

ERITH TOWN FORUM

Notes of the 99th meeting of the **ERITH TOWN FORUM** held at VETS Club, Park Crescent (junction with Glebe Way), Erith on WEDNESDAY 29th October 2014 at 7pm.

Present: Doreen Ives (Chair)
Joan Armitage (Bexley Civic Society), Chris Broadbent (Disabilities Group), Bill Brookes (Erith Playhouse Theatre), Alison Fisher (Erith Rowing Club), Les Hoskins (Erith Rotary Club), Ray Hudson, (Bexley Neighbourhood Watch Assoc.), Jerry Martin (Chair, Local Police), Rev. Rob Radcliffe (St John's Church), Dennis Roberts (Baptist Church, Erith), Alec Tapper (Forge), Councillor Joe Ferreira, Councillor Abena Oppong-Asare, Councillor Edward Boateng, Julie Clark (Minute/Admin officer)

Members of the Public:

J Baxter, C Wakeman, D Brodie, E Brodie, L Finch, B Lupton, S Holland, J Abbott, T Middleditch, I Sidhu, M Gilmer, I Parkhurst, J McCarthy

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Forum Members: Fred Finck, Annie Gardiner

Others: Teresa Pearce MP

The Chair welcomed everyone and expressed a warm welcome to the two new Councillors and welcomed Edward Boateng Erith's third Councillor. The Chair thanked Margaret O'Neill and Chris Ball for their strong support over many years as Councillors and wished both success in the future. Margaret has moved away from Erith but we hope Chris Ball will continue his association with the Forum.

2. PRESENTATION BY ANDREW PIKE, BELVEDERE INCINERATOR

The Chair introduced Andrew Pike, Director RRRL, Belvedere Incinerator who had come to talk about the application to increase the throughput of waste to the facility. He spoke about it being Cory's most significant project to date to process waste for household and companies. He spoke about the sole purpose being to produce electricity as well as disposal of waste for over 100,000 houses a year. He touched on health and safety issues such as air quality reports as well as answering any issues regarding the impact on the river. He spoke about them being operational with the tide and any problems with the mud build up on the walls he said is something they take up with colleagues in line with the river works licence who are responsible for that. He said Bexley are deciding on sites to be powered. Alec Tapper informed the meeting that Erith's air quality monitoring station is due to close at the end of the year due to lack of money. There were many discussions and questions put to Andrew, one being how often do the environment agencies come and he said they have to do a detailed monthly report on emissions etc. He said all information is on their website. He said he would forward some details on to the Chair. Doreen said she would forward on any information.

3. REPORT ON BEXLEY COLLEGE

Martin Peat reported that the college opened on 15th September as scheduled. He said the pedestrian walk way was not quite open and external signage still to go on. He spoke about the Mayor of London coming to open the college on 7th October. He said the weather was great, students were great and said it was great publicity for the Borough to have Boris there. He said student numbers have now increased and Ofsted was good. He continued to say the first half term was good with the building performing well and he hoped it was having a positive impact on the students. He said lots are using buses and we have had two complaints about parking. Martin said we are continuing to encourage the use of public transport or bikes. He said we have screens in the college giving times of trains and buses. He said there would be an open day on 22nd November from 12-2pm and all are welcome. He thanked the Forum and said we look forward to continue to work with you and the community. The Chair asked Martin if he could say any more about the Carnegie building. Martin said the college did look at the possibility of using the building but after discussions with the Council found it not possible because of limited access. The Council are continuing to look at different ways to use that building. Martin said it is a very challenging building eg. front steps, fire controls etc. The Chair mentioned that there was not enough room at the college for some students. Martin said they had rented some rooms from Resources Plus. He said they are trying to sort this out and looking at reconfiguring the Holly Hill site and teaching higher education classes there. Cllr. Boateng asked how long they will be using Resources Plus and Martin said they do have all the facilities available to them but said up to Christmas. There were some questions about transport and Martin said there

had not been any problems so far. He confirmed there would be local flyers to advertise the open day. Martin mentioned about some unfortunate vandalism already to the college. Cllr. Opping-Asare asked if Martin thought it would be good to have a student representative on the Forum. Martin said he could put that forward.

4. CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair started by saying thanks to Cory for the final 3rd year of funding. She said we continue to work closely with the Shopping centre with events to promote the town. Doreen said we raised £80 for McMillan Coffee Morning with a cake tombola. She thanked Joan Armitage and Christ Church for their support. She mentioned about the church choirs singing in the Shopping Centre and said dates to be confirmed. The Chair said she had applied to the Council for a grant for the Christmas lights in Pier Road and Bexley Road. She said we get £2000 but £700 goes back to the Council for their services. Doreen said it was good to see Bexley College in action and welcomed the opening of the Urgent Care Centre in Erith. She mentioned a new Sikh Temple opened up in Frazer Road and welcomed a representative who was at the meeting.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT

Joan reported saying there is £1,404.54 in the account. She reported £500 received from Cory and said £967.65 was raised at the fun day. Joan commented it was a measure of the success of the day.

