

ERITH TOWN FORUM MEETING

Notes of the 92nd meeting of the **ERITH TOWN FORUM** held at VETS Club, Park Crescent (junction with Glebe Way), Erith on WEDNESDAY 31st July 2013 at 7pm.

Present: Doreen Ives (Chair)
Joan Armitage (Bexley Civic Society), Bill Brookes (Erith Playhouse Theatre), Fred Finck (Erith Yacht Club), Les Hoskins (Erith Rotary Club), Ray Hudson (Bexley Neighbourhood Watch Assoc.), Phillippa James (NHS Community Engagement Officer), Terry Middleditch (Disabilities Groups), Rev. Rob Radcliffe (St John's Church), Dennis Roberts (Baptist Church, Erith), Alec Tapper (Forge), Rosemary White (Erith Park Residents), Councillor Chris Ball, Councillor Edward Boateng, Councillor Margaret O'Neill, Julie Clark (Minute/Admin officer)

Members of the Public:

J Baxter, A Finck, C Wakeman, B Abrahams, D Brodie, E Brodie, J McCarthy, M Beadle, I Parkhurst, T Oliver, T Copley, M Davis, J Baker, K Hadley, P West, J Abbott, A Oppons-Asare, J Ferreira, C Hornback, A Heartfield, L Finch, S Boxall

Speakers: Dr Howard Stoate, Chair, Bexley Clinical Commissioning Group

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Forum Members: Alison Fisher

Others:

2. CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair welcomed everyone. She reported that changes to the Constitution agreed at the AGM, had been made, and approaches had been made to individuals about joining the Forum. She confirmed Bexley College will become members once the new college is open in September 2014. She confirmed Dave Darcy from the Erith Group is considering the question. Jenny Vick is discussing with other Swimming Club members the possibility of their group having representation on the Forum. Doreen said the Barge Race showed that the River Thames is such a special feature of the Erith landscape so sports groups on the water should be encouraged to widely publicise what they are doing in the same way that FORGE are doing with the Riverside Gardens. Julie Conalty, the vicar from Christ Church, who spent time on their stall had commented to Doreen that she was able to meet for the first time, many members of the Erith community. Julie spoke with Hugh Neal who runs a blog about Erith and he also has responsibility for Erith Watch, the largest neighbourhood watch group in the Borough. The Chair said he is happy to come and talk to us and get involved. The Chair reported that the three churches have joined together to organise a Food Bank Distribution Centre in Erith. She said it will open later this year and volunteers are being recruited to help run it. Doreen thanked Teresa Pearce MP who donated £50 to the Forum, a fee she had received for participating in a research project. The Chair commented that this was the second time Teresa had sent fees to the Forum.

3. BEXLEY CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP – Dr Howard Stoate

The Chair introduced Dr Howard Stoate, who has been a local GP in Bexley for over 30 years and is Chair of the Clinical Commissioning Group for public health in the London Borough of Bexley. He gave a powerpoint presentation explaining the work of the CCG. It is a clinically led membership organisation with all 28 GP practices being members of the CCG. He said all 28 practice representatives form the Primary Care Advisory Group (PCAG), which is bound by a constitution. Their plans are to keep people out of hospital, improve care of elderly people, and those with long-term conditions, mental health problems and obesity. He said the better educated our patients are the better the system. A member of the public said in Bexley we do not have our own 24 hour A&E dept. Dr Stoate said the reason it closed was because there were too many small A&E depts. He said you could have a 24hour A&E and would be seen by a junior doctor – it's not as efficient. He continued to say research shows that it is better to have larger A&E depts that are better staffed and better equipped. He encouraged patients to report bad service in order to draw attention and improvements. Dr Stoate said all doctors' surgeries have a budget. The CCG has £246m and is responsible for purchasing the services needed. He said obviously we want to make the best possible use of the money, but we can only control the way it is spent not how much we get. A member of the public commented on one of Dr Stoate's handouts saying it needs less jargon. Dr Stoate said he had handed it out for information but it was actually really written for NHS England not the public. The Chair asked how the public were to be given the information. Dr Stoate said on the website,

talks to local groups, eg Pensioners Forums, Community Forums, etc. Dr Stoate commented on the 111 Service and said in principle it is good but it has been set up too quickly and needs more time for testing. He said London Ambulance will take over the service when NHS Direct pull out. He said the changeover will be carefully monitored. Terry Middleditch commented that in his GP practice no-one asks how long it has taken to get an appointment, and also the problem of people getting to other hospitals with the closure of QM. Dr Stoate said it will get better and QM is not going to close down, 90% of non emergency will be available at QM and the hospital will include a cancer care centre. He said the aim is Oxleas will be landlord as of 1st October and said QM has a very optimistic future. Cllr. O'Neill asked how patients' treatment be protected in local hospitals and Dr Stoate said there is a Director of Quality, whose job is to monitor the quality and there are quality and safety groups who report monthly. Cllr. Ball commented on the outcome of the recent High Court Judicial Review on Lewisham Hospital and the future of Erith Hospital. Dr Stoate said the decision will not stop their plans going ahead. Erith is under Oxleas, and Dartford has taken over at Erith so the public will not notice any difference. There were some further discussions about budgets and A&E. The Chair thanked Dr Stoate for attending the Forum meeting.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

