

ERITH TOWN FORUM

Notes of the 98th meeting of the **ERITH TOWN FORUM** held at VETS Club, Park Crescent (junction with Glebe Way), Erith on WEDNESDAY 23rd July 2014 at 7pm.

Present: Doreen Ives (Chair)
Joan Armitage (Bexley Civic Society), Chris Broadbent (Disabilities Group), Fred Finck (Erith Yacht Club), Alison Fisher (Erith Rowing Club), Margaret O'Neill, Dennis Roberts (Baptist Church, Erith), Rev. Rob Radcliffe (St Johns Church, Erith), Alec Tapper (Forge), Rosemary White (Erith Park), Julie Clark (Minute/Admin officer)

Members of the Public:

L Finch, B Abrahams, B Lupton, D Brodie, I Brodie, S Boxall, C Wakeman, J McCarthy, M Beadle, I Parkhurst, A Heartfield.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Forum Members: Cllr. Edward Boateng, Cllr Opong-Asare, Cllr Joe Ferreira, Bill Brookes, Ray Hudson, Les Hoskins. Jerry Martin
Others: Teresa Pearce MP

2. PRESENTATION BY CAROLINE FIELD, ERITH PARK DEVELOPMENT PHASE 2

Caroline reported that Phase 1 is on target. First residents were scheduled to move in before Christmas. Completion is due October 2015. Changes have been made to original plans for phase 2 because of the discovery of a sewage pipe. However the road line has been changed and new planning approval will be negotiated. The plan showed improved access to the recreation ground. The new plans would be up for consultation. Chris Broadbent asked about security in the new flats. Caroline said the flats are in small group so easier for security and said there are phones and video cameras and sub-letting will be limited and only those who have had successful tenancies eg no rent arrears etc will be offered properties. She said Orbit will do a lot of work when people move in to ensure they feel like it is a special place for people to be proud of. She gave out some August dates for consultation opportunities.

3. CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair informed the meeting that due to other engagements many of the new members of the Forum could not attend. Hopefully they will join us for the next meeting. She said she had attended another meeting with the Aleff Group who are refurbishing the Cross Keys. This company would be attending Erith Fun Day and they have sponsored the children's entertainer. The Chair said they had invited the Forum to hold a meeting there once the large conference room was completed. The Chair said maybe next year's AGM.

The Chair spoke about the planning application for the pop-in parlour site and said that the density seemed too great and the meeting agreed that we should make this comment to the Council. Doreen reported that the town centre bus shelter had been re-installed and the road sign had been replaced in Walnut Tree Road.

She informed the meeting that to control parking around Christ Church School, yellow lines would be installed on one side of Lesney Park Road. Lesney Park and Grovebury Close. Joan Armitage informed the meeting that Lesney Park would be closed from the 4th August to the 9th August.

The Chair had attended the Erith Quarry Consultation and said the kind of housing proposed looks good. A new primary school is planned. She said she hoped the Consultants would come and talk to the Forum at the October meeting when they have sieved through responses and probably submitted planning proposals.

Doreen said regarding the parking at the Leisure centre, she had received an email from Ruth Batty and she has spoken to the Manager of the centre. They plan to use the overflow parking and also leaflet dropping to local residents regarding activities generating large numbers using the centre.

The Chair reported that the Danson Festival could not be held this year because the water table was too high due to the heavy rainfall in the early part of the year.

Chris Broadbent informed the Chair that the football club has now left Erith Sports Centre because the pitch is not up to the standard of the Kent league.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

Joan reported saying there was not much movement. She said the Fun Day funds were doing well. She said the Alexander Selkirk money had been spent. Joan said £500 was expected from Cory and said that would see us through, the balance being over £1,100. The Chair pointed out that a member of Erith Forum needs to attend the Belvedere Forum meeting when a Cory representative is going to be present to show our continued interest in the Waste to Fuel Incinerator facility. She said we need to make sure that all external waste continues to be transported via the river and not the roads

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM MAY MEETING

The Chair confirmed that Gerry Martin had promised to sort out a date for the police to come and talk about the use of taser guns in Bexley.

ACTION: GERRY MARTIN

The Chair spoke about Hugh Neal's blog and the impact of Asda on the town. She said Hugh was trying to dispel any rumours that Morrisons was going to close down. The Chair said with all that is going on in Erith, Morrisons will not be leaving Erith.

6. RIVERSIDE SHOPPING CENTRE UPDATE

The Chair said she had no update from Chris Betts but said they are working with us and have given £300 for the publicity for the fun day.

