



ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS TOWN FORUM

Thursday, 26 April 2012

Attended: John Goodfellow, Altan Omer, Philip Whitbourn, Dorothea Holman, Jane Fenwick, Betsy Dix, Sue Kaner, John Forster, John Neel, Sally Balcon, David Barnett, Jonathon Brooks, Lorna Blackmore, David Wakefield, Kyrios Kyriacou, Stephen Bowser, John Mattei, Marguerita Morton, Katharina Mahler-Bech, Kate Sergeant, Michael Holman, Helen Featherstone, John Cunningham, Christopher Thomas, Councillor Mayhew, Councillor Derrick

11. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Maggie Fraser, Mary Wardrop, Stephen Marshall, David Webster, Michael Doyle, David Neve, Councillor Ben Chapelard, Councillor Trevor Poile, Angela Phillips, Anne Stobo, Councillor Tracy Moore and Chris Morris.

12. DECLARATIONS OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Phillip Whitbourne declared he was substituting for Chris Morris.

David Barnett declared he was substituting for J.Paul Lambert.

13. MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

13A. MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS (NONE)

There were none.

13B. CHANGES OF REPRESENTATIVES (ATTACHED)

The Forum noted a membership change for:

The Camden Road Trader's Association, which had changed its name to Camden Road Guild, and changed their representative to Sue Kaner.

The Regina Court Residents Association, which had ceased to be a member of the Forum.

Voluntary Action West Kent, which had ceased to be a member of the Forum.

14. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING 29 MARCH 2012

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 March 2012 are agreed.

15. MATTERS ARISING

29 March 2012

6A TWITA

ALL That Forum members think of ways in which they could get involved with the work of TWITA, in particular ways to hold a fund-raising event to raise the profile of the work.

Ongoing.

ALL That Forum members lobby KCC to reduce traffic speed outside of schools to 20mph.

Ongoing.

7 Pedestrianisation in Tunbridge Wells

DW Mr Nwanosike agreed to return to the Forum in June with the results of the modelling study.

Ongoing.

BR Councillor Ransley agreed to take the scrutiny review plan to Locality Board in June to progress the St John's Road scheme further.

Ongoing.

JG Councillor Neve requested that a proposed bus extension scheme from Woodbury Park to Mount Ephraim be considered by JTB.

Ongoing.

BR The Forum requested that Councillor Ransley press ahead with introduction of shared spaces in the town centre.

Ongoing.

8 Neighbourhood Planning

DW The Chairman agreed to ask Louise Phillips, Planning Policy Manager, to attend April's meeting to explain Neighbourhood Planning further to Forum members.

Completed 26 April 2012.

15A. ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman updated Forum members that he and the Vice-Chairman had spoken with the Leader of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council about the future of the Town Forum, with a view to reviewing its operations. A full range of possibilities had been discussed, including the possibility of an elected Town Council, setting up neighbourhood forums, and closing the Town Forum down.

To assist with the discussions on the future of the Forum, a scoping document laying out options would come to the next meeting, with a detailed questionnaire and timeline for the review included.

Discussion

Dorothea Holman raised concern that the questionnaire might be too closed a method to be able to seek the variety of views of forum members.

Councillor Mayhew felt that this would be a good opportunity for Forum Members to express their views and demonstrate the worth of the Town Forum.

Actions

DW

Michael Holman noted that not many members were present and felt a note should be sent out outlining the options for the review, and the Chairman undertook to do this.

16. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

Louise Phillips, Planning Policy Manager, gave a presentation on Neighbourhood Planning and discussed options for creating Neighbourhood Forums and Community Organisations.

Discussion

John Forster asked if Neighbourhood Plans were produced how long would they last before they were reviewed, and would each review need to be accompanied by a referendum. Louise Phillips replied that a forum was designated for a period of five years, and from this it could be assumed that a plan would last as long, but there was no definitive answer regarding this. She did expect it would need a new referendum each time.

Jane Fenwick asked about timescales and Louise Phillips replied that timescales would be determined by the Neighbourhood Forum that was creating the plan, dependent on how much work they invested in the plan, and how quickly they could bring things forward.

John Goodfellow asked if Neighbourhood Forums could overlap and Louise Phillips replied they could not overlap each other or a parished area. They could include more than one ward or parts of wards, and could be as small as an individual road or site however.

Chris Thomas noted that the plans could not override existing TWBC policies however, and he asked for parameters on what could be done

in a given area. Louise Phillips replied that a plan needed to be created with a formal application, which also needed to be advertised. Other groups and interested parties could then examine this and make representations. The Council would make the final decision on any plans.

Michael Holman asked for more details on Community Organisations, and Louise Phillips replied that they could not make Neighbourhood Plans, and could only represent a specific site.

Louise Phillips added that the Core Strategy of the Council was already adopted. The Local Plan would give more detail on the policies, and areas such as design, conservation and protection were possibly areas that Neighbourhood Plans could most usefully add detail.