Joan Armitage reported that we have £2,060.67 a healthy position. She said the Barge Race Festival broke even and actually has a surplus because of the compensation received for the debacle over a generator to run the bouncy castle.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING (MAY 2013)

Christ Church School expansion - Cllr. O'Neill said planning permission has been granted. She said there were many comments made for and against, there was a very strong debate. Cllr. O'Neil said the school needs to make radical moves to ensure traffic is regulated. Margaret made the suggestion of a walking bus from Erith Recreation ground. A member of the public said there have been three accidents in a few weeks, the school need to take an active role. Margaret O'Neill suggested it might be helpful if the Forum write to the school expressing our concerns and making suggestions. The Chair agreed this would be a good idea. It was agreed that the Chair would do a letter from the Forum.

ACTION: CHAIR,

A member of the public mentioned that they plan to put in yellow lines in the area.

Bus Shelters and Bolders on pavements – The Chair reported that the seats are back in place but the shelter has not been replaced and the Bolders on the pavement were legally there.

Erith Park - Rosemary reported saying that the last block, Verona House, is due to come down soon, scaffolding is going up. She said new flats are going up next to North End Road. She continued to say there are great plans for the dell and all is on track.

Bexley College – This is progressing well.

Coronation Lunch – The Chair said this was excellent, a lovely community occasion. She continued to say it will happen again next year on the 1st Sunday in June. A member of the public asked why the lunch is on the same day as the Riverside Festival. The Chair said she felt both could be on the same day and did not think the festival suffered. The Chair said initially we were worried we had no funding but in the end received sufficient donations.

6. RIVERSIDE SHOPPING CENTRE UPDATE

The Chair had nothing to report from Chris Betts, but Doreen did report that on the day of the Barge Festival the footfall was good. She said there were 1,000 more visits to the shopping centre than on the same day last year. A member of the public commented on a home improvements shop coming into the space opposite Argos in about November time. The Chair said apparently they have had lots of enquiries about eateries. Les Hoskins said there was a community day on 17th August at the shopping centre

7. ERITH SAILING BARGE FESTIVAL

Councillor O'Neill reported saying it was a lovely day with great weather. She thanked Therese, Tracey, Irwin, Jenny Vick, Rosemary and Doreen, saying it was great team work. Margaret said there were a few things we could learn from the day. She said we will continue to have a community event at the end of August – watch this space! She urged anyone who wanted to get involved to email Doreen. Margaret said we need more funding, more support and more sponsorship. It was a fabulous day The Running Horses had a great afternoon and in addition to food and drink, kindly allowed their premises to be used to provide music and toilet facilities. The Chair said one comment made to her was there were not many goods to buy on the day. Very high insurance cover demanded by the Council had kept small businesses away. However, the Rotary Club have subsequently confirmed that their Public Liability Insurance will cover small private businesses to trade on that day so the Chair

invited members to seek out small businesses, eg novelty sweets, flower and plant sales, handcrafts, etc who might participate next year and get them to contact Erith Forum The date is Saturday 30th August.

8. FORGE

Alec showed photos of the Gardens with spring and summer flowers. He thanked Rob Ferreira for doing the watering and said he was very grateful. He said they had entered the Bexley Environmental Challenge for the 2nd time. Alec said the last foreshore clean up was in May and said the whole area remains clear at this moment in time. He said it was a real feel good factor. The Policy Unit would be meeting again to arrange autumn and winter planting. Alec said it was good they had been able to maintain their funding. The Chair said the community owed FORGE a tremendous vote of thanks.

9. SENIORS SUMMER OUTING

Dennis reported on the outing to Worthing. He said we had a 53 seater bus and it was full. He continued to say we had a good day and it was well worth £9.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a) A member of the public enquired about the Garage in North End Road where they wash cars and asked if it was residential now, commenting that there was washing inside the door and the impression that people are living there. Cllr. Ball said it is commercial not residential. The Chair commented that maybe someone was living there for security purposes, like the Carnegie library. The Chair asked the Councillors to investigate. **ACTION: COUNCILLORS**

b) A member of the public offered to lend a hand with the design of the website. The Chair promised to look into this.

c) A member of the public spoke again about pavements being done and said Heathway (small side road) in the Colyers ward has been done. He said all of Avenue Road needs to be done. Cllr. Ball said pavements are inspected twice a year. The priorities are health and safety then footfall. He said there is a really small budget. Commenting on the new lay out in Bexleyheath he said it was not Bexley's money. Cllr. O'Neill promised to make enquiries about Avenue Road again. **ACTION: CLLR. O'NEILL**

d) Phillippa James spoke about local Health Watch and said if you have concerns then first go to your practice manager. She said if anyone wants more information on the 111 service she has it.

11. DATES OF FUTURE MEETING

Date of next meeting: 25th September 2013 at the Vets Club
Dates of future meetings: 27th November 2013, 29th January 2014, 26th March 2014,
AGM 21st May 2014

The meeting closed at 8.35pm.