

Notes of the Eastgate Ward Community Association AGM held Thursday 22nd May 2013

Apologies:- Teresa Peck, 51 Barwell Road, Doug and Chris Conran, Brian and Diana Flack, Peter Thompson

Welcome

Tim Page, Chairman welcomed all present to the AGM and introduced Councillors present - David Nettleton (present as Eastgate Ward Resident) Trevor Beckwith and Patsy Warby

Stephen Mills, Bury Water Meadows Group

Stephen Mills advised that the aim of the group is to preserve the area known locally as "leg of mutton". The area formed part of the St Edmundsbury Vision 2031 proposals. The proposal being to develop a substantial part of this land for a hotel with associated parking and traffic management and lighting features.

Due to the objects to the proposal the Bury Water Meadows Group was formed to lobby the Borough Council. The group comprises of representatives from the Eastgate Ward Community Association, Churchgate Ward, Southgate Ward major local associations and groups and members of Suffolk Wildlife Trust.

A website has been created www.bury-watermeadowsgroup.com and there is also an email address info@bury-watermeadowsgroup.com.

The deliberate aims of the group are to maintain the green space with no mans meadow in the core of Bury St Edmunds, to keep the views from Rougham into the centre of Bury to ensure they are unspoilt for future generations. The land has a chequered history of planning applications and these have consistently been turned down by the Planning Committee. It is hoped that as a result of the lobbying within the revised draft of Vision 2031 the hotel has been dropped and wording on what is allowed on site will have been tightened up.

The main aim of the group is to allow no development and for the space to be maintained as green open space. Stephen Mills (SM) encouraged all present to visit the website and to present their views and support.

Questions – Richard Whalebelly asked if there was definitely not going to be a hotel. SM advised that the wording "hotel" had been removed but it had been left open with the wording "limited leisure associated development".

Julia Rackham queried if any parties had submitted an application for a leisure facility. SM advised that he was not aware but it was difficult to guess what was behind the change in wording.

SM advised that past experience dictates that once development is allowed it opens doors and further applications are received. He therefore again urged people to support the group via the website.

Sue Tamlyn advised that the move of King Edward VI School to the site had not been met favourably.

Tim Page advised that it may be possible to tap into the work of the group if need be should similar decisions be taken in respect of Ram Meadow. He suggested that people remain vigilant and careful in order that parcels of land Tim may be preserved within the town.

Tim Page thanked SM for his presentation

Introductions

Tim Page introduced the Committee members present to the meeting.

Police Information

PCSO Helen Morgan advised of ongoing problems in town, shoplifting, drinking and people sleeping rough within the town centre. Parking issues remain ongoing. PCSO's do the best they can given their resources. PCSO Morgan advised of the recent sad loss of a colleague, this death had shaken the station and community, she had been affectionately known as Miss Marple and worked closely with residents in the Vinefields and Havebury.

A question was raised in respect of people sleeping rough. PCSO Morgan advised that there is no night shelter in Bury St Edmunds the nearest one is Jimmys in Cambridge. Sometimes they want to sleep rough in Bury and then the option is YMCA and Tayfen Project.

Pasty Warby advised that unless the person sleeping rough presents as homeless to the Borough then the Borough can't force them to be dealt with. When they present at the Borough they have to have a tie to the Borough or a relationship in the Borough and these are the criteria that are to be met. Rachel Shaw advised that the unintentionally homeless can also present to St Edmundsbury.

Sue Tamlyn spoke about the freezing cold weather earlier in the year and thought it deplorable that people are having to sleep outside when it is extremely wet and freezing, this was particularly so during the xmas period. PC Morgan said that the homeless do go to at Tayfen House and she was aware that there is cold weather provision. She further advised that work is currently being undertaken on the ground floor at Tayfen House to set it up as temporary accommodation.

Sue Herriott, Headteacher, Guildhall Feoffment spoke to the meeting in respect of the Bury Schools Partnership and the transition from 3 tier to 2 tier in Bury St Edmunds.

Sue Herriott advised that the schools in town work strongly as a pyramid, prompted by the Schools Organisation (SOR) review it was decided to work strongly across school to provide support to the various age ranges within town.

