

Waterlees Community Forum  
Notes of Meeting held on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2017  
at the Oasis Community Centre  
St. Michael's Avenue, Wisbech

1. Welcome & Introduction - Chris Stevens welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. Apologies – Dianne Fenner & Jacqui McIntyre (Spinney), Stella, Michelle & Hannah (Circle Housing) & Lizzi Wales
3. Waterlees\North Ward Community Plan

We have made a start on the Community Plan and this plan will be produced by the community, with support from the strategic partners. The partners have met and are starting to network with each other, the next step is to involve the residents. This is about what the community want and need for the area and also highlights how the residents will help to achieve this. The aim of the project is to identify Community Champions (residents), who we will support, train, mentor to become a voice for the community, but also to engage with the rest of the community. We are working with Cambs ACRE and the next step is to start pulling together the plan, with the input from the community and it must have input from residents, as they will be the owners of this plan and we will feed this into the Wisbech Town Councils plans for the future of the area. This plan will also help people to get to know their neighbours, which many of us don't anymore.

Staci has already identified herself as someone who wants to work with the youth of the ward. Staci has an idea for a youth club and this will be held for children aged 6 - 17 year olds. She hopes this will be held at the Oasis Centre and Community House. This can happen with help from the community to make it possible. She hopes the kids club will run 2 – 3 nights a week and one of these nights to be just for the older kids and held at Community House. It will be run with parent helpers or adults looking to volunteer and maybe older children (14 – 17 year olds). They will be able to earn Time Credits and once they have earned a few months' worth of vouchers, she will sit down with them to decide where they would like to go and spend these credits. We all know there isn't many places for children to go in the Waterlees area, besides hanging around outside or staying at home. This will give the parents a little bit of a break, especially in the school holidays. She is a mum of a 7 year old who is always bored with nothing to do and so she knows how other parents feel. Each week there will be different activities, like craft and games, ask them what they would like to do. Let them have a voice because showing them some respect, is important. To show that they are listened to and some of the older kids can have some responsibilities by earning the Time Credits for helping out.

A plan will be made by everyone and not just adults. The same for the rules, these will be on a traffic light system, green is for a verbal warning, amber will be a call to the parents to pick them up and red will be to miss a week, but if it is a serious matter, then it will be a total ban, but hopefully that will never be the case. Having the rules in a respectful way, so the kids can be comfortable and if anything should go wrong, the team know the problem will be solved. All parents will be told if there is a problem, as it is important that they know what is going on with their children. Everyone is on the same level and the issue is resolved by everyone's input. If we need to charge a fee to enable this to happen, it would be a small fee to keep it inclusive, as many Waterlees families are on low income. It will only cover the costs of the kids club only. It would also be great, during the summer to use other places, like the Skate Park and have a competition, where there is an entrance fee of £2 and have different age groups to compete, maybe a 5-a-side football team to play on Lime Avenue, with boys and girls. There are so many options and opportunities of things to do, if we have the correct people to listen to what the people want and not just say yes we have and then not deliver on those promises, as this has happened in the past. She doesn't know politics, she's not smart, she is just a real person, who just listens to what people want and not what she thinks people want. She is a parent, who wants what every parent wants and that is for their child to do their best. Waterlees is the most neglected and deprived in Cambridgeshire and it is time to stop ignoring it and do something. It is not just for us but for the next generation, to show we can do it and we want to help. A Youth Club will be a start to what we can do and what can be done by the community and show that it doesn't matter what your circumstances are, you can achieve anything if you put your mind to it, as she is doing today.

Michael pointed out that all the Waterlees Councillors were present this evening and are prepared to work with Staci to see if this can be achieved and he felt she got her message over and everyone was listening

to her ideas. Alan asked where we were going to store a pool table, table tennis table etc and we already have a table tennis table here at the Centre and the PHAB group have a pool table and games, which they say any group can borrow. Paul has 10 years' experience as a Youth Worker and he would be willing to help out as a volunteer. Terry said that if this idea didn't get off the ground, could she encourage these youngsters to join the local cadet forces, they are also crying out for volunteers and most importantly when you put someone into a uniform, they are all equal regardless of their background. The volunteer adults have the ability to spot and develop the young people's leadership skills and confidence. They get two weeks annual camp where they learn to look after themselves and its fun. These are existing Youth clubs which we should be promoting. Staci highlighted that most parents cannot afford the subs for these types of clubs, which is why she is proposing a new club and also most of these clubs only run in term time only and this new club would all year round. Maria also offered Staci help with setting this club up, as she has experience of setting up new groups. Virginia highlighted about a mum who has to find £1 per day, per child to get her 3 children to school on the bus and she really struggles with this. There was a Beavers group at the Orchard School but when Staci asked if her son could join, she was told no because it was only open to children who attended that school. Many children on the ward attend the other schools in Wisbech and therefore this excluded a lot of local children.

