

## ERITH TOWN FORUM MEETING

Notes of the 84th meeting of the **ERITH TOWN FORUM** held at VETS Club, Park Crescent (junction with Glebe Way), Erith on WEDNESDAY 28th March 2012 at 7pm.

**Present:** Doreen Ives (Chair)  
Chris Betts ( Frogmore), Bill Brookes (Erith Playhouse Theatre), Chris Broadbent (Disabilities Groups), Mike Dodsworth, Alison Fisher (Erith Rowing Club), Fred Finck (Erith Yacht Club), Andrew Grieve (Rep. S Mellows BATS), Ray Hudson (Bexley Neighbourhood Watch Assoc.), Barry Owen (Erith Riverside Shopping Centre), Rena Papa (Bexley Pensioners Forum), Alec Tapper (Forge), Dennis Roberts (Baptist Church, Erith). Rosemary White (CSAZ), Councillor Chris Ball, Councillor Margaret O'Neill, Julie Clark (Minute/Admin officer)

### **Members of the Public:**

PCSO Tobias Rowe, PC Lesley Hibberd, S Boxall, A Finck, D Brodie. E Brodie, C Isizola, J Baxter, P Harrison, M Peat, J Baker, J Butler, M Butler, P West, J Martin, P Goulden, J McCarthy, M Beadle, C Wakeman, C Field, T Middleditch

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**Forum Members:** Joan Armitage, DJ, Les Hoskins, Cllr. Edward Boateng

**Others:** Teresa Pearce MP

### **2. PRESENTATION BY CAROLINE FIELD – LARNER ROAD DEVELOPMENT**

The Chair welcomed the two police members and introduced Caroline Field who was speaking regarding the Larner Road site. Caroline introduced herself and said she works for Orbit. She explained that Larner Road currently has 7 tower blocks and has become increasingly an unpopular place to live. She explained that a lot of work was done on the blocks eg. cladding at £1M a block she said they are 30 years old and all need new lifts. Orbit had consulted and decided on a mixed development of family-sized houses and low rise flats, nothing over 5 storeys. Green space will be preserved. Orbit have secured £15M to begin phase 1 which must be spent by 2015. Caroline said demolition must start by 2013 so the planning application needs to be in by August 2012. Public consultations were to start within 6-8 weeks. She emphasized that Orbit want to give the community added value from this project. The name will be changed to get a new identity. The Chair asked if the consultations will be in public places like the library. This was confirmed and perhaps Morrisons and an exhibition in one of the 3 bed flats. Caroline answered a number of questions on the timings and process for the demolition work. A member of the public living on Larner Road criticized the consultation process so far. Caroline spoke about ratios of rented homes to private ownership, details of which will be available in the public consultations.

### **3. PRESENTATION BY PAUL GOULDEN – AGE UK**

The Chair introduced Paul Goulden the Chief Executive of Age UK and said that Mary Beadle, one of our longest Forum members, was worried about the future of Pop-in-Parlours in Bexley. Paul said over many years, Bexley Council have signed properties over to us. He said the Council owned the buildings and Age UK had them on a cost free basis with Bexley Council picking up the rent so Parlours have had a very good deal. Then last year, the Council decided to reduce their costs and make cuts in overall grants. Parlours are now asked to pay their own running costs of £5,000 a year. He continued to say that the Welling Pop-in-Parlour used to be a rates office and the building is on a commercial lease of £16,000 a year. He said we had to think how we could raise that money. He said the landlord agreed to drop the rent by £2,000 if they wanted to stay there. He said unfortunately Age UK have to leave Bellegrove Pop-in-Parlour by the end of May. He continued to say that there would be some provision in the Welling area and it is under discussion about re-locating. He said we were fortunate and had a good deal with the Council for 35 years and I need to sort out ways to save money. He confirmed AGE UK are not closing any of the Parlours but it may be they have to change them slightly in the way they are run etc. A member of the public said they should be advertised better because they are really good. Paul said the best way is by word of mouth and said they are under used and we need to do more publicity to prevent Pop-in-Parlours becoming a thing of the past. Cllr. O'Neill said her father started the Erith and Belvedere one and it does rely on volunteers. Paul confirmed Age UK's commitment to the community as long as customers want Parlours.