John Forster said that societies should have a plan for what they wanted to see for their areas, and felt this opportunity should be seized as soon as possible.

Philip Whitbourn said that the TCAAP might be a better way to influence town centre policy on planning.

Louise Philips agreed that organisations should not be distracted by Neighbourhood Plans to the extent that they did not contribute to the TCAAP, which was a key document and would provide much more detailed policies for the town centre area.

Michael Holman asked if the membership of the Town Forum could act as a basis for membership of a Neighbourhood Forum and Louise Phillips replied that it could.

DW

Actions

The Chairman asked the Forum to consider what had been discussed regarding Neighbourhood Plans, and bring forward any ideas to the Town Forum management team.

17. URBAN DESIGN AND THE TCAAP

Alan Legg, Urban Design Team Leader, gave a presentation to the Forum on Urban Design within Tunbridge Wells. Alan Legg discussed the idea of town quarters and the emerging design codes that could be used to promote good design.

Discussion

Chris Thomas asked if Kent County Council Highways department should comply with the town's plan and Alan Legg replied that they were required to maintain the status quo. TWBC's opportunity was in where things could be improved using the infrastructure levy to do this.

Lorna Blackmore expressed concern that accidents would occur before any changes happened, especially on Vale Road and London Road. Alan Legg said that some roads would still need to take vehicular movement, but others could be designed in a better way.

Michael Holman asked at what point would the Council exert pressure on Berkeley Homes to receive an infrastructure payment for the old

Kent & Sussex Hospital site. Alan Legg replied that the K&S site was already an allocated under the Local Plan, and this would apply until the TCAAP could be produced. A policy did exist regarding public art contributions, and officers would need to carefully negotiate this with the developers.

Helen Featherstone expressed regret that Kent County Council had not in the past routinely asked for money for school placements. She asked if contractors were required to take on local apprentices for local schemes. Alan Legg replied that there needed to be an identifiable, evidence based need before Section 106 money could be requested.

Councillor Mayhew added that evidence would also need to be gathered to demonstrate there was a need for local apprentices to be used, and regarding school placements, if there was space in a school within two miles of the school childrens' homes KCC would not be able to request money for more school places. Referring to Michael Holman's question, Councillor Mayhew said that the pressure needed to start at the point of application and residents needed to let the Council know their feelings on specific sites.

John Forster asked about the proposed design codes and whether there would be consistency across the quarters. Alan Legg replied that there may be some over-arching codes that were used for all quarters of the town.

Jane Fenwick asked whether skylines and vistas that had already been highlighted by the Town Plan Panel would also be seen as important part of the urban design of the town centre. The Chairman added that the concept of shared space was also an important design criteria for the town.

18. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR / ALCOHOL FUND BID

Frances Taylor, the Community Safety Team Leader, presented an Alcohol Fund Prospectus bid, which was an opportunity for the Council to bid for funds to help mitigate against alcohol related anti-social behaviour caused by young people in parks. She asked for the Forum's views on the bid before it was submitted.

Sally Balcon noted there were several anti-social behaviour problems on the Commons and felt that regular clearance of the shrubbery helped to reduce the problems of alcohol consumption.

Sue Kaner said that there were issues in Camden Road around the kebab shop, and windows were regularly smashed late at night. CCTV cameras and community wardens would greatly help the situation.

Councillor Derrick said there had been issues in St Johns Park and the bid would help residents to re-own their public spaces.

The Chairman felt that the unemployed could also cause problems on the Commons with alcohol related anti-social behaviour. France Taylor replied that a focus group was needed as part of the bid, and it was felt that young people could be targeted more easily.

Lorna Blackmore commented that Vale Road was on the route to the station and the Commons, and would often experience anti-social

behaviour late at night. She felt that street pastors in this area would help alleviate the problems.

Chris Thomas added that educating young people about the social and economic costs of drunkenness was also important, and added that not all unemployed people experienced alcohol problems.

Jane Fenwick felt that charities who issued tents to people without a permanent place to live were contributing to problems elsewhere as there is nowhere in the town to legally pitch a tent. The residents of Calverley Park have experienced significant problems with illegal camping on private property. She urged that this lack of overnight accommodation be address properly.

Actions

DW The Chairman agreed to write a letter on behalf of the Forum that would form part of the bid and outlined the discussion above.

19. REPORTS FROM THE TOWN FORUM WORKING GROUPS

19A. WATER IN THE WELLS WORKING GROUP

Michael Holman gave a short update and said that an article had been submitted to the Courier newspaper regarding the water feature project and had stimulated a response from a resident that it was a crazy idea. Aside from this, it was important the Forum ensured the project remained a big idea that would work. Planning applications needed to be monitored to ensure that policies for requesting Section 106 monies for public art were adhered to.

20. UPDATES FROM LOCAL RESIDENTS' GROUPS

There were none.

21. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

NOTE: The meeting concluded at 8.30 pm.