The SOR within Suffolk was concerned with the standards of education generally and the achievement of children in Suffolk did not compare well with those children in similar county council areas with comparable social economic situations. The SOR stated its intention that the whole of Suffolk would become a 2 tier system, the Western area is unique in the country being 3 tier.

Various areas within Suffolk have already changed. The changes in Bury were delayed due to the change in government and the lack of financial support for capital building projects. The move to a 2 tier system means that the area middle school will close. A public consultation will take place in the Autumn and the results of this will be known the following Easter. There will be a legal process that is followed before the change to 2 tier.

Prompted by his local schools are working in partnership, there is a lot of expertise and it was felt that the partnership could focus on attainment and providing the best education for pupils in town. The partnership could also support parents worried about their children. The most worried are those in the midst of transition as this is perceived as turbulent.

The plan is that primary schools will remain open and middle schools will close. A new upper school, for children aged 11 – 16/18 will be built on Moreton Hall community. A positive of this is that this will aid the traffic coming into town. Various agencies have expressed an interest in funding the school as an academy.

Tim asked if St James is likely to become the Upper School. Sue Herriott advised that the plan is for a new school to be built on Moreton Hall and she was not aware of any changes to this. A discussion took place with regard to what could happen to St James school site.

Sue Herriott spoke about current planned admissions and how surveyors assess for children numbers. It has been said that a new building will be erected at the school where the current kitchen is, this will complement the school. The building is planned after the public consultation.

Sue Herriot advised that she is aware that parents are fearful. Headteachers are supporting the move to 2 tier and that the focus needed to be on literacy and numeracy. The partnership came about in order that headteachers could support each other and focus on the needs of the children and the raising of their attainment. There are plans for professional development days across the schools. The focus will be on writing. Specialist events for children working across age ranges, with younger and older children working together. The aim being to reassure parents. Governors are supporting the drive forward and presenting as positive to the people of Bury St Edmunds.

Patsy Warby advised that Hardwick and King Edward are working close together. She felt that this would make transition easier.

The Academies will work separately to the Partnership schools and have their own professional development events. The Academies will remain a 3 tier system.

Tim Page commented that there will be two systems of schooling within Bury St Edmunds.

River lark update

Tim Page updated the meeting in respect of the problems with the River Lark. Two issues contribute to the low flow of water through the town. The bread fed to the ducks in the Abbey Gardens if not eaten falls to the bed of the river. It is known that bread is not good for ducks so education boards are being erected to explain why not to feed them bread.

To increase the flow the most important thing to do is to alter the flow. Studies have been undertaken about altering the weir but these are not being pursued due to financial constraints. Most important thing to alter flow, studies about altering weir. Dr Brighty has prioritised funding for this project but will be under review late in 2014.

Swan surgery update

Doug Conran had been unable to attend the meeting but had provided an update that was read out by the Chairman.

Following the changes in rules regarding the pharmacy licences Swan Surgery took advantage of this ruling and in preparation for a pharmacy in 2009 applied for Local Planning permission. The LPA failed to notify local residents or carry out any proper checks and thus the application was approved under delegated powers – i.e. it did not go to councillors. The permission was valid for 3 years, however the surgery was slow in carrying out the necessary building works and so in 2012 had to reapply. This time residents were notified and objections were made based around 3 areas:-

- (1) The late hours of opening until 11.00 p.m. at weekends.
- (2) The threat to personal safety from the likely increase in drug users and dealers
- (3) Lack of parking for customers of the pharmacy.

As a result of these objections the application was “called in” to be discussed by the Planning Development Committee at their meeting on the 6th December 2012. It was thrown out on the grounds of lack of parking and adverse affect on the local community. The committee also gave the LP a severe rap over the knuckles for very shoddy work in producing their report.. The Pharmacy

then made an application for a Lawful Development Certificate to confirm that the pharmacy was ancillary to the surgery and not requiring planning permission. Lawful Development Certificates are not affected by any planning issues so the surgery were hoping to circumvent the earlier planning refusal.