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

A member of the public mentioned about someone still selling the Big Issue. The Chair acknowledged this and asked if there had been any further problems with hassling from religious groups. It was reported there had been no further issues.

7. ERITH QUARRY CONSULTATION

The Councillors reported that this site had been dormant for 30 years – Bexley Road, Frazer Road, Carlton Road, Riverside Road. They said it is also a site of natural significance with butterflies and trees and should be looked after. They confirmed there will be mixed homes and a three form entry primary school. Cllr. Ferreira reported that they are planning to submit mid November. He said they will be testing land, removing Chinese weed. Cllr. Opping-Sare and Cllr. Ferreira highlighted some concerns regarding drainage, Frazer Road access etc. Also some issues were raised regarding parking and the issue of Erith Station access and the 106 money. The Councillors said they were aware of all these issues. Les Hoskins asked the question of how many local Councillors were on the planning committee. Cllr. Ferreira replied none, but said we can stand up and influence. The Chair confirmed the timescale for these plans saying mid-November the planning application was going in and the building would start in the Spring. Cllr. Ferreira said he would send Doreen details regarding the consultation and she agreed to forward on.

8. RIVERSIDE SHOPPING CENTRE UPDATE

The Chair confirmed they are working with us for the Christmas period and said it will be a busy one.

9. FORGE

Alec reported that last week they were digging up all the old plants and replanting some bulbs to put in to hopefully have a lovely Spring show. He spoke about one of their members being very good at ordering and knowing where best to plant things.

10. POLICE PANEL UPDATE

Jerry reported on a new Sergeant Tony Manakee and a new PC. He said they now call what were 'Priorities', 'Promises'. He added that we are becoming West Street Neighbourhood Watch and said we need to stretch out and said we need people to join who do not come from West Street but want to come on the panel. Jerry confirmed the next meeting would be on 11th December at 7pm in Pier Road next to Farm Foods. He said they are held four times a year. Regarding the urinating near Bo-jangles he said he informed the team who already knew of the problem. He asked the Councillors how many public toilets we have and how many are open. The Councillors agreed to look into this.

ACTION: COUNCILLORS

Jerry confirmed it is unlikely that we will get the Taser demonstration because of heightened security. The Chair asked whether maybe we could have a video or something. Les Hoskins expressed his concern of two lives recently being lost and said we do not want them in the Borough. Jerry said personally I would rather know what to expect. There were some further discussions on Tasers. The Chair asked Jerry if he could pursue the idea of them coming.

ACTION: JERRY MARTIN

Alison Fisher asked if there had been any further developments regarding prostitution Jerry said they are aware of it but unless a crime has been committed it is very difficult. Jerry said he had various leaflets and advised those present to take some he particularly pointed out the Park Wisely leaflet saying you cannot get down some roads. Ray Hudson spoke about the concern with last year's crime from November to January where there was a rapid increase in burglary. He said we do not want a repeat exercise and hoped they were deploying police more effectively. He pointed out the Hound Watch and urged people to contact police if they see any issues while out dog walking.

11. ERITH FUN DAY

Les Hoskins said this had been very successful and there had been a great response. He said the sponsorship and insurance would be covered by the Rotary Club for next year.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a) Smart Meters – Alex Tapper asked if anyone could provide information on installation of smart meters. Cllr. Ferreira said he would look into this and get an update.

ACTION: CLLR FERREIRA

b) Church Memorial Services – Rev. Radcliffe informed the meeting that on Sunday 3pm at St John's and 6.30pm at Christ Church there would be memorial services.

c) New NHS Vision on-line – Terry Middleditch reported on the problems with this service whereby you can re-order your prescription on-line and wait two weeks and when you go to collect it they do not have it. Dennis Roberts said he would take this to the Patient Council and find out.

ACTION: DENNIS ROBERTS

d) Patient Council – Dennis reported on the meeting he had attended and handed out information on that meeting and the progress of Queen Mary's in Sidcup.

e) Forum Christmas Tree - The Chair asked for confirmation that everyone was happy for the Forum to have a tree at the Christmas Tree Festival at £27.50. Nobody was against this idea. The Chair urged people to go and decorate it.

f) Queen's Road – A member of the public reported the increase of gravel on the road which is proving to be hazardous. The Chair asked if the Councillors would take this up. Chris Broadbent said he had emailed the Council about putting salt down for snow instead of the Council but he said you could be sued. The Councillors agreed to check this out.

ACTION: COUNCILLORS

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS - 28th January 2015 at the Vets Club.

Dates of future meetings: 29th April 2015 (AGM)

The meeting closed at 9.00pm.