

## ERITH TOWN FORUM AGM AND ORDINARY MEETING

Notes of the 91st meeting of the **ERITH TOWN FORUM** held at VETS Club, Park Crescent (junction with Glebe Way), Erith on WEDNESDAY 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2013 at 7pm.

**Present:** Doreen Ives (Chair)  
Joan Armitage (Bexley Civic Society), Bill Brookes (Erith Playhouse Theatre), DJ (Erith Riverside Residence Association), Phillippa James (NHS Community Engagement Officer), Rev. Rob Radcliffe (St John's Church), Dennis Roberts (Baptist Church, Erith), Alec Tapper (Forge), Rosemary White (Erith Park Residents), Julie Clark (Minute/Admin officer)

**Members of the Public:**

P Cadman, L Finch, I Parkhurst, D Brodie, E Brodie, J Baxter, C Wakeman, S Boxall, K Hadley, M Davis, J Baker, J McCarthy, P Donaldson, T Copley, T Oliver, M Beadle, B Abrahams, A Purkis

**Speakers:** Caroline Field – Erith Park Development  
Danny Ridgeway and Andy Pike – Bexley College

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**Forum Members:** Councillors Chris Ball, Margaret O'Neill and Edward Boateng, Ray Hudson, Jerry Martin, Les Hoskins, Chris Betts, Alison Fisher, Andrew Grieve, Mike Dodsworth

**Others:**

### **PRESENTATION – CAROLINE FIELD – ERITH PARK DEVELOPMENT**

The Chair thanked everyone for coming and introduced Caroline Field from Orbit who are responsible for the new Erith Park Development which was the old Larner Road estate. Caroline reminded the meeting that Erith Park is a regeneration project, The tower blocks being demolished have been the homes of a lot of people and the film shown was intended to capture the moment of change. She said Orbit commissioned a poem to be written and a local film maker, a student of Bexley College, put it together for them. Caroline put on the short film. She said the 5<sup>th</sup> block Verona House will be gone in the next 5 weeks. By the end of the summer buildings will start to go up and by the end of March will have new homes. The Chair thanked Caroline for keeping the Forum informed about the development.

### **Danny Ridgeway and Andy Pike – Bexley College**

The Chair introduced them once again to the Forum. Danny thanked the Chair for inviting them back. He said it is 2 years since we last came and said the building has started. He continued to say there have been a few problems and one thing is there are some cables running across that site which did not appear on the plans, having been told they were not in use they were cut which resulted in a power cut for local dwellings. Danny apologised to everyone for that and said we don't want to get off on the wrong foot. He continued to say as it currently stands, we are still on target for July 2014 and September 2014 college to open. He said we will come back to give an update. The Chair said that one of our business representatives, Lorraine from the Running Horses, said she foresees a good improvement in the town. The Chair also said she had an email from Chris Betts who said he has interest coming in because of the building of the college, particularly looking at more eateries. The Chair said the new college should be really good for the town. Andy Pike said their plans include a coffee shop at the front of the building and a member of the public said hopefully your students will use the riverside gardens too. Andy Pike said students could use Riverside Gardens for photography etc. He said we will have hair salons with reduced prices for hair cuts, (all supervised), beauty salons, a gym etc. Danny commented on the triangle of land just outside the new building and said they were hoping to get something done with that because he said it is a shame to have a nice new college then a triangle of unused land! A member of the public pointed out that there were some concrete blocks on the pavement on walking past the new college site and wondered if they were going to stay there. Andy Pike promised to look into it. DJ asked about parking again asking how many students, lecturers etc drive. Danny said at the moment, because we are at the top of a hill lots of students drive, but he said we do not anticipate so many will and expect a reduction in those driving. He said we are working with the Council and reviewing parking. We are trying to encourage people not to use cars. The Chair asked about the involvement of the Adult Education College within the new college, Danny said we hope to work with them. A member of the public asked if there had been any further developments with regards to getting access at the station. The Chair said Section 106 money had been used elsewhere. Andy Pike said Bexley College are very supportive of the campaign to get disabled access to the railway station. Dennis Roberts mentioned the old swimming pool site being used as a car park. Andy Pike said the Council regard that as their high value site. A member of the public asked how many parking spaces there would be. Andy Pike said 41. A member of the public said she hoped they would have a walnut tree on the site. Andy Pike said we are looking at planting some trees and there will be some other planting. The Chair thanked them for coming to talk at the Forum meeting.