### **POLICING IN ERITH**

The Chair welcomed the two police officers to the meeting. PCSO Tobias Rowe spoke and said he was aware there had been complaints regarding the strength of the team in the area and said he understood the concerns but confirmed they are at full strength now. The new Sergeant is Peter Ward. He said at the ward panel meeting it was said that James Coomber was staying but then he was moved so we had a temporary Seargent who pulled us through. PC Dean Cox has also joined the team.

Toby reported that the 3 priorities set were:

Drugs and ASB in the West Street area  
Burglary  
Fly Tipping.

He pointed out that fly tipping is very hard for police to control.

He said the next panel meeting is set for 20<sup>th</sup> April. He said the room had been double booked so the location will probably change and he said he would inform the Chair so she can pass on the new date and venue. He said there is a dedicated mobile number and left leaflets for the public at the meeting.

#### **4. CHAIR'S REPORT**

The Chair informed the meeting that she had attended a seminar organised by NHS South East London looking at how Bexley is delivering services for those with disability needs. She said we were asked to consider the way the Bexley Care Trust is progressing in this area. The Chair said it was interesting to see that those attending had a different view to those officers who had completed the attainment charts. Having attended the seminar she gave the papers to Terry Middleditch. Terry commented that there are still issues to be resolved in delivering the appropriate service to people with disabilities

The Chair informed the meeting that the application to the Big Lottery failed. She said they like to fund new, specific projects. She said general running costs are not considered except perhaps as part of a specific project. She informed the meeting that Barclays Bank are keen to be involved with the community but only give to registered charities. Doreen confirmed she had not yet approached Corys.

#### **5. TREASURER'S REPORT**

The Chair reported in Joan's absence and said there was no Treasurer's report. She said the last update on Finance showed that there was £926 in the bank, of that £110 needs to be paid out so there is about £700 left.

#### **6. FUTURE OPTIONS FOR THE FORUM:**

Margaret O'Neill congratulated Doreen for doing so much and for all the effort she has put in to try to get funding. Cllr. O'Neill said we now need to formulate new ideas so we can carry on. Firstly, she said the frequency of the meetings. She said if we do not have them as regularly issues will come up and will pass. The other way of communicating, she continued, was Town and Around and said this was so good but expensive. She said we need to look at ideas or comments about how we can keep it going. The Chair said Barclays Bank mentioned about becoming a registered charity and said Ray Hudson was asked to find out about it. She said it appears it might be a good idea as long as it does not cost us any money. Ray confirmed it would not cost any money to set it up. Cllr. Ball said it would open us up to getting more funding, but it becomes more involved regarding Trustees, personal liability, a big involvement with the Charities Commission, HMRC and auditing accounts etc.

The Chair talked about a venue change. She said it would be quite sad not to come to the Vet's Club because they opened it up for us at a cheap rate of £25 but they have had to increase it to £45. Dennis said the Forum could use the Baptist Hall and may be just pay a small fee for heating, lighting etc but it would have to be a different night. It was also mentioned about having an affiliation fee for example like FORGE had a £1 joining fee. The Chair said any changes need to be made to the Constitution at the AGM.

Chris Ball informed the meeting that he would be running a Quiz Night to raise money for the Forum on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> July at 7.30pm in Christ Church Hall. Chris Broadbent said he would be happy to organise a Bingo night to raise some money.

The Chair said if everyone could have a think and feed back to her on – number of meetings to be held, Charitable Status and Venue – then the Management Committee can make a decision.

Cllr. Ball said he thought it better to meet every 2 months – there was a show of hands and every 2 months was agreed. The Chair said at this moment in time we cannot produce any more issues of Town and Around.

#### **7. CONSTITUTION CHANGES- Officers of Forum for 2012/13**

The Chair confirmed that officers of the Forum for 2012/13 need to confirm to her that they are happy to stand for office.