Steve mentioned about the problems caused with previous Youth groups on the ward. Jayde mentioned that this previous group leaders didn't give any of the young people respect and therefore didn't get any respect back and this is why there was lots of problems and ASB. The way Staci wants to run the new youth group, will empower the youngsters to peer pressure those who attend. Virginia stated that according to CCC statistics, Waterlees has just under 1,500 young people on the ward and to have nothing for young people is outrageous. Chris pointed out that we have a Karate group on a Monday, which is well attended by all nationalities. It was highlighted that even though we are the most deprived ward in Cambridgeshire, we don't seem to attract the funding and Chris suggested that once the Mayor has been elected for the Devolved Local Authority, we invite them here to ask them why this is and what they plan to do to resolve this.

#### 4. Friends of Waterlees Skate Park

Virginia feedback re the Skate Park meeting and about the current state of the equipment, which was so dangerous as it was falling apart, to find out if residents do want to have this equipment replaced or not. There were stories that it had been vandalised, but the wood is so rotten, it appears to have fallen apart and was very dangerous for children. It needs to be replaced, but it needs the support of everyone in Waterlees to help make this happen. She is suggesting that they do bag packing to raise funds. In order to get the big money, you have to evidence that the residents want it and have raised some funds themselves. It is a bit of chicken and eggs situation, but that is how we have to do it, once we have done this, we will be looked at more favourable. Murrow has one that cost £75k, we do have the Spinney but that doesn't meet the needs of all the children on the ward. Facebook is the best way of communication, as a lot of residents use this method. She will set up a new facebook page for the Skate Park. Jody Cundy, gold para-Olympic medallist, has agreed to be Patron for the Skate Park group and this is wonderful start to try and get funding for the equipment, he also has the freedom of the town of Wisbech. We are in the early stages and doesn't want to make kids false promises. She believes that some people didn't come to the pre-meeting re the Skate park because they have heard it all before, which is frustrating because she is very passionate about this project and wants to support the residents to make it happen and doesn't want it to be taken by some officer of the council and they make promises to the kids and it all falls apart. Small steps to start with and just give it as much support as you can and not necessarily financially, but perhaps help if they are doing something which you think I can help with that.

#### 5. Police Reports and Priorities

There have been 3 burglaries on the ward since October, 3 criminal damages, 3 thefts from motor vehicles and 19 rowdy nuisances and only one of these has been at the Spinney Playground. There have been a total of 104 crimes reported in the last quarter and this is due to the way crimes are reported now, they are recorded first and then investigated, hence the difference. They are currently investigating a number of car tyres slashing which have happened on the Waterlees ward recently, 5 vehicles in the last week. They have a possible suspect for this crime. Reporting back on last meetings priorities, they have put in 30 Police hours. They caught someone a couple of days after the last Forum meeting and this appears to have removed the problem from that area. With regards to the parking problem that was happening down

Beechwood, Steve has spoken with them but this doesn't seem to have made a difference, so his next step is to involve Circle Housing to see if they are residents and then try and resolve it, with their support.

Chris tried the 101 system the other day and it took her 22 minutes to get through to speak to someone, after the first operator has answered your call initially and therefore there doesn't seem to be much improvement in the system, even though they have recruited more staff. You can go into a call back queue but when she tried this before they came back several hours later.

Paul mentioned that during the last two litter picks, he has collected several used needles along Waterlees Road and we are discovering more drug related rubbish on the ward. The Police are aware of this and other needles and the knife, via Chris and the Waterlees in Bloom group. Virginia asked if she could have this in writing as she has constantly asked for a camera to be put in that layby, but they have to get a court order to put a camera in, as they cannot be moved from one place to another, so the only way she can get Fenland to put one there is to keep badging them about the problems. The needles weren't only found in this layby, but also on the waste ground beside the Oasis, the alleyway between Bath Road and Bramley Road and the knife was found on the grass opposite the front entrance to the school.

Chris is still trying to find out who to contact re these speeding strips that go across the roads, everywhere else seems to get them but we can't. Terry believes we need to contact CCC Highways (Matt Pickering) and they can arrange for these to be placed on the ward. They monitor speed and number of vehicles.

