4.4	Another issue was the promoting the Forum on social media like Twitter and Facebook and Therese Oliver agreed to look into the possibility of helping.	TO
4.5	The Chair also referred to the petition being organised by the Danson Youth Trust in respect of the Welling Youth Club following the Council's decision to withdraw grant funding.	
5.	TREASURER'S REPORT.	
	Joan Armitage reported the balance in the Forum's account was £1,1678.82. The deposit of £1,000 (d/d 10/2/16) was in respect of the return of a donation towards a Bexley Youth Service football event.	
6.	MATTERS ARISING FROM LAST MEETING – 28 APRIL 2016.	
6.1	The notes of the last meeting held on 28 April 2016 were circulated.	
6.2	(Item 2) - It was noted that the operation of the Wednesday market had currently been suspended and there was further support expressed for a Saturday market which it was felt would generate more footfall.	

NOTES OF MEETING		Action
7.	TOWN CENTRE SITES & RIVERSIDE SHOPPING CENTRE.	
7.1	It was reported that progress was being made on Mambocinos taking up the vacant Unit 11 opposite Argos which would allow a restaurant use beyond the normal closure times of the shopping centre.	
7.2	Further questions were raised about the future of a number of sites – the Carnegie Library building in Walnut Tree Road, the Running Horses PH in Erith High Street and the former White Hart (Potion) PH where there was a planning application for a block of flats at the rear.	
8.	FORGE (FRIENDS OF RIVERSIDE GARDENS).	
8.1	Alec Tapper reported that in its 7 th year FORGE membership was now nearing 200 members. The summer planting, mixing both annuals and perennials had produced particularly fine displays. A new Parks officer had joined the Council and as part of his work on Erith Riverside Gardens, he had introduced some changes to the planting layout and a new colour scheme.	
8.2	The main problem was the need to fetch water from the flats as the water point was kept secured by the Council. It was suggested that some of the new public realm funding for Erith Town Centre should be spent on provision of a more accessible water supply for the Gardens.	
9.	ERITH SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD PANEL.	
	Jerry Martin reported that the new Chair of the Panel was John Turner. At the last meeting the Panel had agreed its three policing priorities were Anti-Social Behaviour, Motor Vehicle Crime and Security Marking to deter theft and assist in identification of rightful owner.	
10.	CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP.	
10.1	Dennis Roberts referred to the recent article in the Bexley Magazine about the launch of the Bexley Linked Care – a data sharing project that allowed doctors and nurses at Urgent Care Centres at Erith Hospital and Queen Mary's Hospital and the out-of-hours GP service to access patients' medical records with their consent.	
10.2	He also referred to the good progress being made on the introduction of a cancer unit and kidney unit at Queen Mary's Hospital.	
11.	ERITH FUN DAY – 9 JULY 2016.	
11.1	Therese Oliver reported on the extremely successful Erith Fun Day on Saturday 9 July 2016 at the new venue of the Erith Recreation Ground which attracted approximately 3,000 people with many families staying 3 to 4 hours picnicking. The Theatre group and the petting farm had been very popular.	
11.2	Some difficulties had occurred in preparing the bigger site and the wind had caused problems for the gazebos. There were issues over the main food concession and extra bottles of water had to be brought from Morrisons. More temporary toilets would be required for next year as there had been complaints about the Leisure Centre charging for the use of their toilets.	
12	DATES OF MEETINGS 2016/17.	
	(venue Bexley College (Erith Campus), Walnut Tree Road beginning at 7pm):	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday 27 October 2016 • Thursday 26 January 2017 • Thursday 27 April 2017 (AGM) 	