

ERITH TOWN FORUM MEETING

Notes of the 77th meeting of the **ERITH TOWN FORUM** held at VETS Club, Park Crescent (junction with Glebe Way), Erith on WEDNESDAY 29 SEPTEMBER 2010 at 7pm.

Present: Denis Roberts (Acting Chair)
Chris Broadbent (Disabilities Group), Chris Betts (Frogmore), DJ (Erith Riverside Res. Assoc.), Mike Dodsworth (Erith Museum), Les Hoskins (Erith Rotary Club), Pamela Horner (Erith Playhouse Theatre), Ray Hudson (Bexley Neighbourhood Watch Assoc.), Jerry Martin (Chair, Local Police Panel), Councillor Margaret O'Neil, Julie Clark (Minute/Admin officer)

Members of the Public:

R Read, J Baxter, E Prott, G Wratten, M Beadle, J McCarthy, D Brodie, E Brodie, J Copleston, F Finch, A Finch, P West

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Forum Members: D Ives, J Armitage, R White, A Fisher, S Boyd

Others: David Evenett, MP, Teresa Pearce MP, Cllr. Chris Ball, Cllr. E Boateng

2. CHAIR'S REPORT

Denis Roberts welcomed everyone to the meeting and said the Forum would like to say congratulations to Doreen and Chris on their recent wedding. Denis reported on the behalf of Doreen Ives. He said Doreen apologised for not being present at the meeting and hoped that it would be a successful one.

Denis reported saying that the Chair had not attended any meetings on behalf of the Forum since the July meeting, apart from the Management Group meeting. He said the Chair had said that there were problems occurring with the Cross Keys and said the licence had been withdrawn from the pub. Denis told the meeting that the Chair said that unfortunately our pubs are getting rather a bad name and in some quarters this is spilling over into criticism of the whole of Erith and its community. It was reported that the Chair does not believe the behaviour truly reflects the neighbourhood and she put the News Shopper right with a letter to them following their disparaging article under their Pub Spy series. Denis said the Chair hoped some of you read it. Denis said the Chair said we need to talk Erith up because we still have shop units to be filled and we want our town to grow and be successful.

Denis went on to say that the Chair reported that Bexley have decided not to fund any Christmas lights this year, so again we have to look at ways of trying to get the local businesses to fund some Christmas lights, other than those provided by the Shopping Centre Management. Denis said that Chris Broadbent may well have some news on that front.

Denis continued on behalf of the Chair to say that Christ Church Hall has been booked for 13th December, following the Erith Christmas Tree Festival weekend, for our Senior's Christmas event. A member of the public commented that it was too cold in the hall last year and said it would be good if the heating could go on this year!

Denis reported from Doreen that the other topic discussed at some length was the new Bexley College building to go on the old tramshed site in Walnut Tree Road. She said this was a very good thing for Erith because we could get some very good spin-offs from it,

Denis also mentioned the Bexley Healthcare papers, and said the Chair hoped everyone received them in time to participate in the consultation, if appropriate.

Denis reported on Town and Around and said that the Chair has got most of the articles and graphics for this and will be getting it published by middle of October. He said she apologised for the delay.

Chris Broadbent commented on the issue of Christmas lights. He said the contractors had been in touch about whether we wanted lights. The Chair had asked Chris to see if the shops would put into a fund to cover the cost for lights near the outside shops not covered by Frogmore. Chris said the general opinion was that they should not have to pay for their lights because they are paying the same rates as Bexleyheath but are not getting the same service. Chris Betts said that Frogmore would pay for lights on 10 lamp-posts, he said he will see if they can do any more. Cllr. O'Neill said it would probably be best to do the ones in Pier Road. Chris Betts said they would try to stretch up to the roundabout. Chris Broadbent said in previous

years there have been 21. A member of the public said it might be worth approaching Morrisons. Cllr. O'Neill said or even the Doctors Surgery. Cllr. O'Neill agreed to write to both Morrisons and the Doctors Surgery with regards to this.

(ACTION: CLLR. O'NEILL)

Chris Broadbent confirmed it was only Bexleyheath getting lights. Chris Broadbent asked Chris Betts if we would get a Christmas tree. Chris Betts said a tree would be nice, and he will see if he can sort something out. He said he would like an event of turning on of the lights etc. Denis said that the plan was to get Christ Church choir and all the churches together in Erith. He said we need to get a date. Cllr. O'Neill said we need to ask Doreen to liaise with Frogmore to sort out a date. Margaret said it would be nice to have an MP officially turn on the lights and said Teresa Pearce would be happy to do this. Jerry Martin mentioned it may be nice to ask the Salvation Army or something similar with some instruments. Denis said we would have instruments with the choir. DJ said it would be nice to have a Grotto in Erith. Chris Betts said it is very expensive. Chris Broadbent mentioned whether Wilkinsons would be happy to do this. Chris Betts said he could enquire. Cllr. O'Neill said she thought that if we try to do too much in one year it might not all come off.

(ACTION: DOREEN IVES)

Margaret O'Neill expanded on the Bexley College issue and said that they want to buy the Tramshed site but they need to sell the Tower Road site first in order to fund it. She said their plan is to leave the Construction campus and move the other bit into the town centre. She said the plan was in the infancy stage. Margaret said the first question she asked was about getting disabled access for Erith Station under the 106 Agreement. She said the latest situation is that the college is still very interested.

