

ERITH TOWN FORUM

Notes of the 90th meeting of the **ERITH TOWN FORUM** held at VETS Club, Park Crescent (junction with Glebe Way), Erith on WEDNESDAY 27th March 2013 at 7pm.

Present: Doreen Ives (Chair)

Dennis Roberts (Baptist Church, Erith), Bill Brookes (Erith Playhouse Theatre), DJ (Erith Riverside Residence Association), Alison Fisher (Erith Rowing Club), Fred Finck (Erith Yacht Club), Ray Hudson (Bexley Neighbourhood Watch Assoc.), Terry Middleditch, (Disabilities Group), Barry Owen (Erith Riverside Shopping Centre), Alec Tapper (Forge), Councillor Chris Ball, Councillor Margaret O'Neill, Julie Clark (Minute/Admin officer)

Members of the Public:

D Brodie, E Brodie, D Young, S Boxall, I Parkhurst, B Abrahams, R White, J Vick, D Vick, J McCarthy, M Beadle, J Baxter, C Wakeman, T Oliver, T Copley, K Hadley, J Leake, P West, A Heartfield

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Forum Members: Joan Armitage, Cllr. Edward Boateng, Andrew Grieve, Les Hoskins, Rev. Robert Radcliffe

Others:

2. CHRIST CHURCH SCHOOL

The Chair thanked everyone for coming and introduced Kevin Taylor, Head of Howbury Stakeholder Engagement and Special Projects, for the London Borough of Bexley. Kevin introduced himself and started by saying there are 6 schools across the Borough, including Christ Church who are up for expansion. He said we have had as much positive as negative feedback. He continued to say that as a Council we have to provide every child with a school place in Bexley. He said we have children moving into the Borough and as a local authority we have to provide school places. He continued to say that in high profile reports out recently all local authorities have come under pressure over the last 3-5 years to provide places. He said this time last year he still had to provide another 150 places by September. He said we have looked at 6 schools where there are spaces. He said there is a report in the public domain which is a 40 page document explaining all the reasons why we are building / expanding these schools. He said the Traffic section held an event in January, which he said was well attended. He said we will address anti-social behaviour. He reported that the traffic measures, saying there will be more yellow lines and they are also looking at adding another entrance at the school and drop off points, all these issues are currently being looked at. Kevin said no-one is forcing this through and it has not gone to planning. A member of the public asked if there is a timescale. Kevin said we may have to put the planning application through but it doesn't mean we will go ahead, but will be putting in application within the next month. Alec Tapper asked why it was an expansion to Christ Church School and not a new school within the Erith Western Gateway Proposals. Kevin said that as a local authority we cannot go out and build a community school. He said an Academy can build a new school or a community group can build a school. A member of the public asked that since the whole Borough has more housing why there has been no application for a new school. Kevin said we have to look at existing schools, Pearswood was extended Colyers to become SEN etc and said that to build a new school costs a lot of money and the money is not there, this is why we have chosen to extend the 6 schools.

There were continuing discussions on this subject and the Chair said she had been invited by the school to see where the children are coming from and was reassured that not a large number were travelling a long distance. A member of the public voiced that Christ Church is becoming an Academy and if the children are coming from 1-2 miles away, it would be sensible to link with another school as part of the Academy. Kevin commented saying we had £8M this year for expansion, and this is where the demand for school places is. The Chair thanked Kevin for coming to talk and he said once we start to publish the plans and we go to formal planning we will write to those who have taken part in the consultations.

3. CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair started by saying that she had received an apology from the Vets Club for the condition of the hall for the last meeting, but they did not charge us for the hire. The Chair informed the meeting of the sad passing of Sylvia Boyd. The Chair confirmed the closure of the Drop in Advice centre in Cross Street. Cllr. Ball said to use the Citizens Advice Bureau. The Chair commented on the questionnaire on-line with regards the B12 proposals. Go to <https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/buses/route-b12> where you can make comments. Doreen commented on the wind-up meeting held for the Riverside Resource Forum, and said a decision was taken to amalgamate with the Belvedere Community Forum but Erith Forum Chairperson would have a seat on the Management Committee for matters related to the Cory Incinerator. She continued to say that appropriate changes would be made to the

