

## **Crossgate Community Partnership**

Feb 22<sup>nd</sup>, 7.30pm

**Present:** Ann Evans, Jackie Litherland, Jeff Young, Grenville Holland, Nigel Martin, Dick Fong, Odile Fong, Roger Cornwell, Jean Rogers, Carole Reeves, Gemma Charlton, Janie Bickersteth

**Apologies:** David Ramsden, Colin Green, Simon James, Desmond Evans

**Appointment** of Chair for the meeting: Roger, on the understanding that he won't be next time!

**Minutes of last meeting** Ann queried point under 'matters arising' about '*Difficulty contacting Council Officers*'. Nigel and Grenville said that no difficulty in talking to officers, if you know the right ones, but response not very good – it should be five working days max. Grenville suggested contacting George Garlick. ACTION: Nigel to confirm to google group protocol for replies. The group also agreed that would like a directory of officers and relevant numbers.

Arts Centre – Carole reported that Tony Hoyland working on this.

### **Neighbourhood Issues**

*Neighbourhood warden* Gemma had nothing to report. Roger reported that there had been some security issues in this area – burglaries have taken place. Nigel asked about litter being left out of bins – Gemma confirmed that fixed penalty of £80 can be made. Janie asked about bins being left out. Gemma told us that her line manager is not happy with fines for this – difficult to enforce. Nigel suggested that the issue is 'can you fine the house rather than the individual?' ACTION: Councillors to pursue – one way of solving the problem would be if Gemma had more power to issue fixed penalties for bins left out.

*Meeting with Stuart Timmiss* This had taken place on 15<sup>th</sup> January but unfortunately no one at this evening's meeting had been present to report back. Roger undertook to approach Mike Costello for a written report he could bring to the next meeting.

*AAP/residents assoc involvement* Nigel would like clarity on how these two groups could work together. AAP could be a useful way to facilitate dialogue between residents' groups and council officers. Meeting back in October was a beginning for officers becoming better informed. Next meeting 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2-4pm, Town Hall. Do residents want to feed in? If so, contact John Murphy as AAP co-ordinator (0191 301 8718 or John.Murphy3@durham.gov.uk). Ann wanted to raise the issue of boarded-up commercial properties and land – she has identified eight places. Nigel pointed out that after the last AAP October meeting, walkabouts for officers were instigated. Ann would like to know why the Council doesn't have powers to do something about these places. Nigel pointed out that Council can ensure that these sites are safe but can't do much more. Ann suggests that residents would like this to be raised at next meeting. Dick raised the issue of 'having our voice heard' – believes that there is general opinion amongst residents that they don't have a voice – meaningful consultation requested. Ann suggests this issue should be raised with AAP's: valuing the voice of residents. Roger would like 'communication' added to AAP meeting (re – snowy period, icy pavements and bin collections)

*Town Councils* Nigel reported that it is the policy of the Council to parish the unparished areas, and asked: what form would we want a town council to have? Are we prepared to pay for it? Carole would like to regain democracy for residents. ACTION: Roger to research into what other parish councils do. CCP googlegroup to be invited to list suggestions from residents as to what we would like our parish council to do. AND what size we would want it to be. (Boundary commission – consultation ongoing – Nigel to email googlegroup with link.)

## **Feedback**

*Balanced and sustainable communities* Jackie recommended that we look at a piece of research circulated today by Mike to googlegroup. Government has announced change of rules for houses of multiple occupation from 1<sup>st</sup> April. Small print still uncertain ACTION: we need this research to get to planners and senior people at County Hall. Jean to put on to CCP website as a file. Nigel suggests that it should be sent to Stuart Timmiss. Janie to send message ( in context of any consultation over the Local Development Framework for Durham).

*Wharton Park* allocation of money. Nigel still uncertain; defer to next meeting

*Market Place* City of Durham Trust has reached a decision, statement going out to members by Thursday, so can't say anything until then. ACTION Roger to distribute statement via googlegroups on Thursday.

*Jimmy Allen licence application* Chris Hutchinson has put in an objection on behalf of the University. Police also objecting.

**Use of CCP Funds/spending plans** Jean suggests that she sets up a grants email and these to be sent to treasurer and secretary. Nigel said that small grants fund for AAP about to be opened - £50-300 per application – could match fund.

**AOB** Ann asking that new garden rubbish bins should not be delivered to houses where there are no gardens. ACTION: request to Council that residents request bins.

**Date of next meeting** 29<sup>th</sup> March

## **Notes:**

Subsequent to the meeting, the following information has been provided:

- Mike Costello has now received a report of the meeting of 15 January as prepared by Stuart Timmiss and this is appended to these minutes.
- Nigel Martin has provided the link to the Boundary Commission's further consultation papers on the electoral review. These may be seen at <http://bit.ly/DHbound>
- Roger Cornwell has uploaded the paper on Studentification : a Durham Case Study to <http://durham-city.googlegroups.com/web/Sudentification.pdf> (click the intermediate link)

**Notes on meeting between permanent residents of Durham City and Stuart Timmiss Head of Planning Durham County Council. 1100-1400hrs 15/01/2010.**

A wide-ranging discussion took place around the concerns and aspirations of permanent residents of Durham City.

It was acknowledged that the new Council had a lot of historic issues to resolve but residents expressed their disappointment at recent planning decisions and lack of progress with protecting the Conservation Area.

Information was provided re the new structures and initiatives being introduced: -

The local development framework and planning policies are being reviewed. 96 Conservation area appraisals are being undertaken throughout the County, 8 have been completed. When they are completed decisions will be taken as to how to protect them and reduce "harm".

Relationship with English Heritage is being strengthened.

2020 Vision is now an implementation organisation under the direction of and working very closely with the County Council.

University strategy to increase its own accommodation, reduce undergraduate numbers whilst increasing postgraduate recruitment is being taken account of. A survey of student accommodation in the City and surrounding villages is being undertaken to inform the process.

Newly formed Development Management Units in each planning area will undertake liaison with developers and manage the whole development process. Increasing the number of enforcement officers and ensuring that compliance of planning permissions and conditions is strengthened will improve monitoring, control and enforcement (job titles will be changed to reflected this) Countywide resources will be focussed on particular issues where appropriate and to deal with large scale problems (e.g. To Let signs, Satellite Dishes etc.).

There was acceptance that better communication between residents and officers was required. The Council will become more visible in respect of planning ensuring that more people have opportunities to review plans and ask questions, moving towards a more open and informed discussion.

Training and improved support for Planning Committee Members was being undertaken to allow better, defensible, decision-making.

Mr. Timmiss has agreed to attend a meeting of the Crossgate Community Partnership the other resident associations will be invited.