3. TREASURER'S REPORT

Les Hoskins reported that the balance as at the July meeting was £4,700.69. He said as of today it is £4,510.27.

	£
Deposit A/C	168.60
Community A/C	4,323.27
Cash in Hand	18.40
Balance	4,510.27

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING (JULY)

Police Surgeries

Chris Broadbent said he was still trying to get more leaflets. He reminded people that the surgeries are now held at McDonalds. Chris said he had spoken to the Chair about the times of surgeries going into Town and Around.

Queen Street Zebra Crossing

A member of public said that the work had not commenced yet. Margaret O'Neill said she would investigate.

(ACTION: CLLR. O'NEILL)

Ray Hudson said he did still not have a name for the representative for the Bexley London Borough Federation of Residents Association.

(ACTION: RAY HUDSON)

Shopping Centre – Bikes

Denis said a bike went past him the other day while in the centre. Barry Owen has spoken to the security people. A member of the public said that a friend of hers got knocked over in Queen Street by a man on his bike. The police were called but said there was nothing they could do. Margaret O'Neill said we may need "no cycling" signs in the centre. Chris Broadbent said there are but they are too high up they need to be lowered to eye level. Cllr. O'Neill said we need to ask the Chair to write for the signs to be lowered.

(ACTION: DOREEN IVES)

5. TRI-FORUM YOUTH NEWS

Margaret O'Neill said that the annual meeting was on November 19th and they will be discussing about next year and funding.

6. ERITH RIVERSIDE SHOPPING CENTRE

Chris Betts was pleased with Mambocino's new café and said it was a catalyst to getting more people into the units. He said the unit next door was now taken. Chris Betts said there were only 3 units empty. Margaret O'Neill said that the footfall has

certainly increased. Chris Betts said it is steadily increasing and is really encouraging. Cllr. O'Neill confirmed that a flooring company also selling beds is going into Woolworth's old building.

7. ROBINSON CRUSOE EVENT 2011

Cllr. O'Neill recapped on the 300th Anniversary events for next year. She said there would be various events during the summer and hopefully a re-enactment on the anniversary on 14th October 2011. She said she has spent the last 2/3 weeks trying to get a sailing ship. Margaret said it would be fabulous if the yacht club could get involved. She said we are hoping the shopping centre will support us and hoped Morrisons would too. She talked about the art competition for local schools. She said they had their first event at the open house in church and had lots of enthusiastic comments. Cllr. O'Neill said money and insurances is still a big problem. A member of the public from the yacht club said that if they want them involved they need as much notice as possible because it has to go to the committee. Ray Hudson said had they thought about approaching television companies with regards to the event. Margaret O'Neill noted this suggestion.

8. ERITH WESTERN GATEWAY/BEXLEY COLLEGE

Covered earlier in Minutes under Chair's Report.

9. SENIOR'S CHRISTMAS EVENT

Denis Roberts reported earlier on this but said there would be bingo, a ventriloquist and tea. He said it will start at 2pm. Names to Doreen Ives.

10. TOWN AND AROUND

Denis touched on this earlier and said it should be ready in October.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1. Erith School Academy Status

June Copleston who is a Governor of Erith School informed the meeting that as from 1st October Erith School would have Academy status and said it was purely a money issue rather than staying with the local authority. She said the management structure would stay the same and the Governors and Board of Trustees would sort out their own budget. She said last year as a foundation school they introduced a fair banding system. She said the Admission Policy was not changing and that the banding system would remain.

2. Town Hall

A member of the public raised the question over the Town Hall usage. Margaret O'Neill said the Town Hall is staying open, with capita, and benefits etc working from Erith, apparently to extend their work. She said they asked if they could use the Council offices/Chamber. She said it would remain with all the wood panels etc. They are taking in 30 local people, although she said the lift has never worked properly. Margaret said better it is used by Capita rather than be left there empty.

3. Cross Street Parking

Chris Broadbent reported on a problem with parking in Cross Street. He said the people who have taken over Wises are doing very well but lots of their customers are getting parking tickets. He said parking tickets are being done through the camera. He said the loading bays say half an hour no return within 1 hour. Chris said people are getting tickets after ten minutes. Chris said he witnessed a lady only the other day that had spent £400 in the shop then got a parking ticket. Margaret O'Neill said she would look into this and speak to Owens and the new people in Wises
(ACTION: CLLR. O'NEILL)

Ray Hudson informed the meeting about a conference to talk about burglary and how to deal with it. He said it is on 23rd November at 2pm at the Civic Offices and is specifically on Crime Prevention.

Jerry Martin said the next Neighbourhood Watch Meeting was on Wednesday 6th October at 7pm in Carrack House where the next three priorities would be set.

Margaret O'Neill thanked DJ for the use of the room for the Robinson Crusoe meetings.

12. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS - Date of next meeting: 24th November 2010 at the Vets Club

Dates of future meetings: 26th January 2011, 30th March 2011 and 18th May 2011 (AGM)

The meeting closed at 8.15pm