#### **8. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING (JAN)**

##### **Bexley College**

The Chair confirmed that Planning Application had gone in for Bexley College and a letter from the Chair had been sent to the Council regarding the parking issues and she had also emailed the Newshopper showing the Forum's support for the application.

##### **Rats on Riverside Gardens**

Cllr. O'Neill said they were still there and she had asked DJ to make some comments to Orbit. A Member of the Public said they had contacted them and had no response.

### **Potions Bar**

Cllr. O'Neill said they were going to make sure that they change their windows.

### **Policing in Erith Ward**

This was covered earlier in the meeting.

### **9. RIVERSIDE SHOPPING CENTRE**

Chris Betts said that following the closure of Peacocks the lease has been sold to Iceland Foods. He said the fit out would start the following week. He mentioned that they had received interest from other retailers which was quite a good moral boost. He said the unit next to the bus stop is proving very difficult. He said they are targeting Newsagents. He also said there has been continued interest from other pawn brokers and charity shops and he has been trying with other banks. He informed the meeting that there has been one new letting in the office suite above Owens which is an after school tuition company. He said there will again be craft stall fayres on Easter Saturday and a Spring fayre. He said Frogmore will work with Christ Church to produce a leaflet to promote both the Christmas Tree Festival 2012 and Riverside Christmas activities

### **10. FORGE - EWG**

Alec Tapper reported that Forge have achieved their objective. The gardens have had an incredible clean up. Cllr. Chris Ball had given him the number of the person concerned for Parks and Open Space. A computer plan of how the space might be improved had been produced. Alec said FORGE is not finished. Alec reminded everyone that even with the decision made to remove the Garden site from the original development plan, a developer could still come along with a viable planning proposal, which the Council might consider. Alec and Joan handed out letters to those present encouraging members to continue to support FORGE by renewing their membership (£1) and joining in with planting colourful plants on the flagpole site. Alec said a Policy Unit had been formed currently consisting of four members and said they would welcome further support. He said FORGE will be registering their project with the Royal Horticultural Society. He informed those present of another clean up day on 13<sup>th</sup> May.

### **11. SENIORS SUMMER OUTING**

Dennis informed the meeting it would be to Hastings on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> July and will cost between £8-£9. Call Dennis on 01322 341913 for tickets.

### **12. JUBILEE COMMUNITY LUNCH**

The Chair confirmed it would be on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> June from 12-3pm. She said they were having a meeting on Saturday with Reps. from Christ Church, the Rotary Club, the Baptist Church and St Johns. She said it would be held in Christ Church grounds/hall. The Chair confirmed it is a free event but by ticket only. She said there will be 300 tickets available and it will be a family affair.

### **13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **Arrival of the Olympic Torch in Erith**

Fred Finck of Erith Yacht Club was happy to inform the meeting that the Olympic Torch would be coming to Erith being hosted by Erith Yacht Club on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> July. He said the torch will arrive at EYC by river from Havering, Essex and disembark at the Club's pontoon. He said here the torch will rest for a while so that members, guests and visitors can toast its arrival. He said an afternoon of art displays and music will be held at the club as part of the celebration and welcome. He said EYC is proud to be part of this unique experience and is delighted that Aaron Reynolds, the Youth Captain and former RYA Thames Valley Regional Sailor of the Year, has been chosen to be a torch bearer as well. He continued to say the torch will then make its way to Danson Park where further celebrations have been organised.

#### **Social Groups meeting in Erith Library**

The Chair informed the meeting that Erith Library are hosting community groups - Stitch and Sew group Tuesday 10.30-11.30, tea and coffee provided and another group due to start is a Family Heredity group - start to trace your family history, who do you think you are. Time and date to be advised.

#### **Orbit Housing**

Rosemary White wanted to inform the meeting that she has worked with Orbit Housing regarding Larner Road and says they could not have done more to help residents. Rosemary said she had been part of the group helping choose the developers and the architect. She said Orbit could not have done more and are listening to what residents want.

### **14. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

**Date of next meeting: 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2012 (AGM) at the Vets Club**

Dates of future meetings: to be arranged

**The meeting closed at 8.45pm**