#### Waterlees Key Community Concern

1. Cyclists with no lights and riding on the pavements
2. Parking on the pavements causing obstruction

The residents felt there was also a drug problem on the ward, but we need to know where and when, maybe do a joint project with FDC, Chris asked Carl if he could speak to someone at FDC about this. Steve said we also have a problem in Mount Pleasant cemetery with drugs, but they visit there every shift and having caught anyone. Staci believes they are drug dealing beside her flat down Hayley Court, as cars go down there, pass a parcel and about 5 minutes later the drive away and come most days, evenings just before it gets dark and again about 9 - 10pm at night. Virginia said the police need a registration number but there is no way of getting this discreetly, without being noticed, because they always have someone on the lookout. Steve will feed this back, he also mentioned that he does a monthly drop in session, where people can come and report this kind of thing, if they cannot get through on the phone, but he stressed that everyone needs to report things like this, otherwise it looks like no crimes are happening on the ward and then he will be sent into town, to issue parking tickets.

Virginia asked where we have got with regards to parking outside the Orchard School and Steve regularly goes there at either the beginning of the school day or at the end and he has issued tickets. The CCC Highways team have said that they will not pay for the lines to be amended and therefore Steve is going to have to look at ways to raise the funding himself. Paul did visit with someone from Highways during the summer months when the school was on holiday and therefore Chris has asked Paul if he could arrange another visit, when the school is open, so they can see for themselves what a huge issue this is and how dangerous this is for children.

#### 6. Devolved Local Authority

Peter Dawe is standing for Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Devolved Local Authority – known as a Combined Authority, led by a Mayor and these elections will be on 4<sup>th</sup> May. He highlighted that this Forum showed how communities are coming together and this is especially important as many budgets are being cut, which means communities have to do more for themselves. Central Government decided that Councils weren't delivering some of the stuff that wants delivering. The role of the Combined Authority is the broad brush stroke stuff and particular house planning and training, not education but training. Also more powers and responsibilities will go to the Combined Authority and the Mayor, in particularly looking at Social Care, looking after the elderly and disabled. He sees this as an opportunity.

He is going to stand as an independent candidate, there will probably be 6 or 7 candidates standing, all the big parties are putting someone forward. Because of the size of the role, the Mayor will not be able to turn up at these sort of events, so they will be by definition, remote and will rely on Councillors to continue to do

this. He wants to get communities to take control of their own destiny by telling their Councillors and Councils what they want. He knows nothing about Waterlees and almost nothing about Wisbech but most communities will have a local school, a Community Centre, there is typically a chippie or something similar, sometimes a church. What we have to do is get the principles in there is talking to one and another. To get a good school, you need a strong community to make a good school. The school used to be the community centre and he believes that that this needs to be reversed.

One of the first things he will try and do would be to get a modular homes factory in Fenland to build prefabs to resolve the housing problems, as the houses are built very fast. He believes that putting this somewhere along the A47 is a pretty good idea. This would be a large employer.

He mentioned that it is great that someone has highlighted that the area needs a Youth Club and we are asking what do we need to do to make it happen. Bringing everyone together, using your resources. You can do that on the small scale and on a big scale. He wants to see the champions out there to make these things happen. He wants the County not to say that you can't do it but to say how can we support you to make this happen. The Councils currently are the reason why some things don't happen, they create problems. He promised that if he gets elected as Mayor, he will come back to the Forum. He mentioned that if the council do match funding and you live in a street of millionaires, then it doesn't take any effort to raise £100k, to be matched by the council, but on Waterlees, we don't have any chance of doing this. He stressed that lots of people who make a lot of noise, get noticed and historically Waterlees has been quite silent. Stephen Barclay has really turned things upside down at the LEP, by going public with his concerns, 16 points, all damn good questions. Just from that speech, Fenland are going to get more money. If we start doing this, we will start to get noticed, more funding, more resources and if you combined this with our own efforts, this will really help.

#### 7. Partners report back from last meeting and new residents priorities for partners to resolve

Terry Jordan – (WTC) - For the Christmas lights display for 2016/17, Wisbech Town Council was able to complete its project. The additional lights installed this year provided lighting for Hill Street, the front of the Town Hall and the large tree situated close to the town bridge (not far from the Old Market). All of the £30,000 which had been allocated by Wisbech Town Council two years ago for the purchase of new Christmas lights has now been spent and further improvements will only be possible if sponsorship from businesses within the town can be achieved.