Belvedere Community Forum constitution. The Chair also reported that she had put in an application to Awards for All for a grant to pay for expenses of the Barge Race Day. She said Erith Rotary Club would provide insurance cover.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

The Chair reported that Joan Armitage was unwell and not able to attend the meeting. The Chair said there was about £2,000 in the bank – not spent any money. and was hoping that we would get another £500 from Corys and hoping to get another £1,000 from Frogmore.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING (30th JAN)

Queen Marys – Cllr. Ball said in reality it is in a state of flux and said on 13th March staff got redundancy letters, 1,000 support staff got redundancy notices. Cllr. O'Neill said she was at Erith Hospital there were 4 people taking blood and she was out within half an hour. Cllr. O'Neill commented on the Breast Screening van not being at the site, and said it was to do with some problem over planning application permission. Somebody had complained about the van being there and noise at night. Cllr. O'Neill said she would contact them to bring it back. She said it is now at QM and is run by Darent Valley. She said older people in the area will not bother to go to Sidcup. A member of the public said she had to go to QE – Cllr. O'Neill will write and ask why.

ACTION: CLLR O'NEILL

Potions - Cllr. O'Neill informed the meeting that the man has not got enough money to change the windows.

Working Men's Club - The Chair said the club is being pulled down and will have 1,2,3 bed flats and associated parking. The Chair asked DJ how their parking situation was and he said that they had not seen any influx of cars parked to go to the station and said until the college moves probably will not feel the impact.

6. RIVERSIDE SHOPPING CENTRE UPDATE

Barry Owen reported that the footfall had dropped losing Blockbuster and reported on Warmlake Sports closing. He said there was 1 empty unit next to Argos. He reported that the footfall at Christmas had increased but said most Managers are not hitting targets. He said it may be the weather, and we need a turn of good weather. A member of the public said we need a Weatherspoon in the centre. He said you have the Cross Keys, Frogmore only own the shopping centre. Cllr. Chris Ball commented on the disappointment of seeing that on the Bexley Council website they are advertising Bluewater and they should be supporting local centres. Barry said there would be craft stalls etc in Erith for Easter. A member of the public asked if it was true Owens was going to close due to rent rise. Barry replied saying no and we are trying to negotiate. A member of the public said it is very sad Warmlake Sports is closing. Rosemary White said she was sorry too and said they were always involved with the Riverside Festival and suggested a letter go to them from the Forum to say Thank You. The Chair agreed. The Chair said in 2007 Paul was a member of the Forum and said she had had a chat with Warmlake Sports and the closing was also prompted by some health issues as well as on-line shopping having a devastating effect on their business. Barry said as far as Frogmore was concerned they had not had a high rent rise. Barry said the 99p shop had opened. A member of the public asked if the bus shelter, that was blown away, could be put back. Barry Owen said that this would be done.

ACTION: DOREEN IVES

7. ERITH POLICING

Doreen said the last meeting had been reasonably well attended and the new priorities set were:

Drug use and dealing in Franks Park

Anti-social Behaviour – Compton Place

Burglary – crime prevention in Gallions Close.

Doreen said the next meeting would be on Thursday 16th May at 7pm at Erith Youth and Family Centre.

Alec Tapper commented saying that not only is there drug smoking but drug production in certain flats in West Street. Alec said if anyone has any information let the police know. He said it is a 20 week cycle to when it starts and is completed, creating dreadful smells when it comes to a finish. Cllr. Ball said tell-tale signs are upstairs curtains closed, condensation on windows, regular visits for maintenance etc. He said there are 20-30 cannabis factories in Bexley. A member of the public said it happened in a home near her and she never knew anything about it.

Ray Hudson spoke about various meetings going ahead and lots of different things happening within the police and said that policing is all very unclear at the moment basically. Ray also urged people to contact the police if you feel anything is wrong because he said so many things are not reported.

It was reported that on 15th April there is a meeting at the civic offices on how magistrates operate from 7-9pm. The Chair gave out a website to visit www.bexleyceps.org.uk for more details. Ray Hudson gave out the local police number 0208 721 2048.