For various reasons this was not approved within stipulated time limits and so the surgery has now lodged appeals against both the refusal of the 2012 planning application and also the non determination of the Lawful Development Certificate. These appeals are due to be considered on the 23rd June 2013.

In the meantime the surgery has had to open the pharmacy, having had no permission to do so or they would have lost their licence.

Trevor Beckwith commented on the amount of work and research undertaken and felt that the group deserved to get a good outcome. David Nettleton commented that he had not seen any problems since the extended hours.

Margaret Chortley advised that she had also undertaken a lot of research. Methadone has a street value and users are known to keep the administered drugs under their tongue and then selling them on. Her research had indicated that neighbourhoods are destroyed with the potential to become a red light district. The Dance Studio had experienced 2 incidents. It is still early days in respect of the increased parking. A Hearing is scheduled for 25th June 2013 the format of which is unknown. Decisions need to be made in respect of nominating representatives.

Rachel Shaw advised that parking had actually increased in Northgate Street anyway which was due to families have 2 or 3 cars.

Chairman's Report

Tim Page thanked the committee. Funding wise Eastgate Ward had been left a legacy from Frank Warby, these are the only resources until a further grant is issued. The Committee had discussed the matter but did not want to go down the route of charging members an annual fee. A bucket would be made available at the end of the meeting for people to make donations. A small amount of money is raised through advertising in meeting leaflets.

- Gauze put up under A14 in Eastgate Street to prevent pigeons roosting. However the pigeons appear to be "spike proof".
- Leg of Mutton – Watermeadows Group. Linda is a representative on the group
- Gas Works – Ram Meadow. These have now been replaced. The area is to be reseeded as soon as possible.
- Formal vote of thanks to Trevor Beckwith for the Pelican Crossing on Mustow Street
- Planters in Well Street funded by Trevor Beckwith Locality Grant and planned by the Growing Well Group. Patsy Warby said a big well done to the Well Street Crew who had worked hard and it was a good sign of the community working together.
- Issues in Barwell Road surrounding the adoption of the development. The community space has been conveyed and adopted by St Edmundsbury Borough Council so is under the responsibility of Damian Parker. The strip of land at the back of the estate has been conveyed to the house owners. The pond is still to be passed over to Anglian Water. The roads and pavements have been officially adopted by Suffolk County Council. The yellow lines have still to be implemented.

Abdul Karim from St Edmundsbury Borough Council advised that the Council were obliged to remove them for the following reasons. As mentioned above, the signs are illegal and it discredits any signs that are legal, As highway authority, we have not installed them, even though they look official, they are attached to street furniture, we had enquiries as to how

permits could be purchased. If these are not removed, it may give the wrong or conflicting message to others. These signs are in contravention of sections 132 and 143 of the Highways Act 1980. Removing the signs is the only way to clarify any misunderstanding, reiterate that the highway authority cannot allow individuals or any other fraternity to regulate the highway and finally, that illegal signs will not be tolerated.

There are issues with the road in Pickwick Crescent and ownership to be advised.

Treasurers Report

- Keith Fennelow advised that EWCA is no longer in receipt of a grant.
- Balance now is £983.00 which is £240.00 less than last year.
- Outgoings have been £326.00 with income at £105.00 outgoings

The grant is £120 but is not available until funds fall to £500. Julia Rackham suggested writing to local business for donations. Next time flyer out add donations would be welcome and deliver to all Eastern way factory unit .

Election of Officers

The Chairperson, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and Committee all agreed to stand again. David Nettleton motioned for an en-block reinstatement and Sue Tamlyn seconded this. Tim Page advised that the Committee were always looking for new members. Tim Page further advised that due to his work commitments this would be the last year for him as Chairperson.

Any other business

- Ram Meadow – not economically viable to build 135 houses due to the need for flood defence and a road to be built from A14.
- There is a rumour Drive Vauxhall want to purchase the old bus depot It was thought that if Drive see this as a good commercial option it could be possible.
- John Preston advised that rainwater gulleys are blocked in Northgate Street. Details to be sent to Trevor Beckwith