Last year's Christmas Fayre, which took place on Sunday 11 December, was bigger and better than in previous years and was a major success – all of the feedback from the public has been extremely positive. The Town Council provided £1,500 of funding to increase the amount of entertainment for last year's Christmas Fayre and it is anticipated, given the success of the event, that it will provide such funding again this year.

You will recall Terry mentioning at the last meeting of the forum that, in response to comments made by attendees that people from Waterlees Village ward would not be able to access this event unless transport could be provided, arrangements were made for the Rosmini Centre to operate a minibus service between the Oasis Centre and Wisbech bus station. It is very disappointing that it subsequently became necessary to cancel the arrangements because of lack of take-up by local people.

Wisbech Town Council organised or supported a number of community events and festivals last year and its Community Events and Festivals Committee agreed, last week, a programme for this year; this includes: St George's event on 22 April, WisBEACH day on 4 June, Rock Festival on 6 August and Christmas Lights switch-on on 26 November. In addition to those events, which will be organised by the Town Council, the council will also support others, such as Armed Forces Day, Arles Festival and the Halloween Spooktacular.

Wisbech Town Council continues to support a number of community projects and initiatives and wants to help make Wisbech a better place to live, visit and work; these include Wisbech Travel Choices, Wisbech 2020 Vision, Wisbech Reads, the Community Led Local Development project, the initiative to achieve renovation of the dilapidated buildings on Wisbech High Street (recently awarded £1.9m) and others.

Also the council has agreed to assist the Alzheimer's Society in making Wisbech a Dementia Friendly Community. A steering group for that purpose has been set up and has held its first 2 meetings. A date for another meeting of the steering group will be set in the near future. Members of Wisbech Town Council received a further presentation on this initiative at their last meeting (on 19 December 2016).

The Town Council operates a small grants budget, to support community groups. The whole of the budget for the current financial year has been spent but it is anticipated that a similar level of funding will be made available by the council in 2017/18. Application forms are available on the council's website. In each of the years 2014, 2015 and 2016 the Waterlees in Bloom group has obtained grant funding from Wisbech Town Council. At its meeting next Monday (23 January 2017), Wisbech Town Council will be setting its budget for the financial year 2017/18. The council's draft budget includes funding to provide additional financial support to the Wisbech and Fenland Museum, which is seeing a reduction in its funding from other sources.

The council's Assets Management Committee has worked with the firm of consultants which is involved in the Heritage Lottery Fund bid in relation to the High Street to prepare a number of design concepts for enhancement of Wisbech Market Place (for its use as both a trading area and community space). The results of the consultancy work were reported to 1 November 2016 meeting of the Assets Management Committee. The committee broadly supported the proposals within the document but decided that a working party, which would include not only a number of councillors but also members of the community, be set up to examine the proposals in greater detail and to undertake public consultation. The Assets Management Committee is also reviewing the council's cleansing contracts for the Market Place and the toilets at Exchange Square and Wisbech Park, with the aim of both securing the best value-for-money and increasing the frequency of inspection and cleaning of the toilets. It is anticipated that the results of the tendering exercise will be considered at the next meeting of the Assets Management Committee (scheduled currently for 30 January 2017).

As was mentioned at the last meeting of this forum, Wisbech Town Council lodged with the County Council an Expression of Interest in acquiring Wisbech Castle (in response to the County Council's decision to dispose of the property), with the aim of developing the use of this building as a community venue. The Assets and Investment Committee at the County Council decided, at its meeting on 21 October 2016, that Wisbech Town Council be selected as the preferred bidder and it was, consequently, given a period of four months to submit to the County Council a business case in support of the bid to acquire the building. Work is in hand to produce a business case – which has included input from community groups such as Wisbech Society, Wisbech in Bloom and the Ferry Project – and Councillor Samantha Hoy and I have met with officers of the Heritage Lottery Fund to explore the possibility of accessing grant funding for repair and restoration works to this Grade II\* Listed Building.

At its 26 September 2016 meeting Wisbech Town Council decided to submit an application for a Local Highway Improvements scheme for the financial year 2017/18 for speed reduction measures along South Brink (between Malt Drive and the Town Centre). The bid is due to be considered by a panel of County Councillors early next month. If the bid is successful, the County Council would provide 90% of the funding required.