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

### **1. CHAIR'S REPORT**

The Chair said she had emailed her report so she said she was not going to read it all but just touch on some significant points. She spoke of the various speakers that have attended the meetings eg Health/hospital provision in the area, the new Bexley College build, Erith Park (Larner Road), the extension of Christ Church school and the Strategic Parking Review.

The Chair mentioned the policing issues in Erith and the ward priorities, also the attendance at the ward panel meetings increasing as reported by Jerry Martin. The Chair spoke about Forge and how it has gone from strength to strength. She reported on the working relationship that continues with the Shopping Centre and Frogmore, who give funding and support community events. The Chair said we are also hoping for the Christmas lights again for this year in conjunction with the Council. The Chair said that the Christmas afternoon tea in the Baptist church had been enjoyed this year but said the Management Committee had recommended this be discontinued due to decreased attendance in the last few years. Doreen said the summer outing had been another success. The Jubilee Lunch was a great success as well as the teas and cakes served on the afternoon of the arrival of the Olympic torch. The Chair commented because of these successful events we are planning a lunch to celebrate the Queen's Coronation on 2<sup>nd</sup> June and a festival on 13<sup>th</sup> July to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Sailing Barge Race. The Chair finalised her report by saying all these social events help to make Erith more than just a town centre and demonstrates how the focus of Erith Town Forum has evolved over the years. Initially totally concerned with regenerating the area and getting a new Shopping Centre, the Forum now also addresses the need to build a settled, multicultural community, proud of the town and anxious to look after Erith, its environment and future.

### **2. TREASURER'S REPORT**

Joan Armitage had copies of the accounts for anyone who wanted a copy. She said there is an amount of £24.78 which is unaccounted for and said it might be to do with the Alexander Selkirk event. The Chair said we would have another £500 from Frogmore and £500 from Cory so another £1,000. The Chair commented we had got a sponsor for the Barge Race – The Erith Group who very kindly gave £500. She said Orbit are supporting the event and Bexley College gave £50 and said the Riverside Shopping Centre may give something too. The Chair thanked Joan for her work.

### **3. CONSTITUTION CHANGES/MEMBERSHIP CHANGES**

The Chair said every year we try to get another group to join. She said we already have Erith Yacht Club and the Rowing Club and said we were hoping to persuade someone to join from Erith Swimming Club. The Chair said she had spoken to Jenny Vick who was going to ask them but as yet we have not had a yes or no. The Chair also informed the meeting about making another change of adding another neighbourhood group. She said we already have two resident groups and said she would like to bring **Rosemary White in as 3<sup>rd</sup> resident group representing the new Erith Park**. This was moved, seconded and agreed without dissent.

It was discussed about having some other residents groups added. It was moved, seconded and agreed without dissent to have 3 more groups represented, with names of individuals being added at a later date: **Oxleas, Bexley College, Lesney Park Action Group**.

Alec Tapper asked whether we could consider having another objective in the Constitution Objectives. After discussion the following was moved, seconded and agreed without dissent:

**Objective 3.4 - To promote Erith Town Centre, Riverside Gardens Erith, and Thames River Erith Residential Foreshore.**

#### **Election of Officers**

**The following appointments were moved, seconded and agreed without dissent**

Chair – Doreen Ives, Vice Chair (Business) – Lorraine Davidson, Vice Chair (Community) – Dennis Roberts, Treasurer – Joan Armitage

The Management Committee remained the same – Rena Papa, Chris Broadbent, Ray Hudson, Jerry Martin, Councillor Margaret O'Neill, Les Hoskins - + Chair, Vice- Chairs and Treasurer

## **ORDINARY MEETING**

### **1. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING (MARCH 2013)**

The Chair said Warmlake sports had been pleased with the letter from the Forum.

**Bus Shelters and seats** – Margaret was looking into the problem of the bus stop that had blown away and the seats that have been taken away. Alec Tapper said he had met with London Transport and they had been repairing bus shelters in Belvedere.