7. FORGE

Alec said they had a busy year following their success of the Mayor's visit. He said they had a double planting this year with an incredible array of flowers and colour. He informed the meeting that they are hoping to have a display of poppies to mark the centenary of the Great War. He confirmed FORGE would have a stall at the Fun Day. He confirmed their funds remain pretty healthy. He said memberships are up for renewal and asked for continued support. Alec said we need community commitment and we need to demonstrate that having a green and open space is of great importance. He said we need to safeguard it from would be developers.

8. POLICE PANEL UPDATE

The Chair said there was no update on this.

9. ERITH FUN DAY

Margaret O'Neill confirmed there would be 30 stalls and said it is all set to go. She said we will have two thirds of the gardens and said that they had received a lot of interest from commercial organisations and charities. She continued to say there will be arena events and at 3pm the Alexander Selkirk sign post would be unveiled. She said it should be a good afternoon from 12pm until 5pm. The Chair hoped the yacht club would be sailing boats on the river as an added attraction.

10. SUMMER OUTING

Dennis confirmed there was a full coach and the Chair said she hoped anyone booked on the trip would have a lovely time.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a) Quarry site development - The Chair reported on this earlier in the meeting. She also commented on the Erith Quarry meeting and said she had asked about Erith Station access and she said apparently this was the first question Bexley Council asked.

There were various discussions regarding the quarry and Margaret O'Neill said you need to respond to the consultation document and the Chair agreed.

ACTION: CHAIR

b) Erith Christmas Tree Festival –The Chair confirmed this would go ahead 12th-14th December. She said anyone wanting a tree to let her know.

c) Faith Issues in Town – Chris Broadbent said the faith groups had disappeared for about two weeks but he said they are now back in the car park next to Farm Food. He said there were no Big Issue people. The Chair said maybe we could speak to the Shopping Centre people. Doreen said she would get in touch with Barry Owen. Margaret O'Neill said she had found them very polite. A member of the public said some people do not find it harassment they find their information interesting. The Chair said we need to look at whether they are actually a nuisance to the centre. The Chair said she was happy to check it out with the Councillors and keep it as an ongoing thing.

ACTION: CHAIR

d) Bo-Jangles - Chris Broadbent reported on some unpleasant behavior outside Bo Jangles, two men were seen urinating. Margaret O'Neill and the Chair agreed that Jerry Martin should be asked to contact the police about this.

ACTION: CHAIR

e) East London river crossing - It was reported that there would be a consultation in the Broadway on the East London river crossing. Margaret O'Neill said TFL have a website. Fears were expressed about the effect on traffic congestion in Belvedere and Erith. Members were urged to download the necessary form and express their concerns to TFL. Fred Finck said the original bridge was turned down due to the fact it would interfere with flights to City airport. A member of the public said it does not have to be bridges but that is the cheaper option.

f) Carnegie - A member of the public said they had heard Bexley Council were working with Erith College for the Carnegie library to be a catering college. The Chair confirmed she had also heard this.

g) Meetings - The Chair commented on attendance at the meetings and urged if we are going to arrange for speakers we need to have a good audience and asked everyone to put the meeting dates in their diaries. It was agreed that better publicity could be achieved using e-communication. Doreen said she would be happy for someone to take this on.

h) Manor Road - A member of the public informed the Chair that he lives just off Manor Road and said the road is open but not the crossing yet. The Chair said we will inform the Councillors. Margaret O'Neil to liaise with them.

ACTION: COUNCILLORS

i) Queen's Road - A member of the public spoke about the surface of Queen's Road and said it needs to be swept, part of it has been resurfaced and the debris left and is covered by gravel and is dangerous. Margaret O'Neill agreed to talk to the Councillors, and also overhanging bushes on Queen's Road pavement.

ACTION COUNCILLORS

j) Clinical Group - Dennis reported as the representative on the Erith Clinical Group and spoke about the Urgent Care Centre opening up at Erith in October and gave out his notes of the meeting he attended. He said it will be manned by GP's 7-10pm. Margaret urged people to use it or lose it! The Chair confirmed it is in the grounds of Erith Hospital and it has been enlarged.

k) Parking - Alec Tapper brought up the issue of parking in Erith with regards the new college opening and said if you visit someone in Chichester Wharf you have to get a 'visitor' car park sign to go on your dashboard or you will be fined. He said this is effective from 1st September. He said the visitor car park is going to become a ticketing controlled car park with no clamping it is private land. He said there will be fines of £60 for parking there illegally. Chris Broadbent commented saying the permit thing will back fire within a year, he said people on his estate voted to get rid of it because people who lived there were getting the parking tickets. Alec Tapper said his management company has said it is working in other areas. The Chair said we should try to be optimistic regarding this and tackle problems as they arise.

12. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS FOR 2014/15

Date of next meeting: 29th October 2014 at the Vets Club
Dates of future meetings: 28th January 2015 and 29th April 2015 (AGM)

The meeting closed at 8.50pm.