As he had promised, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire attended 24 October 2016 meeting of Wisbech Town Council. He reflected upon his first five months in the role and then answered Councillors' questions. If anyone is interested in the comments he made and the responses that he gave to Councillors' questions, they are recorded in the minutes of the meeting, which can be viewed on the Wisbech Town Council website. The website address is: [www.wisbechtowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.wisbechtowncouncil.gov.uk)

Publication of the 2017 Town Guide is expected within the next few weeks – certainly before the date of the next meeting of the Waterlees Forum – and copies will be delivered to the Oasis Centre, as well as other locations, such as the Library and the Fenland@yourservice shop.

Cllr Paul Clapp (CCC) – He mentioned that the lights will now not be switched off during the night (or dimmed as some had proposed) and the proposed reduction in the gritting programme, will also not be going ahead. He has reported lots of potholes in the roads, to Highways to be repaired. He has reported the white lines on Tinkers Drove and also the drain cover which keeps lifting off, even after several people

have put it back. He mentioned that he will look to have a continuous yellow line put around the school, because this would cure the problem.

It was raised at the last meeting that the crossing on Lynn Road and Mount Pleasant Road, there is no sound, so if you are visually impaired, you struggle. Paul will look into this. There is still a problem with the lights on Lynn Road/De Havilland Road junction, they don't allow enough cars to come out at that junction and therefore many cars cross on a red. It was also mentioned that someone was nearly knocked over because of no distance lights near the pedestrian crossing, the roundabout side, there were cars queued past the lights, these had changed to red and a pedestrian got a green light to cross, but the traffic starting moving forward and a car nearly ploughed into her. There needs to be a distance light put in before someone is seriously hurt. Paul will highlight this again to Highways.

Circle Housing – They sent a report of what they have done since the last Forum meeting and they have ticked them all off. The exception was the problem with the bins on Lime Avenue being too small, they will be looking at these but at the moment there is no additional funding available to replace them. They have cut back the hedges in the passageway between Bath Road and Bramley Road, they keep reporting the dumped rubbish in the sub-station to the UK Power Network, who is responsible for the sub-stations, but it will take 28 days to clear it because they outsource this to contractors. When this has been cleared in the past, more rubbish is thrown in. The blocked drains that were reported, Jamie has cleared these twice and it is the leaves from the large trees which keeps re-blocking them. The resident who was experiencing problems down Beechwood Road with the 4 Popular trees, these have now been totally removed and they are arranging to have the stumps removed as well. The path between Walton Road and Coldhorn Crescent has been cleared. Heather reported a residents on Ollard Avenue, who they believed was a Circle tenant, they weren't but they have had a word with them and there hasn't been a problem with this since.

Question for Circle Housing – Why are they building new houses for new tenants but they are not resolving the issues, like damp, mould etc which exist in their old properties and yet they expect their current tenants to keep paying for sub-standard properties, which is effecting people's health, she lives in Hayley Close. When this tenant mentioned this to Circle, her Housing Officer and she said they know these problems exist in these old properties. Virginia asked when did the tenant speak to her Housing Officer, because the new ones are brilliant and it was over a year ago, so Virginia suggested she contacts them again. The same tenant mentioned that she has a problem with the sheds behind her and Michelle promised to come back to her, but hasn't and she is the new Housing Officer. Staci has reported a dumped chest freezer outside her flat, but they haven't collected this. Chris will chase this because if a child gets into this and someone shuts the lid, they won't be able to get out.

Virginia highlighted a problem with the boiler contractor that Circle is using, they visit tenants, turn the boilers off and say they need to order a part and then take several weeks to return to repair it. One of the tenants, who has a disabled son, waited 4 weeks without any heating or hot water. She believes Clarion will work hard to improve their image and their service/response time to tenants.

Carl Suckling (FDC) – The Council are consulting on the new Business Plan and Chris has put a copy on everyone chairs, for them to complete. It is about setting the priorities for next year. Carl highlighted that it does make a difference and feeds into the council process. If you care about certain services, then fill out the form. Ian and Angie have taken on Jayde's role at Community House, they are looking at options to continue this work after March. They are working closer with Clarion/Circle Housing. Owen Eastfield Way is a flytipping area, has a small bin, but doesn't cope with the amount of rubbish. He litter picks there regularly but doesn't pick up the dumped bags. He has reported this several times to FDC but nothing. There is no vehicle access, as it is a pathway and is the main route for people of the ward into town. Paul highlighted that another area which is suffering from flytipping if the little Road which goes behind the houses on Tinkers Drive.

#### 8. Any Other Business

Selective Licencing is going to FDC Cabinet tomorrow.

Date of next meeting – Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2017, 7pm  
Chris closed the meeting at 9pm and thanked everyone for coming.