8. BARGE RACE COMMUNITY DAY

Cllr. O'Neill said it is definitely on for 13th July. She said it will be supported by Forge and the Rotary Club and two to three different organisations will support us. She said the event will be from 1-5 pm in Erith with some stalls with a sailing barge theme. She said Europa would come and do a demonstration. Margaret O'Neill said Andrew Grieve of BATS has agreed they will have a strong man pulling a minibus/car. Margaret asked those willing to come to a meeting to assist in this event to fill out a form at the end of the meeting. Margaret said she will put details on the website. The Chair said maybe we could advertise in the next Bexley magazine. Cllr. O'Neill said she hoped the shopping centre would get involved. The Chair said she had already contacted them in this respect. The Chair asked Alison about the Rowing Club having some involvement and Alison said she would have to consult with the club. Fred Finck said he would check to see if the Yacht Club could put something on in the river.

9. COMMUNITY LUNCH

The Chair said it was a really nice event last year for the Jubilee. She said the Baptist Church, St Johns Church, Christchurch, the Rotary Club and the Forum all get together to put this on. Doreen said there will be wonderful food provided, drinks music, competitions and will be a really good community building activity. Doreen said this one is for the Queen's Coronation – 60 years. It will be a Coronation theme on 2nd June in Christ Church Hall. She said make a note in your diary and if anyone would like to help please let her know. Cllr. O'Neill said in June 1953 there was a procession for the Coronation and said to see if we could get any old pictures may be the old Kentish Times for memories. She said may be it could be announced in the Churches to dig out pictures. A member of the public commented it was the same day as the Riverside Festival. The Chair said she had no information about the riverside festival. The Chair did say that last year the Diocese of Rochester gave Christ Church money to fund the Lunch. Without this funding there may need to be a small charge this year but that is up for discussion.

10. FORGE

Alec reported on the winter pansies and commented on the emerging spring bulbs. He said the flagpole site is going extremely well, and said they are well underway for preparing a summer planting. He said they had a meeting the following afternoon with regards to what Forge might be able to do for the Barge Community day. Alec reported on a further clean up on the foreshore on the residential area – 900-1000m in all. He said we have discussed with Thames 21, been in touch with Morrisons, Bexley Waste Management, the army cadets. He said it is planned for Sunday 19th May from 10.30-2.30 meeting at the wooden jetty at the riverside gardens. Alec said they would be delighted if anyone can help and said it was a year since the last one. Alec said there are one or two local people of ethnic groups joining in which is good for the community.

11. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Chair spoke about the junction of Park Crescent and Hind Crescent by Erith Hospital (the big triangle) and said there are plans that this junction will all be changed. Cllr. Ball said it would make it more pedestrian friendly. Cllr Ball said he would send the Chair a link to pass on in this respect.

ACTION: CLLR. BALL

A member of the public mentioned that the Council had said that Morrisons cannot have all their garden bits and plants etc on display outside the store. Cllr. Ball said the Council wants to charge people for having displays outside. Cllr. Ball will check this out and report back.

ACTION: CLLR. BALL

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Larner Road – Rosemary White said it is all about to start. 5th April 11-2pm. The first block will come down there will be champagne, the stake holders, Deputy Mayor of London, Mayor of Bexley, the Black Eagles – dancers. The Chair said Dennis is going along and she will send the invite round for anyone who wants to attend. Rosemary said the new name will be revealed. A member of the public asked if they had removed all the asbestos, Rosemary said this is only Phase 1. The Chair said at the AGM in May we will show the Larner Road presentation with Rosemary speaking in a poem. Cllr. Ball and Cllr. O'Neill said how good it is.

Health Authority – a member of the public spoke about the London Strategic Health Authority going today. He said the Secretary of State had thrown it out the door. He said watch the news, the Secretary of State will start from scratch. The Chair reported that they had planned to invite Dr Stoa from the Albion Road Surgery to come and talk at the meeting in July.

OYSTER CARD Terry Middleditch spoke briefly saying there is confusion regarding travel within the London Boroughs when you reach 60. You can pay a one off fee of £10 on an Oyster card until you reach the state pension age.

PIP Terry touched on the issue of the Erith Health Centre and PIP Personal Indemnity Payments saying that within the new PIP system if you get turned down you can appeal and if you still get turned down you can ask to see a professional consultant who knows more about your condition/problem.

13. DATES OF FUTURE MEETING

Date of next meeting: 22nd May 2013 (AGM) at the Vets Club

Dates of future meetings: To be arranged

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.