**ACTION: Cllr. O'NEILL**

### **2. HEALTH MATTERS**

The Chair asked Dennis Roberts to report on the latest health issues after attending a meeting regarding Queen Mary's Hospital. He said it was reported that over 40,000 people were treated in urgent care and GP out of hours service. 170,000 outpatient attendance, 12,000 day care procedures, 2,000 in patient procedures, 9,000 patients received rehabilitation or intermediate care and they still made a loss of £10.9M in 2012-13. He said the core part of the site will transfer to Oxleas. He said the areas of site no longer required for NHS services would be disposed of eg. Kent Women's wing nursery and Hyde housing development. Mental health inpatient services for Bexley and Bromley would be consolidated at Queen Mary's Hospital. Services at Queen Mary's Hospital would be procured by local commissioners to ensure continuity.

The Chair asked Phillippa about Erith hospital. She reported that it is still owned by Oxleas and run by SLHT and from October will be run by Darenth Valley and there are no current plans to change this. Phillippa to email confirmation of this to the Chair

**ACTION: PHILLIPPA JAMES**

### **3. RIVERSIDE SHOPPING CENTRE UPDATE**

The Chair reported on behalf of Chris Betts who had sent his apologies. She said he had said the shops and other businesses seem to be doing reasonably well, particularly the national multiples but less so with the independents. It was reported that footfall was averaging at 20% higher than two to three years ago and over 50% higher than in 2008. Riverside have let Warmlake Sports go early because they have not found someone to take it on. The Chair said Chris Betts hopes they will find a new occupier soon. The Chair reported similar circumstances for Owens Hardware. There is also concern whether the Law Centre can keep going as their funding has been cut or withdrawn. The Chair reported on behalf of Chris saying that on a more positive note they are noticing a bit more interest in Erith as a result of the College development. The Chair reported on them putting in a small amount of financial support in exchange for a mention and hopefully the opportunity to display a banner/flag on the Riverside Gardens for the Barge race.

### **4. FORGE**

Alec reported on the launch of a major summer planting for next two weeks. He continued, regarding membership, saying that it is continuing at a healthy pace. He said so many of the community value the gardens, giving actual support and seeing it as a valuable asset in North Bexley. Alex said the Policy Unit Group meets every week. A 4<sup>th</sup> Clean up Day had been held and Thames 21 played a major part to get traffic cones and trollies out. He said over all the clear ups there have seen less trollies each time. He said we got one and three quarter tons of waste from the foreshore and footpath and was great that we had more people attending. He said there were 60 people including the Army cadets, Cllr. O'Neill came as well as Terry Middleditch in his wheel chair who acted as anchor man in the tug of war to get the trollies out! Alec reported on how nice it is to see younger people and different ethnic groups coming to participate. He said FORGE would have a stall at the both Riverside Festival and the Sailing Barge Festival.

### **5. CORONATION COMMUNITY LUNCH**

The Chair reported on this taking place on 2<sup>nd</sup> June in Christ Church Hall, 12.30-3.30. It's a free event and the Chair said she had about 15/16 tickets left.

### **6. SAILING BARGE RACE FESTIVAL**

Margaret O'Neill was not there to report but the Chair reminded people it was going ahead on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2013 from 1pm-5pm.

## **7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**Police Panel Meeting** – Rev. Radcliffe reported for Jerry Martin saying there have been a large number of officer abstractions– new policy as of 20<sup>th</sup> June. The new priorities set are all drug related and geographically based.

West Street, Horticulturists growing (homes)  
Franks Park (lower areas)  
Compton Place

Local group now reduced from 6 to just 2 – 1 police constable and 1 PCSO, just 2 dedicated to Erith. Rev.Radcliffe said that new arrangement is basically like 3 tiers – 1 PC + PCSO then team covers 4 wards, then your 999. Alec said you can call 101 service instead of 999 for less serious reporting. Phillippa said 111 is a health service you can call which is for non-life threatening things which was launched on 12<sup>th</sup> March. If you phone your GP out of hours it tells you to call 111 and someone at the other end will ask you lots of questions. The Chair asked if Phillippa could email this information through.

**ACTION: PHILLIPPA JAMES**

A member of public asked about the railings being removed around the old swimming pool site. The Chair said she would ask the Councillors to investigate.

**ACTION: COUNCILLORS**

## **7. DATES OF FUTURE MEETING**

**Date of next meeting: 31st July 2013 at the Vets Club**

**Dates of future meetings: 25<sup>th</sup> September 2013, 27<sup>th</sup> November 2013, 29<sup>th</sup> January 2014, 26<sup>th</sup> March 2014,  
AGM 21<sup>st</sup> May 2014**

**The meeting closed at 8.55pm.**